

**OUTLINE
HISTORY OF
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA**

Before Naxalbari

Prakash

New Life Publicatons



Outline History Of Communist Party Of India

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The Historical Setting

The victorious October Revolution of 1917 ushered in a new chapter in the history of national liberation movements in colonies and semi-colonies. In the era of imperialism the national liberation movements became an inseparable component of the world socialist revolution. After first world war there was an upsurge of national liberation struggles in colonies and semi-colonies all over the world. Nationalities hitherto had been oppressed cruelly by Czarist Russia – the prison house of nations, attained the right of self determination after the October revolution. First the Russian communists and later the Comintern extended their unequivocal support and assistance to the national liberation struggles. Thus October Revolution gave great impetus to the struggles in the colonial world and made profound impact on them. Left forces emerged in the national liberation struggles started spreading their influence. During the war itself the proletariat in the colonial world emerged as a new historical force that could play a crucial role in the destiny of those countries. Lenin and Comintern recognised the pressing need of building communist parties in the colonial world and took on the task in earnest.

The communist parties of the backward colonial world were born and grew in the upsurge of nationalist struggles with the inspiration of Bolshevism. The big bourgeoisie of the colonial countries was comprador in its nature and it was becoming more and more reactionary day by day. Thus they faced an emerging objective situation in which the proletariat itself should take up the onerous historical task of completing the objectives of democratic revolution that aimed at colonialism and feudalism.

Such is the situation in which the Communist Party of India – CPI was born and grew-up in our country. The masses of peasantry and other oppressed classes of our country had been waging heroic and relentless strug-

gles against feudalism and colonialism by the time the CPI born. On the one hand, the nationalist revolutionaries despite their defective understanding and practice had been creating terror in the hearts of the British imperialists. On the other hand broad masses countrywide started getting mobilising in the anti-imperialist national movement. The comprador bourgeoisie in guise of Indian National Congress (INC) established its leadership over the national movement and was leading it only to defeat it. In this historical setting CPI was born. Only by giving due consideration to the background of these historical conditions one can understand and assess the role played by CPI, in the consequent tumultuous, turbulent, heroic and at times chaotic and tragic period of modern India that lead to the transfer of power and unfulfilled urge of Indian masses to liberate themselves from the yoke of feudalism and imperialism.

Various Streams of Freedom Movement

The anti-imperialist national movement that progressed in a wave like motion from the beginning of 20th century was in fact a conglomeration of various streams of struggles. Even before the emergence of INC as a mass based party, the nationalist revolutionaries of petty-bourgeoisie nature had been struggling against the colonial rule. Along with the development of nationalist movement the activities of nationalist revolutionaries too expanded and constituted an important component of it. Moreover the revolutionaries started recognising the role of masses in the struggle and were getting attracted towards socialist ideology and Bolshevism. On the other hand the proletariat became a militant component of anti-imperialist struggle. It was emerging as a class capable of leading the national liberation movement as a whole as it was progressively awakening to realise its own class interests and destiny. The peasant struggles and adivasi struggles raging from the inception of the British rule continued like a prairie fire in the 20th century too and remained as an important motive force of anti-imperialist nationalist movement. The English educated middle class inspired by bourgeois ideals too played a significant role in this movement.

Even the comprador bourgeoisie participated in this movement, of course with its own hidden agenda. The leadership of INC that represented the interests of comprador bourgeoisie and feudal classes, contrary to the above

mentioned revolutionary social forces never aspired for the complete abolition of imperialist oppression and plunder since the contradiction they had with imperialism was not at all antagonistic. Basically they had common interests with imperialists and thus they never really demanded complete independence. They always sought some concessions and at most they wanted a share in power. But they were wise enough to recognise the fact that, the raging countrywide democratic revolutionary upsurge with all its different streams was perilous not only to imperialism but also to the very existence of the native feudal and comprador bourgeoisie classes. That is why leadership of INC in collusion with imperialists, in the pretext of leading national movement tried in every way to betray it and thus to protect the semi-feudal and colonial relations. The INC leadership throughout the national movement adopted the tactic of coming forward as the leader at every step and hoodwinking it at its peak. It used the anti-imperialist mass upsurge to bargain for some concessions.

It is common for the official historians to depict the Indian freedom movement as the creation of INC, especially of Gandhi, Nehru, etc. i.e. of its top leadership. But in fact, it was the might of those revolutionary forces such as peasantry, proletariat, adivasis and petty-bourgeois democrats and revolutionaries and the mighty pressure created by their incessant struggles that lead to the formation of INC and its emergence as an organisation holding sway over the broad masses; to its assumption of the role of leader at the head of mighty anti-imperialist mass upsurge, just to betray it; and to its later day demand even in words, for complete independence. For a proper understanding of the freedom struggle of the 20th century it is necessary to consider it as the continuation of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles that had been waged by peasantry and other oppressed masses from the inception of British rule in India. At the same time we should take note of the various new forms of exploitation and oppression that Britain in its transition from the stage of industrial capitalism to the stage of financial capitalism thrust upon India, and its new imperialist interests and policies and the resultant changes in the class relations in our country. More over, in the 20th century upsurge of mass struggles and freedom movement new historical forces came to the fore as the important players.

The Colonial Policies of The British

The transition of British capitalism from its industrial capitalist stage to the stage of imperialism i.e. finance capital stage increased the burden of colonial plunder on the masses of our country. Under the rule of British finance capital in addition to the colonial oppression perpetrated under the rule of industrial capital our country was forced to bear the colonial oppression of finance capital. The colonialists in their industrial capital stage used to plunder the raw materials and natural resources in main. In the finance capital stage however they started establishing modern industries such as jute and textiles in India and invested in plantations. The advent of modern industry, though it intended to serve the interests of the imperialists contributed to the emergence of new historical force – the modern industrial proletariat in India. The comprador mercantile class started sprouting into comprador big bourgeoisie. This modern Indian bourgeoisie from its birth had its interests intertwined with those of imperialists and thus it was comprador at its birth itself. The colonial rulers too recognised it as their reliable social prop and thus encouraged it. This doesn't mean that it had no contradiction with imperialism, but it only meant that it was non-antagonistic in nature.

It is well known fact that peasantry and adivasis in India revolted time and again against both feudalism and colonialism since the inception of British colonial rule. These revolts that took place separately were suppressed. However a countrywide uprising – the India's first war of independence of 1857 shook the foundations of colonial rule. The glorious struggle met with defeat mainly due to the leadership of feudal forces. The colonial rulers of course took their lessons from it and recognised the necessity of friendly native forces that could prop up their rule in India and thus cultivated friendly relations with feudals like Zamindars, Rajas and Nawabs. The feudal lords of six hundred and odd princely states especially remained loyal to the British crown till the end.

The colonial rulers even believed that the enduring friendly relations with native feudals and comprador bourgeoisie and their unstinted loyalty to the empire would make British rule in India permanent. With this confidence Britain made India the main pillar of its colonial empire and modernised and expanded the Indian military and used it for the expansion and

protection of its empire. It is the colonial Indian army that waged wars of aggression for Britain in North-West and in Burma. Britain also used the Indian military in Egypt and Sudan. Thus the colonial Indian army had becoming a heavy burden to the Indian treasury. The budgetary ratio of military expenditure of British India rose to 51.1% by 1904-05 from 41.9% of 1881-82. Naturally the colonial government resorted to heavy taxation to meet the rapidly growing government expenditure.

Land revenue which was the major source of revenue of government, during the period 1881-82 to 1901-1902 rose from Rs.19.67 crores to Rs.23.99 crores, despite severe famine conditions prevailing in this period. The peasantry already bankrupt and stuck in the debt trap, with this additional burden of heavy taxation still further pauperised. Both the *zamindari* and *ryotwari* areas witnessed peasant unrest and upsurge of their struggles against heavy taxation, high rents and usury. These peasant struggles and movements continued in the 20th century too.

The colonial rulers usurped the natural and traditional rights of adivasis over forests and forest products with its forest acts in order to widen their revenue base. From 1867 onwards by prohibiting and restricting shifting cultivation in “reserve forests” and establishing monopoly rights over forest products the adivasis were denied their traditional livelihood. The adivasi peasant masses were forced to make a desperate struggle as their existence itself in peril. In the history of anti-colonial struggles in India adivasi masses have written a glorious and heroic chapter with their recurrent and fierce uprisings against British rule. The tradition of incessant adivasi revolts continued even after 1857.

Adivasi Struggles

The 1870s and 1880s witnessed another wave of tribal revolts due to the further tightening of the grip of colonial rulers over forest areas. After the defeat of the famous Santal rebellion Sapha Har or Kherwar movement in 1870s in 1868 Naikda forest tribe in Gujarat and in 1882 the Kacha Nagas of Cachar revolted. In Visakhapatnam agency (A.P.) the tribals revolted under the leadership of a *konda dora* Korra Mallaih. Again in 1879-80 there occurred the famous Rampa *pituri* (rebellion). The *koya* and the *konda doras* of this agency rose in revolt in 1840, 1845, 1858, 1861 and 1862 too. However the Rampa *pituri* of 1872 was a big one. In 1872 in the same area

the tribals again revolted, this time organised as Rama *dandu*. Rampa rose again in 1916.

However the most prominent revolt of this period took place in Chota Nagpur under the leadership of Birsa Munda in 1899-1900. The Kolis revolted in 1883. In Jagdalpur tribals revolted against the Bastar raja. In 1914 Khonds rebelled against the Dasapalla princely state in Orissa. In 1914 Orans and Mundas rebelled in Chota Nagpur. In 1917 the tribals of Manipur and Santals of Mayurbhunj revolted. In 1913 Bhils of Rajasthan revolted against the Bhil raja.

All these adivasi peasant struggles were aimed at protecting their traditional rights over forest and forest products. They challenged the British power to re-establish their traditional authority and political power. These adivasi struggles in general led by their traditional leadership till the nationalist movement of 20th century that influenced some of them.

Peasant struggles

As a result of the disintegration of the self-sufficient village economy under colonial rule and huge increase in exploitation and immensely increased exploitation and oppression due to the new feudal relations introduced by colonialism the peasantry had become bankrupt. The commercial crops and money relations drove the peasantry into the debt trap. Usury became a prominent form of exploitation of peasantry and the money lenders who now became a formidable feudal element in rural India had been sucking the blood of peasant masses.

All these developments naturally lead to severe frustration and agitation among peasantry. During 1859-60 indigo growing peasants in Bengal led a massive rebellion. The Moplahs of Malabar, the Muslim lease holders and cultivators rose up against Hindu upper caste landlords, *jennmis* who had the patronage of the British in 1882-1885 and in 1896. Moplahs revolted 22 times during the period 1839 to 1919. The Hindu peasants of South Malabar too rebelled against *jennmis* in 1860s and 1870s. In the Maharashtra Deccan the victims of commercialisation of crops – the bankrupt and debt ridden cotton growers struggled against the exorbitant rise of land revenue and usury in 1875. Likewise the bankrupt jute growing peasantry of Pabna in Bengal too struggled against money lender landlords. In the next two decades

similar movements took place in several districts of East Bengal. In 1879 low caste Ramoshis of Maharashtra under the leadership of Phadke rebelled and their movement got active and wide support from peasantry.

The famine affected peasantry of Maharashtra Deccan led no-revenue movement demanding remission of land revenue in 1896-97. After the famine of 1899-1900 no-revenue movements took place in Surat, Nasik, Kheda and Ahmedabad districts. Similarly no-revenue movements took place in Kamrup, Darrang districts of Assam in 1893-94.

Like Adivasi struggles these peasant struggles also largely took place under the traditional caste or religious leadership. Though these struggles were often not clearly aimed against colonialism or feudalism they directly rose from the feudal and colonial oppression and exploitation and fought against them. Hence it is quite correct rather than not to consider these struggles as anti-colonial and anti-feudal currents. From the 20th century onwards the influences of modern liberal bourgeoisie and that of INC started to show up on peasant struggles.

The English Educated

By the end of 19th century the number of English educated Indians had been increasing significantly. The number of matriculates was nearing 50,000 in 1880. The number of those studying English rapidly rose to 5,05,000 in 1907 from 2,98,000 in 1887. The growing educated were more and more influenced by bourgeois democratic ideas. The intelligentsia "*indian in colour and blood, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect*" produced by the carefully crafted Macaulay's education system however contributed to some extent to the spread of bourgeois liberal and nationalist ideals. But the majority of these educated belonged to the elite and wealthy classes quite often feudal sections. However middle class intelligentsia too started to grow. Though they were small in number, the colonial rulers got apprehensive about the growth of an intelligentsia especially of middle class. The colonial rulers got restive with the prospect of the middle class intelligentsia of India with its modern outlook taking an active part in the national liberation movement as its counterpart did in Europe and reduced the opportunities of education and placements in government services. Naturally it led to discontent in the Indian intelligentsia and it had been appealing the British rulers requesting the expansion of those opportunities. The colonial

rulers were agitated about the future role that the Indian intelligentsia which had stood by it at the time of India's first war of independence, could play in the future.

The Comprador Bourgeoisie

In the second half of 19th century the beginning was made for the establishment of modern industry in India. But one should not overlook the fact that the growth of the industrial capital in India took place within the framework of colonial relations. It was the comprador, commercial and usurer classes which depended and grew on the commissions they received from colonialists and the rich feudal classes that contributed to the formation of industrial capital in India. Both these classes had been the main social props of British colonial rule and plunder in India.

In the beginning of the 20th century Tata established the first iron and steel industry in India. However after the First World War the process of industrialisation gained impetus. We can not compare this industrialisation with that of Europe as this process which continued till 1947 and after could not change the agrarian nature of the Indian economy. Moreover, this industrialisation shackled to and dependent on imperialism, aimed at serving its interests and thus its scope was very narrow, and it failed to bring about revolutionary changes in production relations.

The Indian big bourgeoisie that was born and grew up in this process was comprador in its nature as it had fundamental unity with the interests of colonial rulers. The heavy taxation imposed by British rulers often made this comprador class too disgruntled with it. As a result this class too come forward at times demanding opportunities for its own development.

However the big bourgeoisie unlike its counterparts elsewhere impotent to consolidate and lead the mighty unrest of peasantry and other oppressed masses either to overthrow feudalism to fulfil its democratic revolutionary task or to overthrow the colonial oppression to fulfil its national liberation task. It is only due to this handicap that the Indian big bourgeoisie failed to come forward to fulfil the democratic revolutionary tasks in India, when mighty mass upsurge that could overthrow both feudalism and colonialism was raging in the first half of the 20th century. Hence different struggles born out of the democratic aspirations of different social classes

and sections of the Indian masses continued as different streams. Thus the objective situation emerged that necessitated that the proletariat take up the twin tasks of democratic revolution of India.

The Industrial Proletariat

The beginnings of modern industrial proletariat can be traced to the commencement of railways in 1853. But the subsequent industrialisation process could not be considered as a significant one when compared with the deindustrialisation that took place under the British colonial rule. Mining was started since the 1770s. The first jute mill was established in 1854. The conditions for the emergence of modern Indian proletariat matured during the period 1851-1870 when modern industry was established. By 1990 there were 3 lakhs of workers in factories and mines. Another 2 lakh were working in jute and textile mills. About 800 miles of railroads were laid. By the end of the 19th century jute and textile mills were developed and Calcutta and Bombay started emerging as industrial cities with the concentration of working class.

In the tea plantations which were growing since 1839 more than 9 lakhs of workers (including temporary labour) were employed by 1919. In addition there were 82 thousand employed in coffee plantations in 1903. The conditions of workers in these plantations were so miserable that they can be comparable only with that of slave labour.

The artisans who were ruined and the peasants who were pauperised in the process of disintegration of the self-sufficient village economy caused by the colonial rule, had no alternative but to migrate to urban centres and become wage earning workers. With the exception of the big industrial centres like Bombay and Calcutta the industrial workers in general maintained their organic relations with their villages and their roots were still in the rural areas. The handicraftsmen and the owners of small private property too were in considerable proportion. Hence the Indian working class in its infancy inevitably showed petty-bourgeoisie narrow mindedness to some extent.

The development of Indian working class and its emergence as the new historical force progressed rather slowly due to the slow pace of industrialisation that took place as part of the colonial economy and aimed at

furthering the colonial interests, and due to the continuation of feudal relations strongly though in a new form. However by the beginning of 20th century the working class started to emerge as a formidable and new historical force and started to consolidate itself by building its own class organisations and waging militant struggles against the bourgeoisie both Indian and foreign.

The Initial Stage of the Working Class Movement

The working conditions of workers in the early days were quite miserable with the working day stretch over 16-18 hours in general. The workers had to toil all the seven days of a week. The wages were so paltry that hardly met the minimum needs of workers. The miserable plight of workers naturally raised sympathy in some educated liberals and reformers and they came forward to highlight the problems of working class and tried for its welfare. Sasipada Benerji, a member of *Brahmo Samaj*, established in 1870 the first working class organisation of India the “Workingmen’s Club.” He himself began publishing “Indian Toiler” (Bharatha Shramajeevi) from 1874, with the aim of educating workers and to highlight the problems of working class. From Bombay too for the same purpose “Deena Bandhu” was started to appear from 1898. These reformists used to run night schools for workers. However these first organisers of working class had neither working class outlook nor correct understanding regarding the problems of working class.

1200 railway workers of Howra station resorted to a strike in 1862 demanding an 8 hour working day. Though this struggle is insignificant in its size and in its effect in bringing the cause to the fore, the fact that Indian working class in its infancy itself took up such a demand 24 years before the famous Chicago workers struggle is noteworthy. In Calcutta porters in 1853 and bullock cart men in 1862 organised strikes, in Ahmedabad workers of brick industry and others resorted to strikes in 1873. During 1880-1890 25 important strikes took place in Bombay and Madras.

By the end of the 19th century the industrial proletariat frequently resorted to strikes on the issues of working conditions, working hours, wages, etc. However the organisation of workers into trade unions had still not begin. The trade union struggles appeared only in the 20th century when the working class emerged as a formidable new historical force. It is proper to

note here the fact that in India too just like in all colonial and semi-colonial countries the working class grew up in the midst of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist nationalist upsurge and thus the history of working class movement in India progressed intertwining with the nationalist movement. The working class movement formed as an important and inseparable strong current in the countrywide upsurge of the anti-imperialist national movement in the first half of 20th century.

The Formation of Indian National Congress

After 1870 famine became a chronic endemic. Widespread peasant unrest and resultant struggles like indigo growers' movements, no-rent movements, etc. made the colonial rulers restive with the prospect of a situation that could enact another 1857 a night mare that was still fresh in their memory. Already a section of the English educated intelligentsia that was coming forward with its own demands extended its solidarity with the struggles of the indigo growing farmers. The British government agitated over the possibility of the emergence of a combination of peasant masses and the educated elite and middle class intelligentsia as a unified nationalist movement. The anti-colonial struggles so far were met with defeat mainly due to the leadership of traditional, feudal and revivalist forces. If the educated with their modern outlook lead the oppressed masses, it might prove to be perilous to British rule in India. But the English educated then constituted about one percent of the population and they were mainly working as government servants and lawyers, teachers, etc. professionals. On the one hand great majority of these more or less had landed or feudal interests. On the other they were influenced by democratic and nationalist ideals due to their English education. In India unlike in Europe neither the English educated elite was closely attached with the industrial production nor did the industry had the potential to absorb the educated on a large scale. The modern industries that appeared on the scene too were mainly run by European managing agencies. Thus the interests of most of the English educated were in fact more in consonance with those of the feudalism and the colonial state. In fact the highly educated and higher rungs of government servants considered themselves as an elite social stratum different from the great majority of the common people.

However this educated elite started to organise itself. As the government servants a big section of it had to work in different parts of the country and thus it paved the way for its country wide consolidation. Surendranadh Benarji established the Indian Association in 1875. The all India conference of the Indian association held in 1883 was described as the precursor for the emergence of Indian National Congress.

In the last quarter of 19th century more than 70 lakh people perished in famines. Deccan rocked with the rebellious riots. As the countrywide mass unrest growing more and more severe day by day threatening to become a mighty mass upsurge of countrywide rebellion, the government resorted to repression to suppress it. In 1878 it usurped the freedom of press by enacting the Vernacular Press Act, recognising the potential threat from modern media that could play a crucial role in spreading the revolution all over the country. In the India's first war of independence people everywhere participated in it spontaneously by taking up their traditional arms. To pre-empt the happening of the same again the colonial rulers enacted the Arms Act of 1879, by which the people of India lost their right to take up arms for self-defence.

In the backdrop of these conditions A.O.Hume, a retired I.C.S officer was entrusted with the task of studying the intelligence reports about the countrywide mass unrest. Those reports were all indicting the prospect of a mighty county wide revolt that could over throw the British rule in India. He correctly recognised that in such a situation the efforts of educated natives to organise themselves and that they were getting support from native rich commercial interests were of dangerous consequences to the British rule in India. He recognised the class of educated intelligentsia as a social force that could lay foundation for the countrywide national unity in future. He felt it was necessary to prevent this nationalist section from taking the path of revolutionary of struggle that could jeopardise the basic interests of British. Thus he thought of providing this nationalist intelligentsia a countrywide platform that acts in consonance with the interests of British imperialism. With the acceptance and encouragement of Dufferin the then viceroy of India, he founded the Indian National Congress in 1885. He aspired that the organisation would act as a safety valve for the mighty mass unrest that was increasing day by day. Thus the Indian National Congress the fruit

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of well crafted design of British imperialism was formed as a means that could protect it from the brewing revolutionary mass upsurge of peoples of India.

The forces that constituted INC at its birth represented a tiny minority in the country. Since the birth of INC these forces got the support of native big commercial and capitalist classes, who were comprador in nature and had strong ties with feudalism. The elite educated intelligentsia that took active part in the formation of INC too as a whole tied to feudalism and dependent on imperialism. With the establishment of INC the British imperialism aspired strongly to keep these forces which had no basic opposition to imperialism, on its side. Just like the educated though insignificant in their number stood behind it in 1857, it expected that these forces also should stand by its side in future. By placing an organisation that has basic unity with imperialism at the head of the national movement as its leader it wished to make its colonial rule in India permanent.

It means neither that the imperialists then itself visualised how the INC acts and what concrete slogans and forms of struggle it might take up in future, nor that did the entire history of INC progress along the lines scripted by them. The issue of utmost importance however is nothing but the imperialism succeeded in placing forces which had no basic opposition with it at the head of national movement as its leader. Every thing else determined time to time by the concrete historical conditions, the mass upsurge, the conflict of different social classes, international developments, etc.

The point here to be stressed is that the INC, which succeeded in getting hold over and controlled nationalist movement of India in the subsequent period, from its birth itself neither anti-feudal nor anti-imperialist. It is because of this basic reason the INC in the pretext of leading the national movement for freedom actually fought for its own interests which ran counter to those of the movement itself and betrayed the movement, and it always opposed any movement or programme against feudalism.

In 1905 Dadabhai Nauroji expressed this view: **Certain people, the moment they are brought under the reign of British flag will automatically become free citizens and remain as the compatriot British citizens. We, the Indians as a birth right are all free English citizens as if we are born and grown up in England.**¹

Surendranadh Benerji said this: **We should work with unequivocal devotion and loyalty towards the bond with the British, because it is not our aim to do away with the British rule in India but is more widening its basis, more liberalising its outlook and more gratifying its nature.**²

These views show the great loyalty and obedience of the leadership of INC had towards imperialism. In later days too when INC took up the slogans of *swarajya* and *sampurna swatantrya* the leadership showed unstinted loyalty towards imperialism.

In the early years of its existence the INC was not a broad mass based organisation. It never resorted to any agitating and mass mobilising tactics but aspired for some concessions through appealing to the kind heart of the Crown. Increasing the participation of Indians in the British administrative bodies was its maximum demand for the achievement of which it adopted the means of appeals, representations and pleadings to the imperialists.

Nationalist Upsurge at the Beginning of the 20th Century

When capitalism entered into its imperialist stage at the end of 19th century, an upsurge of national liberation struggles on the one hand and an unprecedented scramble for colonies among imperialist countries on the other broke out. In 1896 Italy which attacked Abyssinia met with defeat. In Boer war of 1899-1902 England faced severe setback. Revolutionary movements were developing in the Asian countries like China, Persia (Iran) and Turkey. In 1905 Japan defeated Russia. All these developments shattered the racist myths such as invincibility of whites and whites were born to rule the peoples of Asia and Africa. They provided encouragement and acted as an impetus and inspiration to the national liberation struggles in the colonies.

During 1905-07 an important chapter in the world history started to unfold in Russia wherein proletariat in association with other oppressed masses revolted against the Czarist regime announcing the dawn of world socialist revolution on the horizon of turbulent world. Though defeated the Russian revolution shook the foundations of Czarist dictatorship that boasted

of its invincible might and provided great inspiration to the struggles of the oppressed masses world over. Its impact on Indian nationalist revolutionaries and nationalists was particularly the significant one.

At the same time the general crisis of capitalism was becoming more and more severe. As a result Britain witnessed industrial depression and showing a worsening trend of its crisis. Naturally Britain tried to find a way out of the crisis by shifting the burden on the colonial India. Consequently the colonial oppression and exploitation on the peoples of India became still severe and made the life more miserable for the masses.

These developments on the one hand brought broad masses on to the path of militant struggles and on the other caused to the rise of an extremist trend in INC which advocated a line of mass agitations to bring pressure on the British rulers. By then the nationalist revolutionaries already began their activities by drawing inspiration from the Russian nihilists. By 1980s Chapekar brothers and Savarkar began their revolutionary activities. In Bengal from 1905 revolutionaries started publishing *Yugantar*. However the activities of these nationalist revolutionaries which were petti-bourgeois in nature confined to some individual actions. The Hindu revivalist tendency among these revolutionaries was another important drawback of their movement. Despite of all their weaknesses the activities of these early revolutionaries at that time contributed to the spread of patriotic and revolutionary ideas among the people.

At this juncture there was a split in INC between the extremists and moderates. Gokhale and others who contented with appealing and petitioning to the British government were considered as moderates and Tilak and others who advocated the adoption of mass mobilisation to pressurise the rulers were considered as the extremists. The difference between these two factions in Congress was in all essential regarding the way the of struggle but not the main objectives of the struggle. Tilak who first gave the slogan “independence is my birth right” was always ready to accept the dominion status. Arabindo Ghosh, another prominent Congress extremist leader who almost all chalked out the later day Gandhian political programme with *swadeshi*, civil disobedience, social boycott etc, of course with all the significant exception of the deceptive non-violent struggle, blatantly rejected the call of no-rent or no-tax struggle as it hurts the patriotic Zamindars.

Thus with all its factional differences and frictions the INC leadership firmly stood to safeguard the basic interest for which it was established and acted in that frame work only. Here it is necessary to note that when the Congress extremism was in the saddle INC leaders started meddling politics with religion and started adopting the Hindu revivalism and obscurantism both explicitly and disguisedly.

In 1906 Calcutta Congress session the extremists got the majority and they formulated a new programme of which the important aspects are these:

1. For the first time the INC declared the achievement of *swarajya*, the rule of natives under the colonial regime, as its goal.
2. Boycott of foreign goods.
3. Swadeshi movement, i.e. encouraging the domestic industries and using goods produced in India.
4. Effort towards spreading national education.

This programme clearly reflects the interests of the comprador big bourgeoisie. The Indian bourgeoisie which was not in a position to compete with the English industrial goods because of the discriminatory taxation of the colonial regime tried to survive by adopting the slogans of the boycott of foreign goods and the *swadeshi*. Throughout the period of freedom movement these slogans remained in focus. The swadeshi movement considerably helped the Indian bourgeoisie to grow. However the Indian big bourgeoisie due to its comprador nature never tried to develop indigenous technology and to achieve independent economic development without the dependency on imperialism for necessary means of production especially for machinery. In this way while chanting the *swadeshi mantra* it wilfully continued its dependency on imperialism.

By this time a nationalist mass movement started to grow rapidly around the demand to repeal the division of Bengal, which was actually aimed to disrupt the nationalist unity of Bengal then the main centre of nationalist ideas. This division of the state ignited the growing discontent of the masses and resulted in a broad mass struggle, the *vande mataram* movement. It was during this movement the *swadeshi* slogan that represented the bourgeoisie interests became popular and remained in vogue throughout the freedom movement.

It was during this struggle the proletariat came to the fore of the political arena of India as a new historical force. Thousands of Bombay workers led a historic militant struggle in 1908 in protest against the arrest of Tilak and they made a six day political struggle, from 23rd July to 28th July, for the six year sentence given to him. Commending the first political struggle of the Indian proletariat Lenin commented that Indian working class emerged as a political force.

The divide and rule policy of British in case of the division of Bengal actually backfired and triggered in a mass fury countrywide and became a rallying point for the masses against colonial rule. Recognising this, the colonial rulers decided to backtrack and overturn the division. But before withdrawing the division they unleashed repression and jailed the congress extremist leadership to deny it the credit. It was in 1911, only after the movement receded they quashed the division.

Strictly adhering to its Machiavellian carrot and stick policy, while unleashing repression they brought forward the Minto-Marley reforms which could accommodate some Indians elected indirectly and constitute a minority into the central legislative. In the state legislatures which have no control over administration and government's revenue and expenditure the elected members constitute the majority. These reforms which provide no share in power actually aimed at placating the Congress leadership with the decorative legislative posts.

The Activities of the Nationalist Revolutionaries

The patriotic middle class youth, disgusted even with the programme and methods of the congress extremists treaded the revolutionary path. From 1902 itself the *Anushilan Samithi* started working in Calcutta and it started publishing a weekly *Yugantar* since 1906. The activities of the samithi increased rapidly and it had a strong network especially in East Bengal. Even after the quashing of the division of Bengal the activities of the revolutionaries extended rapidly. The activities of Ras Bihari Bose and others spread over Punjab, Delhi and U.P. Nationalist revolutionary groups abroad had been working in Paris, Geneva, San Francisco and Berlin. The Gadar party born in America in 1913 emerged as the most influential among them with its broad mindedness and progressive ideology. It is significant that it had secular ideas and grasped the long and protracted nature of the

Indian independence movement and the necessity of waging a war against the colonialists by building an army. When imperialism was on the verge of its first world war the activities of nationalist revolutionaries in India and abroad developed rapidly, whereas the INC fell into a deep slumber.

During the First World War

The intensification of the general crisis in imperialism and the resultant imperialist scramble for markets lead to the First World War in 1914. The war aimed at the re-division of the world market among the major imperialist countries affected the political, economic and social conditions of India significantly.

During the war the Indian big bourgeoisie firmly stood by the side of the British and the INC extended its support to the Britain's war effort. Gandhi, who still not entered the Congress politics was in South Africa, at the beginning of the war he wrote a letter to the Queen expressing his readiness to extend his cooperation to the crown at its trying times.

The Defense of India Act was brought in to suppress the people and the nationalists and revolutionaries were imprisoned in a big way. The War turned out to be a boon to the Indian big bourgeoisie that thrived and rapidly developed by taking advantage of the war contracts. While the masses bore the burnt of war burden by facing all sorts of hardships due to the soaring prices and scarcity of necessities, the Indian big bourgeoisie by serving the British imperialism as its most subservient accomplice expanded its own economic might during War. The resultant industrial expansion lead to the growth of Indian proletariat too. By 1914 the number of companies registered and their capital increased to 2,553 and Rs.72.10 crores respectively from 1,360 and Rs.36.82 crores in 1900. During the War the British imperialism recognised that a minimum level of industrialization of India was essential for its own interests and instituted the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916. During the War the number of joint-stock companies increased from 2,553 to 2,786 and their capital increased from Rs.72.10 crores to Rs.106.61 crores. The total number of workers employed in textile industry increased to 2,82,000 from 2,60,000 and the production of textiles increased by one third. Thriving on the war profits, Tata Iron and Steel Company established two hydro-electric power plants in 1915 and in 1919. The

Indian Industrial Commission gave the assurance that the excise duties were not bound to be increased. With the huge profits it was reaping the Indian big bourgeoisie felt the investment opportunities were quite insufficient to it.

Along with the advancement of the industry the number of workers too rose considerably during the war. The total number of workers employed in the industries using heavy machinery in 1919 was 13.65 lakhs, of which 3.62 lakhs were in cotton weaving and spinning mills, 1.40 lakhs in cotton ginning mills, 2.76 lakhs were in jute factories and 1.26 were in railway factories. There were 2.80 lakhs of coal miners too. Despite its growth in numbers, the living conditions of the Indian working class deteriorated during the War and contributed to the mighty upsurge of working class struggles after war.

The Activities of the Nationalist Revolutionaries

Aiming to achieve the liberation of our country by taking advantage of the War the nationalist revolutionaries intensified their activities. At one point of time the number of troops in the country even fell to 15,000. The revolutionaries by using this situation tried to make a revolt with the help of Germany and Turkey. The Revolutionary actions extensively took place in Bengal under the leadership of Baga Jatin. Revolutionaries under the leadership of Ras Bihari Bose, Sachin Sanyal and others too intensified their activities. Narendra Bhattacharjee (M.N. Roy) was sent to Jawa to secure arms from Germany and the effort met with failure. It was in this period, Veerendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Datt and others formed the Indian Independence Committee (Berlin Committee) in Berlin.

The Gadar party that was active in conducting revolutionary activities among Indians living in USA and Canada basing itself in the former, and the Berlin Committee, Baga Jatin and Ras Bihari Bose together planned and tried to enact a mutiny in the army. They planned to liberate Punjab first with the mutiny of army and then to conduct war with the aim of liberating the country by 1925. The revolutionaries in India intensified their activities in anticipation of getting arms on a large scale, as the Gadar party was securing them. The Gadar party had established contacts with the Indian army abroad and in India too the revolutionaries established strong relations with some regiments. These efforts of mutiny reflect the partial maturity of

Indian revolutionaries. Despite the all important weakness of neglecting the role of masses, their strategy of liberating Punjab first by making a mutiny in the army and then proceeding to liberate entire country by conducting revolutionary war over a long period, was qualitatively different from those of the individual actions of the first generation of revolutionaries.

However the plan was failed even before its implementation, because the government secured entire plan of the rebellion with all details and acted well in advance to crush the brewing revolt. It disarmed the regiments in Punjab that were affected with revolutionary ideas and arrested most of the revolutionaries who came to India to participate in the revolt. However the activities of Gadar revolutionaries provided great impetus to the revolutionary movement in India. The *kamagatamar* rebellion of the same period which took place under the leadership of Gadar revolutionaries in particular inspired the revolutionaries and the patriots greatly.

The plans of Indian revolutionaries were though foiled but succeeded in raising the wrath against the colonial rulers and in spreading the message of driving them out by using force among the peoples of India. It was during this period the nationalist revolutionaries of India started to attract towards socialism and communism under the influence of October Revolution. They even played a significant role in the efforts made to establish Communist Party of India. The H.R.A. of later days clearly promulgated its aim as ending the system of exploitation of one man by another. The sacrifices, bravery and valor of the revolutionaries were not wasted they provided impetus for the great struggles waged by Indian people to achieve complete independence in the post war period. The efforts of the nationalist revolutionaries too played an important role in forcing the INC to give the call, against its will, for complete independence amidst the mighty mass upsurge of 1920s .

During War the extremist and moderate factions of INC closed their ranks and extended their unequivocal support to Britain. Gandhi, the exponent of non-violence who returned to India on the suggestion of Queen in 1915, collected war contributions in association with Tilak. They even expected to get home rule from the colonial rulers in return of the loyalty they were showing. Tilak taking a moderate stand joined hands with Anne Besant and established the Home Rule League and propagated for it. However she

abandoned it with Mantagu's assurance of the "responsible" government and Tilak too lost his interest in it.

In the devastating War that was waged for the right to plunder the backward countries by the imperialist powers, Gandhi, the champion and the 'sage' of non-violence unabashedly took the side of British imperialism. He never condemned the imperialist war for colonies that was causing enormous human loss and misery unprecedented in history or preached his doctrine to the imperialists the worst perpetrators of inhuman violence against the mankind. Instead he conducted campaigns in support of the British pillagers by urging the Indian people to join the army to become the cannon fodder in the imperialist war and collected war funds from the enslaved people of India to strengthen the imperialist strangle hold of British over the colonial world. It is evident from it that the doctrine of non-violence that he promulgated throughout his political life was actually aimed at disarming the oppressed masses and denying them their inalienable natural right to defend themselves from the oppression and to overthrow the cruel, oppressive and exploitative regime.

During the War the simmering peasant and adivasi unrest continued and resulted in militant struggles. Chenchu tribe of Nallamala forests revolted in this period in Cudapah and Nellore districts. Rampa the synonym of revolt made another rebellion in 1916 and it was proved to be a precursor of the historic and famous *pituri* of 1922-'24 led by Alluri. The adivasis of Bastar and Dasapalla, Orans and Mundas of Chota Nagpur, Santhals of Mayurbhanj, Tode kukis of Manipur and Bhils of Rajasthan made heroic struggles in this period. These tribal struggles apart, there was an upsurge of peasant struggles of which Champaran of Bihar, and Keda of Gujarath were the prominent ones. South India and Bengal witnessed the spurt of caste movements against the hegemony of upper castes. In this way the stage was set for the countrywide mass upsurge in the post war period.

The Post-War Upsurge

The devastating effects of war such as the chaotic conditions of the economy, the falling living standards of the masses and the rampant unemployment lead to serious unrest and frustration among the working class and to the wave of strikes. The October Revolution and socialist ideology

had made a profound impact over the post-war working class struggles. Even though the number of working class leaders and activists who were influenced by the October Revolution was small in number at that time, the seeds were sown to establish a left wing in the working class movement. A government report described the industrial unrest in India at that time was similar to that of the situation before the October Revolution.

The wave of strikes during the period 1918-21 indicates the emergence of working class as a formidable social force in India. More than one lakh Bombay textile industry workers made a one month strike in 1919. 17,000 strong workers of woolen mills made a seven week long strike in 1919. 40,000 workers of Tata Iron and Steel Works lead a one month strike. By the end of 1920 all the industrial centers in India simmering with industrial unrest and agitations. It was in this background the post-war nationalist upsurge began.

The British government, when the War was still continuing especially after the overthrow of the Czarist regime in Russia, started to play the card of reforms to pacify and prevent Indians from converging on a revolutionary path of liberation. By introducing some constitutional reforms the government attempted to create an impression that it was on the way of conceding self-governance to Indians without actually offering anything even remotely related to that. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in the form of the Indian Government Act of 1919 approved the establishment of Central and Provincial Legislative Councils.

The establishment of these councils which had no real political and economic powers was not at all the share in the power that had been demanded by congress since war time. Thus these reforms failed to satisfy even the INC leadership. So the time was on for the INC leadership to adopt its pressure tactics to demand its own pound of flesh for its loyal services to the Crown during the War.

The post-war nationalist upsurge marked by the emergence of two important factors that could decisively influence the later course of the history of India. The emergence of working class as a formidable social force and the growing influence of Bolshevism both on working class and on nationalist forces especially on the revolutionaries was one such an important factor. However there emerged an important counter weight to this

in the emergence of Gandhi as the leader of INC. Even though it is a digression we feel it necessary to examine briefly the emergence of Gandhi and the role he played in India's freedom struggle.

The Making of 'Mahatma'

The INC leadership and the classes whose interests it was largely representing discovered in Gandhi the suitable leader who has been able to achieve its own demand of self governance under the colonial regime without antagonising the British and rupturing the alliance the Indian big bourgeoisie had with feudalism and imperialism; and at the same time assuming the role of leading the nationalist upsurge of Indian masses whose interests and aspirations were clearly anti-imperialist and anti-feudal. Certainly such a task requires not only a genius of tactician but an extraordinary skill of political acrobatics that defies any logic and an ideology that shrouded in mysticism and an acceptability of a religious teacher. Gandhi the politician and the ideologue endowed with all these. However his rise to the status of Mahatma was largely attributable to the play of concrete historical course and forces of his times just like in case of any great historical persona.

Gandhi who always espoused unbridled faith and loyalty towards the British rulers aspired to bring back the old feudal order in the name of *Rama rajya*. In this regard he was the most reactionary of all the prominent leaders of INC. He opposed not only modern industry but everything modern including the modern medicine. He dreamt of clocking back the history to establish the old feudal village order based on the *varnashrama dharma*. Even before his baptism into Congress, Gandhi experimented with the doctrine of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* struggle in South Africa. He taught them to the people of South of Africa who were then fighting against the racial discrimination of Whites. His doctrine of *ahimsa* in practice denies the inalienable right of masses to protest resist and revolt against the tyranny and oppression of the ruling classes and its state. It in fact tried to disarm the people in the face of brutal repression during the course of freedom movement and hampered and ultimately contributed to the betrayal of it.

Gandhi tried to implement his doctrine of *dharma kartritva* that opposes the class struggle and advocates the class amity. He tried to lead the Champaran and Kheda peasant struggles and the Bardoli struggle in the later

period on the basis of his class amity doctrine. He even tried to bring the working class under the influence of his class amity doctrine and build Gandhian trade unions in Ahmedabad textile mill workers. Thus his *dharma kartritva* doctrine in practice is nothing but the endeavor to establish the hegemony of comprador bourgeoisie and feudal forces over the day today class struggles of the oppressed masses.

The patrons of Gandhi, both the imperialist and Indian never seriously considered nor really tried to implement his irrational, ahistorical, political and economic ideas or teachings. They recognised him and his ideas as the most effective means to establish and maintain the control of comprador classes over the nationalist movement even in a most revolutionary situation.

In fact the Hindu *peer's* ascendancy to the political leadership of the Indian comprador classes was to some extent paved by the Hindu revivalism that became a dominant trend by the end of 19th century and the sway of religion over politics at that time. The roots of this religious revivalism lay in the distorted path of development under colonialism and the impotency of the Indian bourgeoisie in fulfilling the tasks of democratic revolution.

By the end of 19th century when modern industry making a dent on the Indian soil and when the Indian bourgeoisie is emerging as a dominant social force, instead of the spread of modern and scientific outlook religious revivalism became a predominant one even in English educated. The social reform movement of the period of Ram Mohan Roy failed to progress towards the complete renunciation of religious obscurantism and superstitions and adoption of modern scientific outlook and thus paving the ideological preparation for the bourgeois democratic revolution. Instead a strong trend of glorifying the past and a stance of everything was there in Vedas gained currency.

It may look paradoxical when the English educated elite was organizing itself and when bourgeoisie was becoming a strong economic and social force, instead of the emergence of strong reform movement that could swept away the Aegean stables of the decadent Indian feudal obscurant ideology, the revivalism and the nominal reforms aimed at the continuation and the propping up of feudal society and culture became predominant. But

it is quite natural as the Indian big bourgeoisie grownup on the basis of feudal relations not on their ruins and as it is not a class that could abolish feudal relations but makes them as prop. As the basis of the Hindu revivalism and its off-shoot Hindu chauvinism were nothing but the semi-feudal and colonial relations their coexistence with the modernity is not a paradox but the phenomenon emerged out of the concrete historical conditions of India..

The most “progressive”, “revolutionary” and even “socialist” Hindu religious reformist and *vedantin* Vivekananda who had not only a “modern vision” but great mass appeal proclaimed “*Study the history of whole world, and you will see that every high ideal you meet with anywhere had its origin in India.*”³

The Hindu revivalism has its political role to play as the Indian big bourgeoisie which has no revolutionary programme to mobilise masses and inevitably had its sway over INC. Even though Vivekananda said the following in different context it aptly represents the situation at that time from the point of view of the bourgeoisie who wedded to feudalism in India: “*If you want to speak of politics in India, you must speak through the language of religion.*”⁴

Despite its endeavor to project itself as a secular organisation the INC leadership maintained close relations with Hindu chauvinist forces and with the Hind Maha Sabha. Without having either anti-feudal or anti-imperialist programme it used religion as the rallying point. The extremist fraction under the leadership of Tilak imported religion into politics in a big way and the INC leaned towards religious revivalism instead of social reformism. In the process it transformed into an organisation having strong leanings of revivalism. The mixing of religion with politics that began with Tilak reached to its peak with Gandhi. While preaching Hindu-Muslim unity Gandhi actually stood for the Hindu revivalism. The Muslim chauvinism and revivalism too grew as a corollary of the Hindu religious chauvinism and religious revivalism. In the Hindu-Muslim divide that lead to unprecedented communal carnage in the later days, the divide and rule diplomacy of British too played a crucial role.

Keeping in view of all these neither the emergence of Gandhi as the *Mahatma* nor his leadership over freedom movement were not at all spon-

taneous developments. They are the creation of the concrete socio-economic, political, cultural and philosophical circumstances that born out of and stood for the semi-feudal and colonial relations. The comprador classes and British imperialism found in Gandhi the leadership qualities that could save them from the mighty upsurge of mass struggles. With the extensive propaganda, even through spread of rumors they tried their best to sell Gandhi as Mahatma. On his turn Gandhi with his ambiguous political action and slogans pretended to be reflecting the real aspirations of the oppressed masses. Peasantry hoped that Gandhi liberate them from feudalism even though he clearly supporting the Zamindars and rulers of the princely states. The landless rural poor expected that he will provide them land. Gandhi the champion of truth however never condemned such propaganda. He left the concept of independence in vague terms so as to make it interpretable as one likes. In this way Gandhi tried to bring all the sections of the masses under his leadership.

Thus the comprador bourgeoisie and feudal forces found in and made him the most able and efficient leader who can safeguard their interests in the context of mighty mass upsurge of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic struggle. The great tragedy in modern Indian history is that the leader of those comprador classes succeeded in gaining the acceptability of the oppressed masses as their own leader.

The Struggle against Rowlatt Act

True to its carrot and stick policy the British while enacting the drama of Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, unleashed severe repression. The revolutionaries were tried and the capital punishments were awarded in a big way. On the suggestions of Rowlatt Committee Rowlatt Act was made in 1919. The black act that allows the arrest of any person without showing any charge met with countrywide dissent.

Gandhi gave a call to countrywide *satyagraha* in protest against the Rowlatt Act. In the conditions of countrywide mass unrest the *satyagraha* movement started and soon became a big mass movement. The British government resorted to cruel repression to suppress the movement. Dyer conducted a massacre on the peaceful gathering, protesting the arrest of Gandhi, in Jallianwallabagh. The massacre was condemned by every body including the moderates of the Congress. However Gandhi condemned the

violent protest of the masses against the massacre by saying he made mistake of the proportion of Himalayas by giving call to the struggle and he condemned the violent acts of the masses. He withdrew the struggle 'temporarily' when the movement was at its height and thereby he echoed the interests of the comprador classes which were seeing in him as the man of the hour.

Till the end Gandhi continued this practice of coming forward as the leader of mighty upsurge of mass struggle and blaming the masses with the accusation that they resorted to violence, and demanding them to accept the savage repression of the colonial regime without showing any resistance. The colonial rulers aspired of him nothing else than that and hence they too praised him as Mahatma of course for the sake of public consumption.

The Non-Cooperation Movement

On the heels of the Rowlatt movement the Khilafat movement came to the fore. Britain restricted the territory of Turkey and the powers of Khalifa – the sultan. Demanding the restoration of Khilafat powers and territory the Khilafat movement gained momentum. In India Mohammad Ali and Shoukat Ali started the Khilafat committee and started gathering the support of Muslims all over the country. The Muhajir movement aimed at migrating to Afghanistan to live on the soil of Islam also began as a part of this Khilafat movement.

The Congress under the leadership of Gandhi gave a call to the non-cooperation movement in the background of countrywide mass unrest. The movement that began in September 1920 declared its aim as the attainment of swarajya through peaceful and lawful means. The non-cooperation programme consists of three points:

1. The boycott of legislatures, courts, educational institutions and titles.
2. Making yarn on charakha in every house.
3. Non-payment of taxes.

In these except the third point nothing could cause any problem to the government. However the first two points were put in to practice and the non-payment of taxes shelved as the time was not yet 'matured'. The move-

ment spread rapidly and significantly the movement now got the support of masses and turned out to be a real mass movement, of course not strictly confining to the limits imposed by the Gandhian leadership. Quite often the masses tuned the movement on to the path of militancy much to the dislike of its leader. The struggle acquired an all India and broad mass nature. The movement started acquiring the nature of a rebellion as the masses targeting the government machinery and properties. The movement started show up the signs of getting out of the control and limits of the leadership. The Congress and its leader actually started worrying about the rapid expansion of the movement they started.

Gandhi boasted of achieving *swarajya* in a year with this limited programme. But it was no where in sight and the movement getting out of control of the bounds of Gandhian non-violence. In the same period peasant struggles broke out in U.P. and Kerala. The strike wave of working class that broke out in all major industrial centers was threateningly acquiring a militant nature. The Indian working class even began organised trade union struggles and started consolidating itself into AITUC. All these developments were certainly not to the liking of leading forces of INC and especially to Gandhi.

Gandhi succeeded in thrusting the *satyagraha* methods on the Khilafat movement too. He even became the president of the Khilafat committee. By using all the mass strength and building pressure on the British he hoped to achieve *swarajya*. But the government not relented and resorted to the suppression of the movement by using brutal repression. Gandhi who vowed either to achieve *swarajya* in one year or to sacrifice his life, disheartened with the adamant attitude of the government which was not even ready to yield him any ground to save his face as the mass movement showing the tendency of growing into a mighty upsurge and the signs of developing into a higher stage disregarding the Gandhian limits.

On 12th April 1919 Gandhi released the code of conduct that should be fallowed strictly by the *satyagrahis*: **The volunteers should not make processions, organised demonstrations and hartals; there should be no violence at all and no stone throwing. The tram cars and traffic should not be obstructed; there should be no putting up of pressure against anybody. In public meetings there should be no clapping; no**

expressions of acceptance or of disagreement; no shouting of shame, shame; no roaring of jubilation. The volunteers should practice complete restraint; they should obey the instructions of their organisers.⁵

The *satyagraha* movement thus architected by Gandhi is in fact aimed at dissipating the consciousness of the masses and to undermine the might of their organised struggles. The struggling masses however besides showing reverence towards Gandhi the ‘*Mahatma*’ quite often transgressed all those restrictions and resisted the brutal repression of the colonialists. Militant struggles became quite common and in the fury of mass revolts the courts, railway stations, government offices, transport and communication facilities were targeted.

Throughout the period of freedom movement the people of our country fought heroically transgressing the Gandhian limits. Depicting Indian freedom movement as a non-violent struggle is nothing but falsification of history because throughout the movement people treaded the militant path of struggle and thousands laid down their lives in the course. The growing militancy of masses naturally made both the comprador classes and their leader restive. The famous Chauri Chaura incident came in handy to provide Gandhi with an excuse to withdraw the struggle, that was growing like a volcano out of the bounds of his limitations. In Chauri Chaura when a peaceful demonstration was attacked by police without any provocation the villagers en masse chased the police in and set fire to the police station. The incident in which 22 policemen died proved to be the litmus test of nationalism and patriotism of both the Indian big bourgeoisie and the INC leadership.

*“British alarm at the incident was vividly reflected by the fact that the sessions court initially sentenced no less than 172 of the 225 Chauri Chaura accused to death (eventually 19 were hanged, and the rest transported). It must remain a shame that there were virtually no nationalist protest against the barbarous attempt to take 172 lives in return for the 22 policemen killed – the only recorded protests being those made by M.N.Roy’s émigré Communist journal, Vanguard, and by the Executive Committee of the Communist International – and that even today at Chauri Chaura there remains a police memorial, but nothing in honour of the peasant martyrs.”*⁶

With the lame excuse of Chauri Chaura incident Gandhi without even consulting the Congress Working Committee withdrew the struggle and as a result both the prestige of INC and Gandhi dipped low. People got disillusioned with Gandhi who vowed in 1920 to achieve *swarajya* within one year. The disillusionment was so widespread that when Gandhi was arrested and awarded a six year sentence in 1922 “*there was not a ripple of protest anywhere in India when Gandhi went to jail.*”⁷

The withdrawal of the movement frustrated the patriotic youth both inside and outside of Congress. They started probing an alternative revolutionary path. The path of armed struggle that was in existence well before the emergence of Gandhian path, now came to the fore again with more progressive ideology and greater prudence. The activities of the revolutionaries started to grow countrywide. Simultaneously *Manyam* revolt of adivasi peasantry surged to the fore under the leadership of legendry Alluri Sita Rama Raju. The patriotic youth like Bhagath Singh and Chandra Sekhar Azad under the influence of Bolshevism had been striving to find a correct revolutionary path by recognising masses as the real makers of history.

In 1924 the nationalist revolutionaries who attempted to kill the notorious Commissioner of Police of Calcutta were hanged to death. The famous revolutionary Gopinath Saha inspired the Indian people by thundering from the gallows that “*each drop of my blood should sprout the seeds of freedom in every household of India.*” In 1923 Sachindranath Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterji and others formed Hindustan Republican Association (HRA). Its activities spread from Bihar to Punjab. In the later period the great revolutionary Bhagath Singh and the prominent Communist leader Ajay Ghosh baptised into nationalist revolutionary movement through this organisation. Under the leadership of the former the organisation reorganised and reoriented into Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) which declared that its aim is not only to achieve freedom but also to establish a society in which exploitation and oppression of one by another should come to an end.

Thus after Gandhi’s betrayal to the non-cooperation movement while the nationalist revolutionaries probing the alternative path of armed struggle to achieve freedom, the process of establishing its vanguard – the Communist Party by Indian proletariat too began. Congress again fell into inactivity.

In such a historical juncture the historical task of establishing the proletarian leadership over the Indian national movement and the possibilities to achieve it were present before the then germinating Communist Party of India that was emerging as the leading detachment of the militant working class. And also present were the possibilities to form a militant communist party by absorbing the nationalist revolutionaries who at that time stood as the epitomes of patriotic valour and sacrifice; by rooting out the idealist conception of history that was wide spread in them and implanting the mass line in place of it, and providing the scientific and proletarian world out look to them. In fact the nationalist revolutionaries abroad at that time were actually striving to form CPI.

1

Colonialism and International Communist Movement

Ever since working class emerged as a significant political force, it has been fighting against colonialism. In England Chartist movement and its journals advocated widely against colonialism. Chartist leader, Ernest Jones exposed England's colonial policy of waging wars in colonies to suppress the freedom of its own people. He had rightly foreseen and stated about the inevitable revolt (1857) in India. Robert Owen commended the First War of Indian Independence of 1857. Thus the anti-colonial tradition had existed in the international working class movement from the time of Chartist movement.

Marx and Engels scientifically explained their views on the national liberation struggles of suppressed nations and its bearing on the world revolutionary process, the relationship between the national liberation movement and the international workers movement, the attitude of the proletariat in the metropolitan countries towards the colonial policies of their governments, and the allies of the proletariat in the revolution. They unequivocally opposed the arguments of Bakuninists that the rule of capitalist countries over the colonies will facilitate the spread of culture and civilisation in those backward countries and thus the colonial rule is beneficial to the peoples of colonies. Marx stated in his debate with Bakuninists *"The nation which oppresses others forges its own chains."*¹ The First International rejected Bernstein's justifying description of colonialism as the *"culture spreading mission of capitalism."*²

Marx and Engels backed the historical right of oppressed peoples to fight for their liberation. They called in the English working class and the international worker's movement to support the Irish peoples struggle for their liberation. *"For a long-time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendancy... Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will never accomplish anything until it has got rid of Ireland. The lever*

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must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general.”³

Marx and Engels recognised the relationship between the national liberation movements and the socialist revolution. Marx in his article on **Revolution in China and in Europe** stated thus:

*“It may seem a very strange and very paradoxical assertion that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and the next movement for Republican freedom and Economy or Government may depend more probably on what is now passing in the celestial Empire - the very opposite of Europe - than any other political cause that now exists ...”*⁴

Marx, in his January 1858 letter to Engels, observed regarding the revolt in India that *“by drawing away people and money”*⁵ the rebellion in India became an objective factor contributing to the working class struggle in England.

By the middle of 19th century capitalism with its colonial bonds made the entire world its market. Consequently capitalism took birth and started to grow up in colonies and semi-colonies. At first Marx and Engels felt that the capitalist stage is inevitable even to the colonies and semi-colonies. Thus the issue that confronted them was that a contradictory situation in which on the one side revolution in Europe is in socialist revolutionary stage and on the other side in the vast backward world capitalism is still developing. In other words, doesn't the developing capitalism in the rest of the world crush the revolution in Europe even the conditions are matured?

*“The difficult question for us is this: on the continent the revolution is imminent and moreover immediately assume a socialist character. Is it not bound to be crushed in this little corner, considering that in a far great territory the movement of Bourgeoisie society is still in the ascendant?”*⁶

This question naturally made them to take up an in depth study on the specific nature of capitalist relations in colonies and the peculiar character of their social evolution. As a result they solved this riddle. They came to the conclusion that, passing through capitalist stage is not inevitable for the development of colonies. They felt it is possible that without capitalist stage these countries could reach socialism. Thus they came to the conclusion that if the revolution in Europe is successful, with the help of these coun-

tries backward countries could develop their productive forces and reach socialism.

“This example will show the backward countries how this is done, how to make the productive forces of modern industry, which have been turned to public property, serve to whole of society in general. Only then those backward countries will be able to embark on this shortened road of development.”⁷

During the lifetime of Engels itself, the tendency of supporting the colonialism had been developing in the social democratic movement. The opinion, that with the profits from the colonies, the whole of European working class could develop further, has gained support. This tendency has gained strength by the time of Stuttgart congress of the Second International. The “Socialist Colonial Policy” proposed by Dutch social Democrat Vonkol was rejected. But it is worth noting that this resolution got 108 votes in favour (128 votes against). These Socialist Colonialists argued that the capitalist colonialism will advance the revolutionary movements in the backward uncivilized countries.

Lenin fought against this tendency of shameless support to capitalism and its oppression of peoples. He explained how the capitalism is leading a parasitic life through oppression of the colonial countries. He made it clear that any one who refused to condemn the national oppression can not be an internationalist. Lenin stated that the right to self-determination of nations is a step towards the international federation.

According to Lenin the national liberation movements in colonial, semi-colonial countries are the strategic reserves of world socialist revolution. These are part and parcel of world socialist revolution. *“..imperialism means that capital has outgrown the framework of national states. It means that national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation. Hence it follows that we must link the revolutionary struggle for socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question.”⁸*

The Third International in its first Congress held in Moscow from March 2 to 6, 1919 stated its stand on colonial and semi-colonial question: *“The Comintern considers it is obligatory task to establish a permanent and close bond between the struggle of the proletariat in the imperialist*

countries and the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies and to support the struggle of oppressed peoples to facilitate the final destruction of the imperialist world system.”⁹

Lenin said that the duty of the socialists would be to “*render determined support to more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising - or revolutionary war, in the event of one - against the imperialist powers that oppress them.*”¹⁰

He further said to the communists of Eastern countries that “*...The majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the working people - not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories but typical representatives of the working people and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression.*”

“*...you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the communists of the world, relying upon the general theory and practice of communism you must adopt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries. You must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism.*”¹¹

With the victory of October revolution, the national liberation struggles of colonial and semi-colonial countries had reached a new stage. The Soviet Russia, which has implemented without any exceptions the right of self determination of the nationalities, has become friend and guide of the oppressed people. It has supported unequivocally the right of self determination of Persia, Turkey and Afghanistan. It also backed the national liberation struggles of China and India.

Under the guidance of Lenin Comintern gave committed support to the colonial and semi-colonial liberation movements. The salient features of Leninist ideology regarding revolutionary movements of colonies are as under:

1. Imperialism and feudalism are the two targets of the democratic revolution in the colonial, semi-colonial and backward countries.
2. This revolution shall mainly have the peasant character. Therefore,

the working class with the agrarian revolutionary programme have to consolidate the peasants and assume the leadership.

3. With the help of Soviet Russia and that of working class of developed countries these countries could achieve socialism without passing through the phase of capitalism. That means these countries have to create the material conditions required for socialism through non-capitalist path.
4. These countries must make the democratic revolution successful with the help of the United Front of peasants, workers and national bourgeoisie, with the alliance of workers and peasants as its foundation.
5. The national bourgeoisie shall have dual character and shows compromising attitude. Since the workers movement is in an embryonic stage, the united front with it becomes necessary. But during the course of emergence of working class as the leader of oppressed masses particularly of peasant masses, the national bourgeoisie may leave the united front.

Comintern tried to form and guide the Communist parties in colonies with this Leninist understanding. But due to the mechanical methods of the parties in the colonies and the leaders of the Comintern, the parties could not develop as per the Leninist understanding. It can be said that only CPC was the first country under the leadership of Mao could implement the Leninist understanding. Mao developed, through his theory of New Democratic Revolution, the Leninist understanding of the revolutions in the colonies into a general comprehensive revolutionary theory pertaining to colonies and semi-colonies. Although the NDR theory of Mao was developed based on the Chinese revolution, it proved to be the general revolutionary theory applicable to all colonies and semi-colonies.

In 1950 Cominform recognised the revolutionary path of China as the general path of revolutions in East. The theory of New Democratic Revolution emerged as an inalienable part of the development of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Mao described the stage of New Democratic Revolution as follows:
“In the course of its history the Chinese revolution must go through two

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stages, first, the democratic revolution, and second, the socialist revolution, and by their very nature they are two different revolutionary processes. Here democracy does not belong to the old category - it is not the old democracy, but belongs to the new category - it is New Democracy.”¹²

“A new democratic revolution is an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat. The new democratic revolution is vastly different from the democratic revolutions of Europe and America in that it results not in a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie but in a dictatorship of the united front of all the revolutionary classes under the leadership of the proletariat.”¹³

“Economically, it aims at the nationalisation of all the big enterprises and capital of the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, and the distribution among the peasants of the land held by the landlords, while preserving private capitalist enterprise in general and not eliminating the rich-peasant economy. Thus, the new type of democratic revolution clears the way for capitalism on the one hand and creates the prerequisites for socialism on the other. The present stage of the Chinese revolution is a stage of transition between the abolition of the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and the establishment of a socialist society, i.e., it is a process of new democratic revolution.”¹⁴

“To counter imperialist oppression and to raise her backward economy to a higher level, China must utilise all the factors of urban and rural capitalism that are beneficial and not harmful to the national economy and the people’s livelihood; and we must unite with the national bourgeoisie in common struggle. Our present policy is to regulate capitalism, not to destroy it.”¹⁵

Considering the social character the new democratic revolution is itself not socialist revolution, but it is an inalienable part of proletarian world socialist revolution.

“In this era, any revolution in a colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., against the international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, or no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category. It is no longer part of the old bourgeois, or capitalist, world revolution, but is part

of the new world revolution, the proletarian-socialist world revolution.”¹⁶

Lenin and Comintern also emphasised the united front of working class, peasantry, petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. But Mao recognised the comprador nature of the big bourgeoisie in colonial countries. He considered only middle bourgeoisie as national bourgeoisie. It implies that big bourgeoisie is a strategic enemy in new democratic revolution. Only tactical alliance is possible with it. Whereas he considered the national (i.e. middle) bourgeoisie as a vacillating ally that has dual nature. This classification of bourgeoisie into comprador and national cleared the confusion regarding the nature of colonial bourgeoisie in communist movement in general and communist parties in colonial countries in particular.

Mao brilliantly analysed and elucidated the different classes and forces, their inter relationships and the changes in those inter relationships at different stages of revolution. It is obvious from the fact that the tactics of united front became a “magic weapon” in Chinese revolution, united front played a key role in new democratic revolution.

In contrast to the dogmatic method of adopting Russian path of revolution universally, Mao creatively formulated the path of new democratic revolution in colonies and semi-colonies as the Protracted Peoples’ War. We can briefly sum up Mao’s formulation on the path of new democratic revolution as follows: **If a country is ruled directly or indirectly by some foreign imperialist power or powers and is semi-feudal where bourgeois democratic rights do not exist, the party of the proletariat from the very beginning arouses and mobilises the people for armed struggle, relies on the peasantry - the main force of revolution - makes backward rural areas its main centre of work, builds armed forces of the people and base areas in the countryside, enlarges them in the course of Protracted People’s War, encircles and finally captures cities to complete the new democratic revolution. In such a country the main form of struggle is armed struggle, but other forms of mass struggles and mass organisations also are indispensable. These mass organisation and mass struggle are the preparation for armed struggle before it breaks out and will serve it afterwards directly or indirectly. This was the path the Chinese revolution traversed to win the world shaking victory in 1949.**

Brief Summary

Marx and Engels correctly recognised the inalienable relationship between national liberation struggles and socialist revolution, and felt that these struggles contribute to the victory of the socialist revolution. They made it clear that the proletariat should extend its unequivocal support to these struggles as they bound to weaken capitalism. They recognised the fact that development of backward countries need not take the capitalist rout.

The imperialist stage of capitalism brought the world socialist revolution on to the agenda. Lenin considered the national liberation struggles in colonies as the reserves of world socialist revolution and hence directed his efforts towards linking them and building an alliance between them. With the victorious October revolution the democratic and national liberation struggles in the backward countries became a part of world socialist revolution and it became a great impetus for those struggles. Lenin emphasised the mainly peasant nature of these struggles and made it clear that only through emerging as the leader of the broad peasant masses with the adoption of agrarian revolutionary programme, the proletariat of these countries could successfully complete the democratic revolution and enter into socialism through a non-capitalist path. With this understanding Comintern began to build and guide communist parties in colonies and semi-colonies.

Mao too with this understanding formulated the general revolutionary line and New Democratic Revolutionary theory to those countries. The New Democratic Revolution which progresses through the path of protracted people's war with the agrarian revolution as its basis and the proletariat as its leader proved to the general revolutionary line of the backward countries.

2

Formation of Communist Party of India

October revolution began a new chapter in the history of National liberation struggles in colonies and semi-colonies. In India the growing national liberation movement and working class movement got new vigour and encouragement with the October revolution. In fact, the 1905 revolution itself infused powerful influence on the Indian revolutionary movement. But with October revolution both the working class and the national revolutionaries were attracted towards communism. Even among the patriotic and nationalist forces within the Congress also socialist ideas developed. As a whole October revolution has affected the independence movement. Particularly the middle class intellectuals were attracted towards communism and socialism. The vernacular press too influenced by the October revolution. The Indian politics as a whole were taking a left turn. As a result of this, Marxist Study Circles and Communist Groups were formed in India. Influenced by October revolution some revolutionaries established direct contacts with Comintern. October revolution is one of the important factors which prepared ground for the formation of Communist Party in India.

The Emergence of Indian Working Class as a Formidable Historical Force

During the First World War period industrial development has taken place in India to some extent. This has helped the Indian working class to strengthen itself numerically. According to ILO (International Labour Organisation) the number of factory workers has gone up during the period from (1910-1922) from 5 lakhs to 13.4 lakhs. In the post war crisis there has been unprecedented growth in the working class struggles. The number of strikes and its effect during the period 1918-21 has shown that Indian working class has emerged as a powerful force.

The Textiles workers strike in Ahmadabad was held in March 1918. In January 1919, more than one lakh Bombay Textile workers participated in

the strike for about a month. This struggle took place during the time when the “Home Rule League” was popular among people. The followers of Tilak tried to divert this struggle into the path of compromising. But workers rejected the Home Rule League leadership and continued their struggle. They achieved 20% rise in their wages. The tendency of organised industrial working class, rejecting its reformist leadership and fighting militantly was growing.

In November-December 1919 about 17,000 wool factory workers in Kanpur had participated in strike for seven weeks. In Feb-March 1920 about 40,000 Tata Iron and Steel Works workers struck work for one month. Similarly several strikes took place in Rangoon, Calcutta, Sholapur and Madras. In 1921 itself 396 strikes of considerable significance took place. About six lakh workers participated in these strikes. About 70 lakhs man days were lost due to these strikes. Workers from different industries such as textiles, jute, railways, coal-mines, plantations (Assam), tramways (Calcutta), ports, P & T etc., took part in these strikes. During the time when national movement was going on, workers quite often participated in political strikes also. In 1919 working class participated actively in the struggle against the Rowlett Act.

The political strikes in protest of the arrival of the Prince of Wales were important ones. The Bombay workers fought militantly in those strikes. They engaged in street fights and 30 died. Ahmadabad workers took the city under their control on 11th and 12th April 1919. Government property was destroyed on a large scale. The army took back the control of the city after killing 30 persons and injuring many.

Formation of AITUC

During this time the formation of systematic trade unions also developed. All these developments had prepared ground for the consolidation of the Indian working class on national level. On 7th July 1920 Bombay workers decided to organise the All India Trade Union Congress. The inaugural congress of AITUC took place between 31st October and 2nd November 1920.

801 delegates from all parts of the country attended this congress. 106 Trade unions took affiliation and expressed their solidarity and support.

This congress represented 5 lakh workers (including 2 lakhs of mine workers)

Lala Lajpathi Rai as president and Joseph Baptista as vice-president were elected. Tilak was proposed as a second vice-president but he died before the congress took place. The standing committee meeting held subsequently elected Diwan Chamanlal as general secretary.

The formation of AITUC is a big step forward in the working class movement in India. But at that time the entire leadership was in the hands of Congress leaders and reformists. By 1920 many lower level Trade union organisers started leaning towards leftist views. These lower level Trade union organisers, who played an active role in the formation of working class movement, afterwards played crucial role in the formation of communist party.

The following are the main persons who worked hard in the initial period in the formation of workers movement.

From Madras: Kalyana Sundaram Mudaliar, E.L.Iyer, B.P.Wadia, Singaravelu Chettiar. From Bombay: Joseph Baptista, N.M.Joshi, R.S.S.Nimbkar, S.A.Dange, S.S.Mirajkar, K.S.Joglekar. From Bihar-Bengal coal mine workers Swami Viswananda. From Kanpur J.P.Mitter. The majority of those who worked as lower level organisers in workers movement also are the active workers in INC and Independence movement. Many of those organisers were attracted towards Leftist ideology and Communism by two important events. 1. October revolution; 2. loss of confidence in the leadership of Congress carrying the national movement.

Efforts of National Revolutionaries

The initial attempts to form the CPI were made in Russia. The Indian national revolutionaries who were living as emigrants in foreign countries made these attempts. Germany (Berlin), America (California) and Japan used to be the revolutionary centres before the first world war. These revolutionaries tried to launch the armed struggle in India with the help of Germany. The Gadar Party (under the leadership of Lala Haradaya) from America, "Berlin Committee" under the leadership of Virendra Nath Chatopadhyaya, the Provisional Government of Independent India from Kabul under the leadership of Raja Mahendra pratap and the group lead by

Ras Bihari Bose from Japan worked in close contact with each other. After defeat of Germany in the war and the failure of the rebellion by the Gadar party, these revolutionaries turned towards Russia for help. These revolutionaries, staying abroad had already been attracted towards Marxism, socialism and communism. The October revolution has further brought them closer to communism. In fact Virendranath Chatopadhyaya attempted to meet Lenin in Stockholm before the October revolution – after the February revolution. Some of the *Muhajirs* who reached Russia on their way to Turkey as a part of *Khilafat* movement also were attracted towards communism.

First Congress of Comintern

The first congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow from 2nd March to 6th March 1919, made its stand clear towards the national liberation struggles in Eastern countries.

Comintern resolved to work towards formation of communist parties in the eastern countries and to extend support to the national struggles for overthrowing imperialism.

*“The revolutionary task of the communist parties of the eastern countries must be projected in two directions. First, emerging out from the party’s revolutionary and fundamental programme i.e., to establish communist parties in the Eastern countries gradually. Second, emerging out from the current political, historical, social and economic situation, it becomes inevitable to extend support to the local national movements with the aim of overthrowing the west European imperialism. This support is extended only as long as these movements are not against the revolutionary aim of overthrowing the imperialism.”*¹

Second Congress of Comintern

The second congress of the Communist International, which laid the basis for the programme, tactical and organisational principles, met in Petrograd/Moscow from July 19 to August 7, 1920. It was attended by 169 delegates with the right to vote and 49 delegates with voice but no vote, representing 67 workers organisations from 37 countries. M.N.Roy attended this congress as a delegate of Mexican Communist Party. M.P.B.T

Acharya, Mohammed Shafique Siddique and Abani Mukherjee represented India without voting right.

This congress was held when the post-war revolutionary wave had been continuing in Europe. Detailed discussions were held in the congress regarding the national liberation struggles of colonial and semi-colonial countries. The congress formulated the Comintern's strategy and tactics towards these national liberation struggles. Lenin's Theses on National and Colonial Question were endorsed as congress decisions. In view of this, the second congress of the Comintern is very important as far as the communist movements in semi-colonial/colonial nations are concerned.

Lenin delivered the famous draft **Theses on National and Colonial Question** to the delegates of the congress for discussion. Lenin prepared the theses to enable implementation in practice the stand adopted by the first congress.

Lenin took M.N.Roy, who has been attempting to study the eastern question from Marxist standpoint, into the colonial commission. Lenin encouraged M.N.Roy to prepare supplementary theses to his theses on the national and colonial question particularly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries (China) oppressed by capitalist countries. The congress adopted the theses of Lenin with minor editorial amendments. Lenin and the Colonial Commission made several fundamental changes in Roy's Supplementary Theses. The fundamentally amended Supplementary Theses were also adopted by the congress.

Salient Features of Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Question

"2.As the conscious expression of the proletarian class struggle to shake off the yoke of the bourgeoisie, the communist party, in accordance with its chief task-which is to fight bourgeois democracy and expose its falseness and hypocrisy-should not advance abstract and formal principles on the national question, but should undertake first of all a precise analysis of the given environment, historical and above all economic;

"Secondly, it should specifically distinguish the interests of the oppressed classes, of the workers and the exploited, from the general concept

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of so-called national interests, which signify in fact the interests of the ruling class;

“Thirdly, it should as precisely distinguish the oppressed, dependent nations, unequal in rights, from the oppressing, exploiting nations with full rights, to offset the bourgeois-democratic lies which conceal the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world’s population by a small minority of the wealthiest and most advanced capitalist countries that is characteristic of the epoch of finance-capital and imperialism”.

“4.the entire policy of the Communist International on the national and colonial question must be based primarily on bringing together the proletariat and working classes of all nations and countries for the common revolutionary struggle for the over-throw of the landowners and the bourgeoisie. For only such united action will ensure victory over capitalism, without which it is impossible to abolish national oppression and inequality of rights”.

“6. At the present time, therefore, we should not restrict ourselves to a mere recognition or declaration of the need to bring the working people of various countries closer together; our policy must be to bring into being a close alliance of all national and colonial liberation movements with Soviet Russia; the forms taken by this alliance will be determined by the stage of development reached by the communist movement among the proletariat of each country or by the revolutionary liberation movement in the undeveloped countries and among the backward nationalities”.

“9.communist parties must give direct support to the revolutionary movements among the dependent nations and those without equal rights (e.g. in Ireland, and among the American Negroes), and in the colonies.

Without this last particularly important condition the struggle against the oppression of the dependent nations and colonies, and the recognition of their right to secede as separate states, remains a deceitful pretence, as it is in the parties of the Second International”.

“11. In regard to the more backward states and nations. Primarily feudal or patriarchal or patriarchal-peasant in character, the following considerations must be kept especially in mind:

“(a) All communist parties must support by action the revolutionary

liberation movements in these countries. The form which this support shall take should be discussed with the communist party of the country in question, if there is one. This obligation refers in the first place to the active support of the workers in that country on which the backward nation is financially, or as a colony, dependent”.

“(d) It is particularly important to support the peasant movement in the backward countries against the landlords and all forms and survivals of feudalism. Above all, efforts must be made to give the peasant movement as revolutionary a character as possible, organising the peasants and all the exploited wherever possible in Soviets, and thus establish as close a tie as possible between the West European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies and backward countries.

“(e) A resolute struggle must be waged against the attempt to clothe the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries which are not genuinely communist in communist colours. The Communist International has the duty of supporting the revolutionary movement in the colonies and backward countries only with the object of rallying the constituent elements of the future proletarian parties-which will be truly communist and not only in name-in all the backward countries and educating them to a consciousness of their special task, namely, that of fighting against the bourgeois-democratic trend in their own nation. The Communist International should collaborate provisionally with the revolutionary movement of the colonies and backward countries, and even form an alliance with it, but it must not amalgamate with it; it must unconditionally maintain the independence of the proletarian movement, even if it is only in an embryonic stage.

“(f) It is essential constantly to expose and to explain to the widest masses of the working people everywhere, and particularly in the backward countries, the deception practised by the imperialist powers with the help of the privileged classes in the oppressed countries in creating ostensibly politically independent states which are in reality completely dependent on them economically, financially, and militarily.”²

Lenin appreciated the discussion opened by Roy on the issue of reformist national bourgeois policy from the Indian experience. In order to be

careful about this, Lenin substituted the phrase **National revolutionary movement** for the phrase **Bourgeois- democratic movement**. By doing this he emphasised the struggle to be carried on the reformism.

The essence of Lenin's tactics of the proletariat in the backward countries is that on one hand we have to unite with that bourgeoisie which is leading and participating in the liberation struggles, and on the other we have to fight against the reformist bourgeoisie. The phrase **Bourgeoisie democratic liberation movement** applies to the ongoing liberation struggles in the colonies as a whole. Lenin felt that we should realise that we have to unite with the revolutionary part of that movement; there is reformist section also which is compromising with imperialism; we have to fight against this section. That was why Lenin used the phrase "Revolutionary Liberation movement: in lieu of **Bourgeoisie democratic movement**. With respect to revolutionary stage and revolutionary character both the phrases connote the same. So the amendment is only of explanatory nature but not a fundamental one.

M.N.Roy fundamentally differed with the theses of Lenin.

1. He argued for deleting the part (a) of the 11th thesis of Lenin. Roy's argument was that the bourgeoisie of the colonial countries has the tendency to compromise with the imperialism and hence Comintern must not support the national liberation struggles under its leadership. According to Roy the working class support to bourgeois-democratic liberation struggles in colonial countries amounts to help developing national spirit in the oppressed people and it hampers the development of class consciousness in the oppressed people. This argument is totally against Lenin's assessment, tactics and formulations.

*"The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support."*³

Not only that, the communism in colonial countries has to develop by taking advantage of the national consciousness of the people.

*"You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among these peoples [of the East], and which has its historical justification."*⁴

2. M.N.Roy argued that Comintern should not extend its support to the bourgeois national movements but to the working class and peasant movements which are existing “independently” of the former. Roy described the working class movements and the national liberation movements independent of each other. In support of his argument he said that in India working class movement is developing independent of the national bourgeois movement. As a matter of fact working class movements at that time were not independent but closely associated and working under bourgeois leadership. The primary task of the yet to be formed communist party is itself to win over the proletariat and other labouring masses under the leadership of the bourgeois. The description of national liberation movements and working class movements as independent of each and opposing each other, amounts to refusal to notice that Indian revolution was in the democratic revolutionary stage.

3. According to Roy India is not a feudalist country and capitalism had developed to a considerable extent. He justified his arguments by stating that in the post war period the investments had increased by 20 times, industrial proletariat had increased by 15% and 80% of the population was agricultural labour. But his statistics were assumptions. Lenin did not give any importance to these arguments not based on real facts. Lenin right from the beginning in his theses, speeches and writings described the relations of production in colonial countries as **predominantly pre-capitalist relations of production**.

This subjective assessment of Roy had naturally led him to overestimate the strength of the working class and its movement in colonies. The programme advocated by him for communist parties of backward countries, particularly Indian communist party was more or less like socialist revolutionary programme. That’s why building up of the communist party organisation which was **deep rooted in peasantry, trained and grown as political leader in the school of peasant movements** and agrarian revolutionary programme remained empty phrases to him.

4. According to Roy, the victory of communism depends on the success of revolutions in backward countries Lenin criticised this sectarian and left tendency. This tendency was very strong at that time in communists of Asian countries. For the sustenance of capitalism in the imperialist era

the colonial exploitation no doubt plays a crucial role. But, this argument over estimated the strength and stability of capitalism in developed countries. We may consider this argument as a manifestation of nationalist tendency in the communist movement of colonial countries.

5. Roy raised the question: Is it necessary for the colonial countries to follow the capitalistic path for its emancipation? In view of the above said sectarian weaknesses, Roy failed to formulate an alternative to capitalist path which the colonial countries could follow. From this question, Lenin reached the conclusion that National Democratic Revolution of the backward countries has to establish soviets in accordance with the respective conditions in those countries. Lenin explained how the national liberation revolution will reach socialism without passing through the phase of capitalism. (see Lenin's amendment to 9th supplementary theses.)

Salient Feature of Roy's Supplementary Theses as Adopted after Amendments

“7. There are to be found in the dependent countries two distinct movements which every day grow further apart from each other. One is the bourgeois democratic nationalist movement, with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order, and the other is the mass action of the poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from all sorts of exploitation. The former endeavour to control the latter, and often succeed to a certain extent, but the CI and the parties affected must struggle against such control and help to develop class consciousness in the working masses of the colonies. For the overthrow of foreign capitalism which is the first step toward revolution in the colonies the cooperation of the bourgeois nationalist revolutionary elements is useful.

But the foremost and necessary task is the formation of communist parties which will organise the peasants and workers and lead them to the revolution and to the establishment of Soviet Republics. Thus the masses in the backward countries may reach communism, not through capitalistic development, but led by the class conscious proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries”.

“9. Indeed, it would be extremely erroneous in many of the oriental countries to try to solve the agrarian problem according to pure communist

principles. In its first stages, the revolution in the colonies must be carried on with a programme which will include many petty bourgeois reform clauses, such as division of land, etc. But from this it does not follow at all that the leadership of the revolution will have to be surrendered to the bourgeois democrats. On the contrary, the proletarian parties must carry on vigorous and systematic propaganda of the Soviet idea and organise the peasants' and workers' Soviets as soon as possible. These Soviets will work in cooperation with the Soviet Republics in the advanced capitalistic countries for the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist order throughout the world."⁵

M.N.Roy instead of getting rid of his erroneous ideas continued with his left and sectarian views throughout his subsequent practice. Roy's in his "Memoirs" had written that Lenin had reconsidered his theses after listening to his arguments and the supplementary theses had been adopted with minor amendments, which is totally false.

Among the delegates from colonial countries to the Second congress, M.N.Roy played active role. ECCI took him as a member of "Central Asiatic Bureau". After Second congress, **Congress of the Peoples of the East** was held in Baku from September 1–20, 1920. Abani Mukharjee, M.P.B.T.Acharya and Abdul Rab attended as delegates from India. M.N.Roy, who was opposed to work along with the national movements did not attend this congress. He described this Congress as the "**Zinoniv Circus**" and as waste of time and energy.

Formation of "CPI" in Tashkent

After the congress, the Comintern made efforts with the help of Roy and others to form the Communist Party in India. Roy was entrusted to organise the Mujahirs and other revolutionaries living in Russia. Acharya and Abdul Rab had been working in Russia prior to Roy.

The Indian revolutionaries leading an alien life in foreign countries for a long time lost lively contacts with their own country and people. They also developed strong feelings of individualism, groupism, jealousy and differences. There was considerable opposition towards M.N.Roy in the Berlin Committee and among other revolutionaries because of his egoism and indiscipline. Moreover, after the Second Congress of the International

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they could not digest Roy's elevation to an important position. Added to this, Roy's egoistic, individualistic and careerist style of work had created a big gulf between him and the other revolutionaries. These differences and group quarrels had continued till end. These differences and quarrels had remarkable bad affect on the Indian communist movement of that time.

M.N.Roy showed keen interest in the formation of **Military School** in Turkistan. He wanted to create a Liberation Army in Russia with the help of thousands of Mujahirs going to Turkey and establish armed posts on the north-western borders of India.

M.N.Roy's opponents Acharya and Abdul Rab had already started working towards formation of Indian Communist Party with the help of their contacts in Turkistan. Roy wrote in his **Memoirs** that a party formed in a foreign country without having any contact with the peoples movements of native country will remain only for namesake. But after realising that his opponents like Acharya and others were determined to form the party and not interested to leave that opportunity to them, Roy also agreed and joined them. Roy, after leaving the Mexican Party might have felt the necessity of forming the "CPI" to represent at Comintern.

On 17th October 1920 emigrant revolutionaries formed the "CPI" in Tashkent with seven members. They were: 1.M.N.Roy, 2.Evelyn Trent Roy, 3. Abaninath Mukharjee, 4. Rosa Fitingov, 5. Mohammed Shafique Siddique, 6. M.P.B.T. Acharya and 7. Mohammed Ali. Mohammed S.Siddique was the secretar. The party was formed without any documents, not even statutes. After some time Abani Mukherjee prepared a draft programme but it was not adopted. The duration of candidate membership of those who join the party was three months as decided by the conference. Some young Mujahirs joined the party later (Masoor Alisha, Shaukath Usmani etc.)

After the formation of party, M.N.Roy carried all his activities in the name of CPI. The internal differences among the revolutionaries did not end even after the formation of the party. These differences further deepened. Right from the formation the party got divided into two groups with M.N.Roy and Abani Mukharjee on one side and Acharya and others on the other side. Turkistan party tried to resolve their differences but in vain. Comintern did not recognise this "CPI" as its affiliated body. But it treated

it as a part of preparatory work in formation of the party and extended required help.

Comintern, as a matter of fact, kept in its view the fact that majority of Indian revolutionaries abroad remained outside this party. It tried to unite all of them. Virendranath Chatopadhyaya met Lenin in 1920 and requested for help to the Indian revolutionaries to which Lenin agreed. Comintern continued its efforts to unite all the revolutionaries till 1921. In the beginning of 1921, a team of Indian revolutionaries under the leadership of Chatopadhyaya reached Moscow. Two commissions appointed by Comintern tried to unite the revolutionaries but failed.

Indian Political and Military School

Along with the formation of party in Tashkent, Political and Military School was also established. This was M.N.Roy's brain child. The school was meant for giving training to the small teams of young Mujahirs entering Russia and creating a nucleus for the Liberation Army. Roy's plan was to enter through Afghanistan with this army and to form liberation zones with the help of the anti-British tribes in the North-Western frontier. Lenin and the leaders of Red Army expressed their doubts about the feasibility of this plan. Lenin said that Roy's assumption that Amir of Afghanistan will cooperate was not realistic. He further said that Amir of Afghanistan, being a representative of feudal forces, will not enter into any such confrontation with British rulers. In spite of this due to Roy's insistence Russia sent two train loads of arms and ammunition and training staff to this school in Tashkent. But Russia did not own this plan. The plan remained exclusively of the Indian Revolutionaries.

This school functioned from October 1920 to May 1921; contrary to the expectations of Roy thousands of Mujahirs did not reach Russia. Out of 200 Mujahirs who reached Russia only 26 joined the school. As warned by Lenin, Amir of Afghanistan did not agree for this plan. The complete project which was based on wrong assumptions failed miserably. The school was closed (against these realities, Roy in his "Memoirs" wrote that the school was closed due to the Trade Agreement between Russia and Britain). Those who joined the school for training were shifted to "Communist University of Toilers of the East" in Moscow. 22 of them who agreed to go to this university were sent to Moscow and the remaining was sent back to

India. Roy wanted to take the help of those trained in this University for party formation work in India.

Third Congress of Comintern

The third congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow from 22nd June - 12th July, 1921 under the following circumstances:

- * Revolutions in Europe one by one failed;
- * Post-war revolutionary upsurge came to an end;
- * Capitalism consolidated its position and started counter reactionary offensive in a big way.

Leftist-dogmatism came out strongly in this congress. The delegates of various countries, without taking into consideration the changed circumstances, argued for continuation of the offensive. The congress under the leadership of Lenin reiterated the necessity of rallying the majority of masses around the communist party. It brought forward the slogan of **Go to Masses**. This retreat became necessary due to failure of the working class movement.

In addition to M.N.Roy, three other Indian delegates attended the congress. As the second congress had adopted the National and Colonial Theses after detailed discussions only one year back, the Eastern question was not included in the agenda of the third congress. M.N.Roy strongly protested against this. He was of the opinion that the movements in Eastern countries were taken lightly.

After the third congress, ECCI had adopted the theses on **Workers United Front** in December 1921. Lenin said regarding the **Workers United Front** that to organise the vast majority of the working people into the struggle against capitalism is the aim and meaning of the tactics of United Front. For this we shall not hesitate to call repeatedly the leaders of the Second International and Two and a half International.⁶

After the Third Congress, the efforts of the Comintern to organise the All India revolutionaries conference had failed. Comintern had to depend only on M.N.Roy. Roy, who was not prepared to learn from the past and from the reality, continued to follow his wrong political views. Also he could not come out from his old petty group conspiratorial style of work.

Shaukath Usmani returned to India in September 1921. Among the many revolutionaries who returned to India after taking training in Russia, he is the only one who escaped from the arrest by police. By his efforts a Communist group was formed in UP. All others were arrested by the police as and when they arrived in India from Russia. Between 1921 and 1927, six Peshawar conspiracy cases were registered and all those arrested were tried in these conspiracy cases and were sentenced.

In 1921 when non-cooperation movement in India was in full swing, Roy made an attempt to establish contacts with Indian revolutionaries.

Roy prepared the programme for the Ahmadabad Congress (INC) held at the end of 1921. This was printed in Moscow and was sent to India through Nalini Gupta. Roy expected contacts with *khilafat* leaders and leaders of INC. Nalini Gupta went only to Calcutta and met Muzafer Ahmad.

Roy wanted to form a left block with the help of Chittaranjan Das, President INC, keeping his differences with Gandhi in view. Roy's programme had some effect as a Communists' criticism of the INC movement. This manifesto wanted Indian National Congress to take up the workers and peasants problems and not to confine to the demands of a few upper class people. Roy stated in that Manifesto that Congress can become a real people's organisation and organise anti-imperialist struggle only by taking up the demands of workers and peasants. Since then it has become a tradition to send the Communist Party Manifesto to each Congress session.

From 1922 Roy started working with Berlin as his centre. A fortnightly magazine **Vanguard of Indian Independence** under the editorship of Roy started coming out from May 1922. The aim of this magazine was to propagate among Indian people anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic demands. This paper continued up to December 1924. For sometime this paper came out in the name of **Advance Guard**. Among the efforts of Roy this magazine was very important one. This paper could encourage the Communists, Socialists, Left Nationalists and progressive magazines (the intelligence report has stated that papers like *Atma Sakti*, *Dhuma Ketu*, *Desharibaghi* of Bengali, *Navayugam* of Telugu (G.V.Krishna Rao - Editor), *Current* (Kanpur) Socialist (Bombay - Dange) and *Amruta Bazar* were under the influence of 'Vanguard')

In the middle of 1922 **India in Transition** by Roy was published. Roy

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said that he had written this to convince Lenin. During that time international debate was going on about the compromising character of the National bourgeoisie of the colonial countries. It was clearly visible that in many countries the national bourgeoisie has been compromising with the imperialism. Because of this tendency, the idea of not giving support to any liberation struggle under the leadership of bourgeoisie was strengthened. Roy too continued his arguments on the same lines.

The industrialisation in colonial countries during and after the First World War and strengthening of the relations between the local bourgeoisie and the imperialism were the facts from which people like Roy derived sectarian conclusions. Lenin clearly warned against this bourgeois compromising tendency. But bourgeoisie was not distinguished as comprador bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. CI treated only the mercantile bourgeois as having the comprador character. The entire industrial bourgeois was treated as national bourgeoisie (some times it referred of as the native bourgeois). But in reality, the most important part of the industrial bourgeois of the colonial, semi-colonial countries was born and brought up with the imperialist interests. Because of this, Mao distinguished the bourgeoisie as comprador bourgeois and national bourgeois. This distinction has rightly characterised the differentiation in the bourgeois of colonial and semi-colonial bourgeois.

Due to his failure to recognise this differentiation, Roy and afterwards R.P.Dutt related the bourgeois compromising tendency and the betraying character to the post-war period industrial development. In 1928 Roy stated in his **Decolonisation Theory** that in colonies and semi-colonies the industrialisation was taking place due to the British rulers' policy of allowing the development of local bourgeoisie and as a result of this, the local bourgeoisie has left the antagonistic attitude towards the imperialism. This theory of **Decolonisation** can be treated as the continuation of **India in Transition**. Roy said that when he has started writing this booklet, Lenin has warned him not to distort the real facts according to his wishes. But Roy never appeared to have followed this warning.

The idea of treating the entire bourgeoisie class in colonial and semi-colonial countries as national bourgeoisie, has led the communist parties to utter confusion in formulating the tactics to be followed in the national

liberation struggles of those countries. Roy lacked the grip on India's real conditions and calibre to interpret and apply the Lenin Theses according to the concrete conditions. Moreover, Roy, in an attempt to distort the facts according to his whims has come to the conclusion that India is not a feudal country.

Roy fundamentally opposed to Lenin's Theses. This was visible at every step in his practice. Attempts were made to achieve united front as per the directions of Comintern. But the attempts were made with unrealistic views to capture leadership of national movement by attracting some INC leaders. There was total negligence of the means of establishing proletarian hegemony over the independence movement i.e., the formation of strong Communist Party which retained the broad masses of workers and peasants with it.

Communist Groups in the Country

During the time when efforts were going on in Tashkent for formation of communist party i.e. during 1920-22 communist groups emerged in all corners of the country independent of each other.

Bombay: Under the leadership of Sripad Amrut Dange (S.A.Dange) one group was functioning in trade unions since 1920. Dange started a publishing unit with the financial help of one millionaire Lotwala (a mill owner). He took over the leading Marathi daily *Indu Prakash* and started bringing out this daily with leftist views through this publishing unit. In 1921 he wrote and published a book **Gandhi vs. Lenin**. He started publishing the first Indian communist paper **Socialist** (weekly) from 1922 August.

Calcutta: Under the leadership of Muzafar Ahmed, Calcutta group used to work. Ahmed was a revolutionary poet. He published *Navyug* a Bengali paper in association with Nasrul Islam. In 1921 he arranged to get secretly the Marx-Engels works. This group worked among workers.

Madras: This group worked under the leadership of Singaravelu Chettiar. Chettiar worked among workers as a leader of INC before he was attracted towards communism. He played an active role in 1920 Gaya congress. He established in 1923 **Labour Kisan Party of Hindusthan**. A public meeting was held in May, to announce the formation of that party. This

is the first May Day meeting in India. For the first time Red Flag was hoisted in public meeting.

Lahore: This group worked under the leadership of Gulam Hussain under Mohammed Ali's (founder member of CPI in Tashkent) influence, he left his teaching profession and started working in Lahore Railway Workers Union. Gulam Hussain used to bring out an Urdu paper *Inquilab* under his editorship.

M.N.Roy tried to establish contacts with these groups. With the help of Nalini Gupta he contacted his erstwhile revolutionary comrade in arms Muzafar Ahmed. He established contacts with Dange after seeing his book Gandhi vs. Lenin. Through these groups Roy tried to circulate the **Vanguard of Indian Independence** and other Comintern papers and publications.

Singaravelu and Dange planned independently, to form a leftist party within the congress and work through it. Roy also was of the same opinion. Dange informed Roy about his plan of forming **Socialist Labour Party of Indian National Congress**. Roy advised him to wait till the IV Comintern congress. He invited Dange to attend the Congress or to send delegate.

Roy wrote to Muzafar Ahmed also to attend the IV congress of Comintern. To make the arrangements for their attending the congress, Roy sent Charles Ashle of British party secretly to India to meet Dange and Ahmed. Roy informed Ahmed about the Ashle's visit to India. Ahmed was entrusted the work of delivering the invitation letters to C.R.Das and Subhashchandra Bose.

Roy had lot of hopes about the participation of Indian delegates in the IV Comintern Congress. But the police having come to know about the visit of Ashle, cancelled his passport. Ashle was arrested on his landing at Bombay on 19th September 1922. As they could not get anything from him on search, he was asked to go back to England. Ashle within the short time available to him, managed to give police a slip and met Dange with the help of Bombay Chronicle journalists (Dange revealed all these details to police when he was arrested in 1924).

Fourth Congress of Comintern

The fourth Congress of the Comintern met from November 5 to December 5, 1922. This was the last congress attended by Lenin. At that time he was seriously ill. Roy's attempts through Ashle to bring the delegates from India who represented the various communist groups had failed. Roy, Masood Alisha, Nalini Gupta and Gadar party representatives who came from Sanfransico i.e. Ratan Singh, Santhok Singh attended the congress as Indian delegates. Only Roy and Rattan were the delegates with the voting right. Roy was elected in this congress as an alternate member of ECCI. Basing on the Roy's reports Zinoniv had expressed satisfaction over the progress of the communist movement in India.

After the third congress ECCI prepared theses on the **united front of the working class**. This united front worked against retrenchment, reduction in wages, dangers of war etc. It also helped in resisting the post war capitalistic onslaught. The attempts of the united front had failed due to the anti-working class activities of the second and two and half Internationals. Even then, ECCI in its Second Plenum passed a resolution to continue the tactics of the united front. This congress criticised the sectarian tendency of under estimating the importance of the united front of Communist parties of certain West European countries. The attacks of Mussolini's fascist groups necessitated the need of the working class united front (Mussolini came to power in Italy in October 1922).

On the other side, in colonies the upsurge of national liberation struggles had been continuing. In 1922 Turkey's people war was successful. The national liberation struggles in Egypt, China, India, Korea etc had been progressing. The Fourth Congress of the Comintern took place in these circumstances.

Addressing the Congress Lenin said This:

“at the third congress, in 1921, we adopted a resolution on the organisational structure of the communist parties and on the methods and content of their activities. The resolution is an excellent one, but it is almost entirely Russian, that is to say, everything in it is based on Russian conditions..... But we have not learnt how to present our Russian experience to foreigners. All that was said in the resolution has remained a dead letter. If we do not

realise this, we shall be unable to move ahead. I think that after five years of the Russian revolution the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. We have only now obtained the opportunity to do so. I do not know how long this opportunity will last. I do not know for how long the capitalist powers will give us the opportunity to study in peace. But we must take advantage of every moment of respite from fighting, from war, to study, and to study from scratch.”⁷

Main Tactical slogans:

1. For communist parties of capitalist countries **“United front against the onslaught of capitalistic attacks and against increasing fascism.”**
2. For Asian & African peoples independence struggles - **“united front against imperialism, struggle for national independence”**. All the decisions of the congress were based on these two mutually interconnected issues.

Thesis on the Eastern Question

The Eastern Theses formulated by Colonial Commission on the basis of the Lenin’s Theses that was adopted at the Second Congress clearly enunciated the strategy and tactics of revolution in colonies and semi-colonies and it clearly defined the relationship between the international working class movement and the national liberation movements of these countries.

Conditions of the Struggle:

* The bourgeois democracy in colonial countries develops basing itself on feudal-bureaucratic and feudal-agrarian elements. The foreign imperialists convert the feudal upper classes as the agents of their domination. Thus *“the dominant classes in the colonies and the semi colonial countries are incapable and unwilling to lead the struggle against imperialism in so far as this struggle tends to become a revolutionary mass movement”*.

* *“This main task common to all national revolutionary movements is to bring about national unity and achieve political independence. The real and consistent solution of this depends on the extent to which the national movement in any particularly country is capable of attracting to itself the toiling masses and break off all connections with the reactionary feudal*

elements and include in its programme the social demands of the masses”.

** “.....the Communist International supports all national revolutionary movements against imperialism. At the same time it does not lose sight of the fact that only a consistent a revolutionary line of policy based on the active support of the masses, and the unreserved break with all advocates of compromise with imperialism in the interests of maintaining class domination, can lead the oppressed masses to victory”.*

Agrarian Question:

** “In the majority countries in the East (India, Persia, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia) the agrarian question is of primary importance in the struggle for emancipation from the domination of the despotism of the great powers”.*

** “The struggle for the emancipation of the land from feudal dues and feudal obstacles thus assumes the character of a struggle for national emancipation against imperialism and feudal large landownership (examples of this are the Moplah rising against the landowners and the British in India in the autumn of 1921 and the revolt of the Sikhs in 1922)”.*

** “Only the agrarian revolution aiming at the expropriation of the large landowners can rouse the vast peasant masses destined to have a decisive influence in the struggles against imperialism. The fear of agrarian watchwords on the part of the bourgeois nationalists (India, Persia, Egypt) is evidence of the close ties existing between the native bourgeoisie with the large feudal and feudal-bourgeois landowners and their ideological and political dependence upon the latter. The hesitation and wavering of this class must be used by the revolutionary elements for systematic criticism and exposure of the lack of resolution of the bourgeois leaders of the national movement”.*

** “The revolutionary movement in the backward countries of the East can not be successful unless it is based on the action of the masses of the peasantry. For that reason the revolutionary parties in all Eastern Countries must define their agrarian programme which should demand the complete abolition of feudalism and its survivals.”*

The Labour Movement in the East:

** “.....the trade union and political movement of the working class in*

the backward country has made considerable progress in recent years. The formation of independent proletarian class parties in almost all the eastern countries is a remarkable fact, although the overwhelming majority of these parties must still undergo considerable internal reorganisation in order to free themselves from amateurity, sectarianism and other defects”.

The General Tasks of the Communist Parties in the East:

* *“An alliance with the proletariat in the West will lay the path towards an international federation of Soviet Republic. The Soviet system, for the backward nations represents the least painful form of transition from primitive conditions of existence to the highest culture of communism,..”*

* *“The objective tasks of colonial revolutions exceed the limit of bourgeois democracy by the very fact that a decisive victory is incompatible with the domination of world imperialism. While the native bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia are the pioneers of colonial revolutionary movements, with the entry of proletarian and semi-proletarian peasant masses into these movements, however, the rich bourgeoisie and bourgeois landlords begin to leave it as the social interests of the masses assume prominence”.*

* *“The struggle to secure influence over the peasant masses should prepare the native proletariat for the role of political leadership. Only after having accomplished this preparatory work on its own training and that of the social classes closely allied to itself will it be possible to advance against bourgeois democracy ...”*

* *“The refusal of the communist in the colonies to participate against imperialist oppression on the pretext of alleged “defence” of independent class interests is opportunism of the worst kind. No less harmful must be recognised the attempt to isolate oneself from the immediate and everyday interests of the working class for the sake of “national unity” or “civil peace” with bourgeois democracy”.*

* *“In putting forward special demands (of working masses-Ed.), these parties stimulate and release revolutionary energy which finds no outlet in bourgeois liberal demands. The working class in colonies and semi-colonial countries must know that only by deepening and extending the struggle against the imperialism of the great powers can its role as revolutionary*

leader be fulfilled. On the other hand, the economic and political organisations and the political training of the working class and the semi-proletarian classes will facilitate and extend the revolutionary scope of the struggle against imperialism”.

* “The communist parties in the colonies and the semi-colonial countries in the East, which are still in a more or less embryonic stage, must take part in every movement that gives them access to the masses. At the same time, however, they must conduct an energetic campaign against the patriarchal and craft prejudices and bourgeois influences in the labour unions, in order to protect these embryonic organisations from reformist tendencies and in order to convert them in to mass fighting organisations.”

The United Anti-Imperialist Front:

* “While in the West.....the watchword of the united labour front put forward, in the colonial East it is at present necessary to put forward the watchword of a united anti-imperialist front. The expediency of these tactics is dictated by the prospects of a prolonged struggle against imperialism demanding the mobilisation of all revolutionary elements”.

“Just as the watchword of the united labour front in the West facilitates the exposure of the social democratic betrayal of the interests of the proletariat, so the watchword of the united anti-imperialist front will facilitate the exposure of the wavering and hesitation of certain bourgeois nationalist groups in the East”.

* “The labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries must first of all secure for itself the positions of an independent factor in the common anti-imperialist front. Only on the basis of the recognition of this independence and the maintenance of complete independence is a temporary agreement with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary. The proletariat must support and put forward partial demands such as independent democratic republic, abolition of all feudal rights and privileges, and enfranchisement of woman, etc. in view of the fact that the present correlation of forces does not permit it to carry out its Soviet programmes”.

* “*The danger of an agreement being arrived at between the bourgeois nationalists and one or several of the rival imperialist powers in the semi-colonial countries (China, Persia) or in countries striving to secure political*

independence by exploiting the rivalry between the imperialists (Turkey) is greater than in the colonies. Such an agreement.....under the cloak of formal independence will leave the country in the same position of a buffer semi-colonial state subordinate to world imperialism”.

* *“Recognising the permissibility and inevitability of partial and temporary compromises for the purposes of securing a respite in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, the working class must, however, irreconcilably resist every attempt avowed or tacit division of power between the imperialist and the native ruling classes.”*⁸

Gaya Congress Session: The 36th Congress of INC was held in Gaya in December 1922. The stage was ready for show of strength between C.R.Das and Gandhi. The programme of Gandhi (Statusquoists) was adopted. The resolution placed by C.R.Das’s Swaraj Party regarding the participation in councils of was defeated.

C.R.Das stated that 98% of the people want Swaraj and Congress should represent this 98% people. He supported the struggles of working class and peasants. Because of this M.N.Roy described C.R.Das as a revolutionary. Roy wanted to form, with his help, revolutionary front.

Comintern sent a message of greetings to the Gaya Congress session and suggested that *“the National Congress should categorically declare that its political programme is the establishment of a democratic republic, completely independent of any foreign control.”*⁹ In view of the betrayal made by Gandhi by withdrawing the non-cooperation movement it further said in its message: *“The last two years were a period of mighty revolutionary upheaval in India. The awakening of the peasantry and of the proletariat struck terror in the heart of the British. But the leadership of the National Congress failed the movement in the intensely revolutionary situation.”*¹⁰ It expressed to the Congress to adopt an economic programme based on agricultural revolution in addition to the political programme. It extended its support to the Indian peoples revolution to defeat the British imperialism.

M.N.Roy prepared and sent the programme to Gaya Congress. This was widely propagated in the country when Reuter News Agency circulated this to news papers. Roy criticised Gandhi’s leadership with reference

to the situation obtained after the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement. This Roy's programme become the basis to the workers and peasants parties (WPP) formed afterwards. This programme brought with it the confusion which Roy has led regarding socialist and democratic revolution. To put it in Roy's own words, he prepared 'social democratic' programme. C.R. Das did not fight with Gandhi for the *swaraj* of 98% of the people as expected by Roy. He fought only on the participation of Congress in the councils of swaraj party. Roy later on expressed that his programme has led to unexpected anti results. He stated that instead of strengthening the left wing of the congress it was subjected to panic. S.A. Dange and Singara Velu also attended the congress of Gaya.

Efforts for CPI conference in Berlin:

After the IV Congress of the Comintern, Roy made an attempt to organise a conference of all the communist groups of India in Berlin, to discuss and take decisions on the following issues.

1. To prepare a programme for CPI and to discuss about the organisation of revolutionary movement in India.
2. Establishing a revolutionary peoples party.
3. To establish a canter at All India level for the Communist Party of India.

Roy decided to invite the following persons to this conference.

Dange, Singaravelu, E.L.Iyer, Muzafar Ahmed, Siddique, Baidyanath Biswas(Bengal Trade union Federation, a police agent) S.M.Joshi, Bhupathi Muzumdar (Hugli Congress Committee). But this congress did not take place. Dange and Singaravelu Chettiar were not ready to go to Berlin. Dange wrote to Singaravelu:

*"We shall go on as best as we can in propagating communism among the masses. Who are the Indian communists, how many of them who are prepared to go to Berlin when Germany is on the throes of starvation? There is a good deal to be done here before one things of a congress. But let him go on if he has resources enough, but it is absolutely impossible to cross our shores at the present.... when that is the case why think of the Berlin conference."*¹¹

Even if Dange and Singaravelu had not refused to go to Berlin, this conference would not have taken place. Because of Roy's lack of experience in secret work, inability to work as per plan, acting on whims and fancies instead of an real circumstances etc., this conference would have failed. Dange and Singaravelu's reaction clearly shows their nationalist tendency. Muzafar Ahmed tried to attend the conference, but he was arrested on 16-5-1923.

Kanpur Conspiracy Case -State Offensive

The left wing in the Congress got strengthened after the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement. The national revolutionary groups re-established themselves. The revolutionary activities started spreading. Attempts were going on for unity of the various communist groups. Further attempts were actively going on to form a legal people's party within the Congress under the leadership of Communist Party. Government tightened the controls throughout the country. Many arrests were made. British government tried to destroy the communist movement in the initial stage itself. At one stroke it attacked on all the communist groups throughout India. This attack was made when Peshawar conspiracy case was coming to an end.

Police used to know all about the correspondence of Roy with Indian revolutionaries. The communist groups in India were working legally. All the information required by government to crackdown on the communist groups at any time was ready with the Home department. (During that time Roy used to correspond through R.C.L Sharma of Pondichery. With the help of the French officials, British police used to read the correspondence of Roy).

Shaukath Usmani was arrested in Kanpur on 8th May 1923. Muzaffar Ahmed was arrested in Calcutta on 19th May 1923. Gulam Hussain was arrested at the same time in Lahore. All those who were having close contacts with Roy were arrested. Gulam Hussain surrendered to the enemy. He appealed to the Viceroy on 14th June to disclose all details. He disclosed all the details including his relations with Roy. Mohammed Shafiq turned as an approver in Peshawar Conspiracy case. While government was hesitating to file a conspiracy case against these people due to lack of sufficient evidence, Nalini Gupta was arrested on 20th December. He told all his activi-

ties to the police on 21st December. Muzaffar Ahmed also gave a statement. He later on said that he gave the statement because police had already got all these details.

Police had already got about 64 copies of the correspondence of Roy. With the turning of Nalini Gupta who worked as a link between the Comintern representative Roy and the revolutionary groups of India as an approver, the government had decided to file the conspiracy case (Nalini Gupta turned as police informer after his arrest, this was not known to others).

Dange and Singaravelu were arrested on 6th February. Singaravelu was released on bail on 7th (on health grounds). Cases were filed against eight of the prominent communist leaders. They were: 1. Roy, 2. M. Ahmed, 3. Shaukath Usmani, 4. Dange, 5. Gulam Hussain, 6. Nalini Gupta, 7. Singaravelu, 8. R.C.L. Sharma.

The trial of Muzaffar Ahmed, Usmani, Dange and Nalini Gupta was started on 1st March 1924. Sessions court on 20th May 1924 sentenced all four of them to four years rigorous imprisonment. (The Judge was H.E. Home who sentenced 120 peasants to death by hanging in Chowri-Chowra case.)

Communists failed to use the court as a political platform. When compared to the skill shown by Bhagat Singh and others in using the court as the platform for political use and the courageous behaviour of these revolutionaries at the time of their going to gallows, the behaviour of these communist revolutionaries was not at all praise worthy of the prestige of communist party but it was an insulting one.

Along with Nalini Gupta who had turned as an approver, Dange also surrendered before the imperialists with an appeal of pardon. Dange wrote a letter stating that he will use all his influence with the communists in India and abroad for the benefit of the imperialists (as an agent). It is worth noting that CPI knowing about these letters kept mum about this. Only during the party split CPI(M) leaders talked publicly about these Dange letters (Current - an English magazine published these letters on 7.3.1964 issue). But Dange alleged these letters as forgery. It is doubtless that the British imperialists can go to any extent to insult the communists. But it was meaningless act to keep those forgery letters in their files secretly. Therefore,

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Dange's stand was nothing but a lie. Its ironical that the CPI(M) leader Muzaffar Ahmed who attacked Dange on this count, himself gave a written statement accepting the wrongs committed by him and giving all other details.

The Kanpur conspiracy case could not create any serious impact in the country. There was not much of sympathy wave for the communists. Whatever it may be, the Kanpur conspiracy case had seriously weakened the fast picking up communist movement.

Fifth Congress of Comintern

Lenin's death, on 21st January 1924, especially at a time when both the Russian revolution and world revolution were in a critical position, became a great loss to world proletariat. However the CPSU and Comintern under the able leadership and guidance of another great proletarian leader Stalin, the best follower of Lenin prepared to face the challenges ahead. The Trotskyite clique that conducted an attack on the Leninist path during the period of illness of Lenin now redoubled its efforts to undermine the Leninist revolutionary line with the help of its accomplices abroad. The Second and Two-and-half internationals, the apologists of bourgeoisie in the working class movement joined hands to intensify their disruptive activities. In Comintern itself both right and left deviations appeared after the defeats of the working class in the post-war revolutionary upsurge. At the other end, capitalism though temporarily progressing towards economic and political stability.

In the backdrop of these conditions the Fifth Congress of Comintern was held from June 17th to July 8th of 1924. This was the first congress held without Lenin's presence. The congress resolutely took up the task of defending the Leninist revolutionary line by defeating both the right and left deviations. It analysed the partial stability in capitalism. (The phrase **partial stability** however was coined in 1925,) The congress resolved to firmly advance the slogan **To the people!** given by third congress. It was resolved to continue the tactic of fighting back the capitalist onslaught through working class unity.

Taking into consideration of the right and left opportunist deviations that cropped up in practically building working class front, clearly stated

the basis for the front in the countries where the social democrats were strong: Unity of ranks at the lower level and simultaneous talks of the leaders - but not the agreements of the leadership alone should be the basis. In the united front the communist parties must strictly preserve their independence and their communist existence.

It emphasised the Bolshevisation of communist parties, i.e. it stressed the development of communist parties in accordance with the principles of the new party forged by Lenin.

Recognizing the invaluable and immense contributions made by Lenin theoretically, politically and organisationally to the international communist movement, the congress for the first time used the phrase Marxism-Leninism.

Roy and Mohammed Ali with voting right and Clemens Dutt (the brother of R.P.Dutt) with consultative vote represented India as delegates to the congress. After the congress these three acted as the foreign bureau of CPI.

The ECCI report adopted by the congress said this on the national and colonial question:

“17. On the national question, the executive had frequent occasion to remind many sections for whom this question is one of the greatest importance that they were not carrying out the decisions of the Second Congress satisfactorily.”¹²

“18. In addition to the winning the support of the peasant masses; and of the oppressed national minorities, [ECCI] emphasised the necessity for winning over the revolutionary movements for emancipation of colonial peoples and for all peoples of the east so as to make them the allies of the revolutionary proletariat of the capitalist countries. This requires not only the extension of the direct contact between the executive and the national-emancipation movement of the orient, but also very close contact between the sections in the imperialist countries with the colonies of those countries.....”¹³

On the issue of further developing relations between ECCI and national liberation movements Roy proposed an amendment. Roy continued his old argument that was rejected by second congress after a thorough debate,

that Comintern should have relations only with the revolutionary sections of those movements. Adhering to the Leninist policy of extending support to the national liberation movements as a whole while precisely understanding the different sections of those movements and the different roles they play, the congress rejected Roy's amendment.

ECCI V Plenum: The Plenum held between March 18, and April 14, 1925 clarified the stand of Comintern on Indian National Congress. Based on the report of Roy, who was the secretary of the colonial commission, the plenum had expressed the tasks of the Indian communists as:

1. Formation of a broad based mass party which demands total independence and has an anti-feudal democratic programme.
2. To establish anti-imperialist block.
3. To establish mass organisations of workers and peasants organisations at all India level.

Roy's attempts to form a People's party as a part of Congress failed as a result of the arrests made in the Kanpur conspiracy case. After 1925, workers and peasants parties were formed and started working. These parties to some extent helped in organising the left wing of Congress and petty bourgeois sections. But, the success of the WPP depend on the above stated third task.

Second task made it clear that, the anti-imperialist struggle shall not be limited to a part of the Congress movement. But it should be remembered that the success of these efforts to form this united front mainly depend on the efforts and strength of the communist party. Only communist party leading the vast masses of the people can form such an united front. As repeatedly said by Lenin and stated in Comintern Theses, only the efforts made to consolidate the peasantry with agrarian revolutionary programme can give that strength to the working class parties in the backward countries.

But Roy's practice took a different course. He failed to understand the fact that differences between the warring factions of INC leadership were not of basic nature. He felt that, working class without emerging as the leader of vast peasantry and other oppressed masses can establish its hegemony over the independence movement. Roy expected that Gandhism will die down and *swaraj* party will collapse and therefore he thought of

taking over the leadership of the national movement through the formation of WPPs and people's parties. Because of these unrealistic estimates and because of the attempt to secure the leadership of the united front without having enough own strength, all the tactics failed like fighting in the air leaving the ground.

Kanpur Communist Conference

The First Communist Conference with the representation of almost all the communist groups working in India was held in Kanpur during December 26 - 28, 1925. Interestingly the conference in which CPI was formed was not organised by any of the important communist groups. An ex-nationalist revolutionary belonging to U.P, Satya Bhakhta organised this conference. After withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement, he was attracted towards the communist movement. During the trial of Kanpur conspiracy case, the public prosecutor stated that the crime committed by the accused was not their becoming communists but only the conspiracy to overthrow the government. Based on this statement of the public prosecutor, Satya Bhakhta thought independent Indian communist Party can be formed without any relation to the Comintern or the Bolshevism of Russia. He declared in 1924 that he has formed the (ICP) Indian Communist Party. He organised the Kanpur conference inviting all the groups of Indian communists. Dange also came to the conclusion, based on the statement of public prosecutor, that communist party can be formed legally on the All India level. Dange who was in the jail at that time supported the Kanpur conference through his followers.

Lenin's theses adopted by the second congress of the Comintern **Fundamental Tasks of the Comintern** stated this regarding the formation of the secret party:

Communist parties of all countries, such as free democratic countries, constitutional republics and those countries in which the revolutionary struggle is in the primary stage, must have both legal and illegal organisation in a systematic and planned way having proper co-ordination with each other. Because in a developed free democratic countries where the bourgeois constitution has firmly established,

the governments, by making false promises regarding liberty and equality, starts preparing the secret lists of communists, helping the reactionary white guards secretly and publicly by violating the constitution, murdering the communists, and preparing secret list to arrest the communists and inflicting saboteurs into communist groups. Only petty bourgeois having the anti-revolutionary character can refuse to recognise this truth. Only he refuses to recognise the necessity of forming secret organisations to meet the situation when the bourgeoisie attacks the party publicly.

Lenin said that it is also essential to get ready to carryout illegal activities as well as legal activities without any limitations, to overcome the obstacles, to establish legal papers under different names and legal organisations of different names and to change their names as and when necessary.¹⁴

It is surprising to note that Dange, when the weakness of communists groups working totally immersed in legalism is clearly visible, has come to the conclusion of organising legally the All India Communist Conference. It can be noticed, that the reluctance to establish secret party and strong inclination towards legalism and striving to maintain legality of the Party at any cost had been there in CPI right from the beginning.

300 delegates attended the conference from different parts of the country. The issue of party name, whether it should be Communist Party of India (CPI) or Indian Communist Party (ICP), has come for discussion. Satya Bhakta thought the name of CPI will be close to the Comintern and Bolshevism and will affect adversely the legal nature of the party. He argued that the name must be ICP giving importance to nationalism. Although he was the organiser of the conference, he has become alone on this issue. The name as CPI was adopted. Within four days of conclusion of the conference, Satya Bhakta formed his own “National Communist Party” (NCP).

The Conference adopted the statues which clearly shows the immaturity of the communist party of that time.

Aim: To liberate the country from the British imperialism and to establish a workers and peasants republic based on social production and distribution (not to establish communism or classless society)

Delegates: Any worker or poor peasant is eligible to attend the annual congress.

Singaravelu Chettiar said in the inaugural speech that there is a difference between Bolshevism and Indian communism. ".....*Indian communism is not Bolshevism for Bolshevism is a form of communism which the Russians have adopted in their country. We are not Russian Bolsheviks and Bolshevism may not be needed in India.Bolsheviks are the political party in power in Russia as opposed to Mensheviks, the minority party, now out of power. We are one with the world communists but not with Bolsheviks.*"¹⁵

Singaravelu Chettiar as president, J.P.Bagerhatta, S.V.Ghate as General Secretaries were elected (Bagerhatta was expelled from party after coming to know that he was a police agent). It was resolved that Krishna Swamy Iyenger for Madras, Satya Bhakta for Kanpur, Muzaffar Ahmed for Calcutta, S.D.Hasan for Lahore shall act as organisers.

CEC met on 28th December, CEC comprised of Joglekar, Ghatae, Nimbkar, Ahmed, Abdul Mazid, Bagarhatta and Iyengar. This executive committee formed in Kanpur conference had worked during 1925-29 for the formation the movement of the party. In spite of many drawbacks to form a single party of all the groups and to establish a central committee is an achievement of the Kanpur conference.

Main Weaknesses:

1. The nationalist trend in the communist movement was manifested in the conference. This conference revealed on the whole that pioneers of CPI instead of participating in the independence movement with the working class outlook they considered themselves as the left wing of independence movement.
2. The policy of working legally was clearly expressed.
3. Lack of maturity both politically and organisationally.
4. Showing unwillingness to affiliate to the international communist movement in order to protect the legality of the party.

The undivided CPI had been considered that the Party was founded in the Kanpur conference whereas the CPI(M) is recognising the Party that was formed in Tashkent in 1920. The Party formed in Tashkent by a small

number of emigrant revolutionaries who had no live contacts with their country never functioned as an organisation and in fact it ceased to exist as an organisation within a short time with the internal squabbles. Even the Comintern too correctly considered the activities of Roy and others during the period 1920-25 in the name of CPI as the efforts made by it to build Communist Party in India with the help of emigrant Indian revolutionaries.

Brief Summary

The Communist Movement in India began in the backdrop of the growing mass upsurge of national democratic movement against the colonial rule of British imperialism and the obsolete feudal relations. The ground for the establishment of the Vanguard of Indian working class – the Communist Party of India was prepared amidst the post-war upsurge of working class struggles under the profound influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The second Congress of Comintern was of great importance especially in relation to the building of Communist Movement in colonies. It was in this Congress the basic Marxist -Leninist understanding and tactics of the national liberation struggles of colonies were formulated. Comintern made its stand clear that the Communist Parties in colonies should participate and support the liberation struggles of those countries while keeping their own identity. However Comintern recognised the conciliatory nature of the national bourgeoisie in those countries and thus Lenin's Theses clearly stated that the working class while participating in national liberation movements along with the bourgeoisie it should strive to emerge itself as the leader of the peasantry and other labouring masses and to establish the proletarian leadership over those movements.

Roy's difference with Lenin's Theses is of fundamental in nature. He advocated that the working class movement should have no relation with the national bourgeoisie in the colonies and it should support the independent movements of working class and peasantry.

The first efforts to found the CPI were made by the nationalist

revolutionaries of India abroad. They aspired to achieve the liberation of our country with the help of Russia after the October Revolution and in the process they attracted towards Communism. Thus the emigrant Indian revolutionaries in Russia formed CPI in Tashkent in 1920. The party thus formed in Russia without having live contacts with the working class movement and revolutionary movement in India was not got the recognition of Comintern. However Comintern continued its efforts to build CPI through the emigrant revolutionaries who formed the party in Tashkent, especially with the active role played by Roy.

Meanwhile various Communist Groups in India began their work in working class movement. Roy tried to build Communist Movement in India by establishing contacts with these groups. Roy mistook the split in the INC was of fundamental in its nature and failed to recognise that it is not possible to establish proletarian leadership over the national movement without having a strong and mass based Communist Party. Thus the concentration on the agrarian revolutionary programme lacked form the beginning.

The efforts made towards the unification of all the Communist Groups in India into a unified Party met with failure at that time. Moreover the British government unleashed anti-communist repression even before the formation of the Communist Party. It pounced upon the Communist Groups and trade union movement when the Peshawar conspiracy cases were going to be concluded and made up the Kanpur Conspiracy Case. It proved to be great detriment to the formation and building up of Communist Party at that time.

In the First All India Communist Conference held in 1925 in Kanpur, to which all communist groups in India were attended, the Communist Part of India was formed. As the CEC elected in this conference laid the foundations to the Party building in India it is quite correct to consider the Conference as the founding conference of CPI. However the deviations like left nationalism and legalism appeared form that conference itself and the Conference opted not to be affiliated to Comintern with the excuse of protecting its legality. These weaknesses strengthened in the later time.

By the time the CPI was formed ,the youngsters participating in the national movement got disillusioned with the betrayal of Gandhi to the non- cooperation movement and started probing the alternative path of armed struggle and the working class started to emerge as a prominent and formidable political force on the political scene of India. the CPI formed at this juncture faced with the historical task of fulfilling the democratic revolution by emerging as the undisputable leader of peasantry and other labouring masses and establishing working class hegemony over the national movement and presented with the historical possibilities to full it too.

3

Expansion of Communist Movement: Onslaught of Colonial State

The communist movement in India had been progressing when Meerut conspiracy case arrests took place in 1929. Particularly, the Trade Union activities of CPI had expanded. The formation of Red Flag Trade Unions took place rapidly. The spontaneous upsurge of working class struggles has contributed to this. A small leftist group under the influence of communists was formed in the AITUC. The Peasants and Workers Parties which were started from 1925 had given an opportunity to the communists to work publicly. But the efforts of CPI were confined only to trade union movement and to strengthen the leftist faction in the Congress. No efforts were initiated to unite the peasant mass which is the main force in the revolution of colonial countries. Also no attempts were started to emerge as leader of the vast peasant masses based on agrarian revolutionary programme. In fact nothing was done in that direction. The WPPs worked largely as workers and urban petty bourgeois parties.

In 1925 Gandhi and C.R.Das reached an agreement. Congress decided in 1926 Gauhati Congress to participate in the elections to the councils. As expected by Roy, the Swarajya Party didn't splinter into disintegration. It accepted the leadership of Gandhi. Gandhi and Motilal Nehru jointly opposed in 1928 the **Complete Independence** resolution brought forward by Communists and leftists. Gandhi also demanded the "Dominion Status" as stated in Nehru Report (Motilal). But, the activities of Indian national revolutionaries particularly the activities of Bhagath Singh and others and the propaganda for total independence carried out continuously by Communist Party helped to strengthen the left faction in the Congress. At the same time the comprador bourgeois had been trying to get control of the left faction. The 1927 Madras AICC session has accepted the resolution for total independence introduced by the initiation of the Communists. But the amendment of Jawaharlal Nehru that "*the achievement of complete independence will be the objective of Congress*" has created an opportunity to retract from the resolution. (Gandhi did not attend the Madras Session).

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The 1928 Calcutta Congress passed the resolution demanding Dominion Status, with one year deadline after the expiry of which it declared to start countrywide **Civil Disobedience Movement** for total independence.

Mean while in 1927, all sections of independence movement had protested against the Simon Commission¹ formed by British government. The boycott of Simon Commission has come forward as a big movement in 1928. The working class under the leadership of WPPs had carried out great struggles in Bombay and Calcutta in the 1928 movement against Simon Commission. The anti-Simon Commission struggle had expedited the re-emergence of the independence movement. Government tried to thwart the movement through Black acts such as Trade Union Act 1926, Industrial Disputes Act 1926 and Public Safety Bill 1928. Through these acts government prepared to launch attack on WPPs, communists and working class. The consolidation of left faction in national movement by Workers and Peasants Parties and the increasing influence of the left factions had created panic to the British government. The historic Bombay Textile mill workers strike in 1928 under the leadership of communists shook the colonial rulers. They were perturbed about the possibility of the peasant movement of Gujarat under the leadership of Patel going into the hands of the Communists. Because of this reason alone the government agreed to reduce the land Tax. The colonial powers had correctly realised the fact that the Communist Party might become an invincible force with the support of peasantry. It is unfortunate that Communist Party failed to realise this correctly.

CPI General Body Meeting: The general body meeting of the CPI was held between 29th May and 31st May 1927 in Bombay. S V. Ghate was re-elected as General Secretary.

1. No decision was taken regarding the affiliation to Comintern (The leadership wanted to lead the Party legally. They had strong illusions that without any affiliation to Comintern, CPI protects its legality).
2. All Party members have to join the Congress Party as its members.
3. Minimum programme: a) Total independence, b) Formation of Republic based on Adult Franchise, c) Abolition of Feudalism, d) Nationalisation of public utility services, e) Formation of left-wing

in AITUC, f) 8 hours working day, minimum wages etc., g) All India Conference of Workers and Peasants Party.

4. Roy and other emigrants will work as CPI's Overseas Bureau.

The detailed report of the General Body meeting with the names and addresses of all the Central Committee (CEC) members was released to the press.

CEC members were as under:

Ghate, Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Gaur Rehman (Lahore), Singaravelu, K.S. Iyengar, Joglekar, M. A. Mazid, Nimbkar, A. Hakim, Soumyendranath Tagore.

Unofficial Papers: Ganavani (Bengali), Mehanath Kash (Urdu), Kranthi (Marathi). CPI has no organ of its own. All these were Workers and Peasant Party's papers. CPI has not realised the need of its own paper. This shows that the Workers and Peasants Party was treated as an alternative to CPI. This shows clearly the intention of CPI to run the party only as a legal party. In spite of the repeated suggestions by the Comintern to organise the party secretly, the CPI failed to realise the need of secret party. Neither the 1924 Kanpur arrests nor the Black laws and detention acts of British government made the party to recognise the need to carry out the activities of the party secretly. Spratt and Bradly were also responsible to some extent for this legalistic tendency in CPI. (Spratt and Bradly in practice worked along with Ghate, Ahmed, Joglekar as part of top leadership.)

Working Class Movement:

Comintern continued its efforts to build Communist Party and working class movement. To help CPI in building trade union movement, Comintern sent George Ellison, Philip Spratt, Hachinson and Benjamin. F. Bradly of Britain Communist Party (CPGB).

Ellison, the popular mine workers' leader arrived under the name of Donald Campbell, in India in April 1926 and worked. But police arrested him in January, 1927. He was sent back to Britain after rigorous imprisonment for 15 months in Yerawada jail.

Philip Spratt, the young British communist, came to India in January 1927. In the month of September of the same year Bradly came to India.

*“The Workers and Peasant Party was a mass anti-imperialist party; it was a party of those classes whose interests are opposed to imperialism in a revolutionary manner. Its membership consisted of the affiliated trade unions, peasants unions, revolutionary youth organisations and revolutionary intellectuals.”*²

Workers and Peasants Party has extended a public platform to enable CPI to participate in the national movement. But at that time CPI did not have a party of its own. ECCI had described this situation in the message sent to WPP’s First Conference: *“The existing (only on paper) Communist Party of India, since it does not show any signs of revolutionary life, has no grounds to consider and even to call itself communist, although there are individual communists among its members.”*³

According to a report published by Comintern in 1928 *“The main weak point of the Workers and Peasants Party is that, in practice, it is acting more as a Left wing of the Congress than as an independent political party. The Workers and Peasants Party can not develop in to a party of mass national-revolutionary struggle unless it emancipates itself entirely from the influence of bourgeois politicians and becomes transformed into a bloc of the working class with all the exploited masses under the leadership of the proletariat. On the other hand, it is entirely out of the question that the Workers and Peasants Party should be a substituted for Communist Party, the organisation of which is absolutely necessary.”*⁴

During 1925-29, WPP acted as a platform for CPI to work among the people. But due to Meerut arrests this was weakened. After 1930 it did not exist at all in practice. CPI also not tried to rejuvenate it following the Comintern VI Congress’s line.

Youth Movements: During this period youth movements also progressed considerably. The atmosphere of independence movement, the activities of national revolutionaries and communists attracted the youth towards socialism.

In 1926 **Nav Jawan Bharat Sabha** was formed in Punjab with the initiation of Bhagath Singh. Afterwards this got affiliated to Workers and Peasants Party. In 1927 **All Bengal Youth Association** was formed. In 1928 with the initiation of Workers and Peasants Party **Young Comrades**

Both of them started guiding CPI. By the time Spratt arrived in India, Roy had left to China. After his return from China, Roy also started guiding the CPI. This resulted in confusion several times during the period 1927-29. After Roy was expelled from Comintern in 1929, Comintern started guiding CPI directly through Spratt and Bradly.

The Indian working class was subjected to attacks on one hand by the imperialist's capital and on the other hand by the native capital. Reduction in wages, increase in the intensity of work, retrenchments in the name of rationalisation etc., were resorted to in large scale. The working class which was on the verge of collapse due to poverty prepare for struggle in a big way. In the history of Indian working class movement 1927-29 period was a great epoch. The effect of these struggles was responsible to acquire a powerful place in working class movement of CPI.

Strikes by B.N. Railway Workers: The B. N. Railway, Kharagpur, workers took part in strike from 11th February to 10th March 1927. 40,000 workers took part in this strike which was against the low wages, retrenchments and rationalisation etc. Police resorted to firing on workers who were picketing peacefully. The reformist leadership got frightened and called off the strike under the excuse that it was causing hardship to people.

B. N. Railway workers again struck work in the end of that year. They tried to expand strike. But leadership came in their way. V.V.Giri and other leaders of AITUC intervened and called off the strike after agreeing for retrenchment of 2000 workers. In 1928 there were 203 strikes and lock-outs. 5,06,851 workers participated in these strikes and 3,16,47,404 man days were lost.

Historic Bombay Textile Workers Strike: In this strike which had started in April 1928 about one and a half lakh workers participated. Communists in the name of Workers and Peasants Party took the leadership of this strike which continued for six months. Workers accepted the Red Flag as their class flag and as a symbol of their class fraternity. (Workers approached Gandhi for his support to this strike but Gandhi refused saying that what workers doing was wrong. But Ahmedabad factory workers extended the support). When the strike was called off in October 1928, Girni Kamgar Union (GKU) had been formed with 80,000 members and Rs.6000 union fund. In Calcutta also lakhs of Jute mill workers went on strike under the

leadership of workers and Peasants Party's Red Flag. A new Red Flag Trade union movement had emerged.

East India Railway Workers' Strike: About 1400 workers of Liluwa workshop started strike in March 1928. Workers leader K. C. Mitra tried his best to sabotage the heroic struggle. He resisted the attempts of workers to extend the strike on to the line. Two workers died in police firing. Many were injured. But workers fought with determination. The strike was called off due to the betrayal of the leadership in July 1928.

South Indian Railway Workers' Strike : About 17,500 workers of SIR workers took part in strike started on June 28. Singaravelu played an important role in this strike. He tried for a nation-wide strike through All India Federation of Railwaymen. Workers fought valiantly against the cruel police repression. Though this strike was only for ten days this was a heroic militant struggle. Singaravelu, Mukundan Sarkar and D.K. Pillai were convicted for 10 years rigorous imprisonment. But they were released in August 1930.

AITUC did not give a call for strike from the day it was formed. AITUC remained as an organisation only in for namesake in the hands of rightist leaders who were giving importance to the interests of capitalists. Although the so-called leftist leader C.R.Das who was the president of AITUC twice, he could not change the nature of AITUC. More rightist leaders Chamanlal, N.M.Joshi, V.V.Giri etc., took the leadership. Communist Party had gradually become a small group in AITUC. Ghate was elected as Joint Secretary in Kanpur session (8th) held in Nov. 1927. Dange was elected as Joint Secretary in the 9th session held in 1928. During this period, the strength of communists in AITUC had grown considerably along with the expansion of the trade union movement.

Workers and Peasants Party

The All India Conference of Workers and Peasants Party was held in Calcutta between 21st December and 23rd December 1928. The delegates from all the four states where WPP was already formed attended the Conference. In fact the attempts to form the WPP were initiated in 1923 itself. After the Gaya Congress Conference, Roy expressed his opinion that a peoples party under the leadership of workers in needed in order to form a

leftist block in Congress.

Almost at the same time the communists in India also thought of forming a leftist group within the Congress to represent the workers and peasants interests. Dange declared about the formation of **Socialist Labour Party of Indian National Congress**. Singaravelu formed **Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan** in 1923. (In the Kanpur Communist Conference Singaravelu declared the dissolution of his Party.) Roy started attempts to organise, at All India level, Workers and Peasants Party Conference in Lucknow. But then attempts could not materialise due to arrests of Kanpur conspiracy case.

The famous revolutionary poet Kazi Nazrul Islam declared on 10-11-1925 about the formation of **Labour Swaraj Party of India of National Congress**. After losing faith in Gandhi and other nationalists, Kazi Nazrul Islam had tried to form this Party with the help of others. This Party brought out a paper from 23-12-1925 named *Langal* with Nazrul as its Chief Editor. The name of this Party was changed as Workers and Peasants Party from 6-2-1926 (under the influence of communists). *Langal* was brought out from 12-8-1926 under the name of *Ganavani*. It was the first Communist Party paper in Indian languages.

In 1927 Bombay Workers' and Peasants Party was formed. This party started a paper under the name of *Kranti*. **Kirti Kisan Sabha** was formed in 1928. Gadar Party comrades Santhok Singh, Sohan Singh Joshi and others had started working in Punjab. From 1926 under the editorship of Santhok Singh one paper under the name of *Kirti* had been started. The first Conference of **Kirti Kisan Sabha** was held in Jalianwala Bagh on 12-4-28. The second conference was held on 20th to 30th September 1928 in Lailapur. *Kirti* (Punjabi) was the paper of that party. *Kirti* was published in Urdu also. *Mehanath Kash*, a workers' paper was also published for some time.

The Workers and Peasants Party of UP and Delhi was formed in 1928 in Meerut. P. C. Joshi was elected as Secretary in the Conference held in 15th & 16th October 1928. This Party published a paper *Kranthikari* (weekly) from 17-11-1928.

Later Joshi described the political character of the WPP in this way:

League was formed. In 1927 **All India Socialist Youth Congress** was formed in Bombay. This was formed independently. But afterwards it was influenced by Workers and Peasants Party. In 1928 December **All India Youth Congress** was formed in Calcutta.

Comintern Sixth Congress

The sixth Congress of the Comintern was held from July 17 to September 1st of 1928. When capitalism was boasting that it had come out of the crisis, Stalin said that stability was only transient. He correctly predicted that the world capitalism was approaching another serious crisis. He recognised, keeping in view the dangers of war and the emerging revolutionary situation, the necessity of working class preparing itself to use such situation. He tried to formulate a comprehensive programme to Communist International. This Congress took place when the internal struggles within CPSU were coming to an end (after Trotsky's expulsion).

Two issues have influenced this Congress:

1. The betrayal of Kuomintang to Chinese revolution.
2. The tendency of Social Democracy in imperialist countries to tilt towards fascism showing opposition to working class united front.

This Congress emphasised the slogan **united front from below**. It took up the policy of **class against class**. It seriously took note of the reactionary role of the Social Democracy in working class movements in imperialist countries and the national bourgeoisie in the national liberation movements. This had adopted the following three important documents.

1. The programme of Communist International.
2. A statement on the Communist struggle against imperialist war.
3. Thesis on the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies.

Theses on Colonial and Semi-Colonial Revolutionary Movements

1. Based on Lenin's Thesis, this Congress discussed the strategical issues pertaining to colonies and semi-colonies taking them individually and

group-wise.

2. The theory of **Decolonisation** is alien to Leninism. *“To recognise the ‘decolonisation’ and industrialisation of the colonies would essentially mean to give up Lenin’s thesis concerning the nature of colonial exploitation. To be sure, there is a certain industrial development going on in the colonies. But this industrial development does not yet signify industrialisation. The industrialisation of a country means the development of the production of the means of production (machinery, etc.) in that country, whereas imperialism allows in the colonies only the development of small manufacturing industries engaged in the conversion of agricultural produce. It deliberately hinders the development of the production of the means of production. But imperialism checks the industrialisation of the colonies not only hindering the development of the production of the means of production; it checks progress by the whole of its policy of supporting the survivals of feudalism in the village and by the innumerable taxes which ruin the already impoverished peasantry.”*⁵

3. Chinese revolution has brought forward the question of the hegemony of proletariat on national revolutionary movements.

4. The agrarian revolution along with national liberation movement is pivotal for bourgeois democratic revolutions in some important colonial countries.

5. *“The national bourgeoisie in these colonial countries do not adopt a uniform attitude to imperialism. One part, more especially the commercial bourgeoisie, directly serves the interests of imperialist capital (the so-called comprador bourgeoisie). In general, they maintain, more or less consistently, an anti-national, imperialist point of view, directed against the whole nationalist movement, as do the feudal allies of imperialism and the more highly paid native officials. The other parts of the native bourgeoisie, especially those representing the interests of native industry, support the national movement; this tendency, vacillating and inclined to compromise, may be called national reformism.”*⁶

6. *“The Indian bourgeoisie as a class is no doubt more consolidated economically and politically, and more mature than was the Chinese bourgeoisie; whereas the proletariat, although more numerous than in China, is*

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politically still under the influence of bourgeois nationalism.

A section of the Indian bourgeoisie-and the most influential one-has already taken to the path of compromise with British imperialism; another section (the Swarajists), as pointed out in the Political Theses of the congress, is 'substantially looking for an understanding with imperialism at the expense of the toilers'. All the tendencies of the Indian bourgeoisie have already betrayed the agrarian revolution of the peasantry in the past, and in the future they are only likely to play a counter-revolutionary role"

Tasks: To strengthen the communist parties of colonies and semi-colonies politically and organisationally.

Tasks Concerning India: 1. *"The combination of the communist elements and groups into a strong Communist Party, the combination of the proletarian masses in the trade unions, the systematic struggle within the latter with a view to the complete exposure and expulsion of the social-treacherous leaders from all the trade-union organisations is the most indispensable task of the working class in India, and the indispensable condition for the revolutionary mass struggle for the independence of India (Para 28 of the Political Theses). Such is the first task of the Indian Communist Party."*

2. *"The struggle for the proletarian hegemony in the national struggle against imperialism and the remnants of feudalism, such is the second task of the Indian Communist Party as the vanguard of the proletariat, because only under the leadership of the proletariat will the bloc of the workers, peasants and the revolutionary portion of the intelligentsia be in a position to smash the bloc of the imperialists, landlords and the compromising bourgeoisie, to unfold the agrarian revolution and to break through the imperialist front in India"*(Para 28 of the Political Theses).⁸

United Front: *"The formation of any kind of bloc between the Communist Party and the national-reformist opposition must be rejected; this does not exclude temporary agreements and the co-ordination of activities in particular anti-imperialist actions, provided that the activities of the bourgeois opposition can be utilised to develop the mass movement, and that these agreements do not in any way restrict communist freedom of agitation among the masses and their organisations. Of course, in this work*

the communists must at the same time carry on the most relentless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois nationalism and against the slightest signs of its influence inside the labour movement.

It is absolutely essential that the communist parties in these countries should from the very outset demarcate themselves in the most clear-cut fashion both politically and organisationally, from all petty-bourgeois groups and parties. In so far as the needs of the revolutionary struggle demand it, temporary co-operation is permissible, and in certain circumstances even a temporary alliance between the Communist Party and the national-revolutionary movement, provided that the latter is a genuine revolutionary movement, that it genuinely struggles against the ruling power, and that its representatives do not hamper the communists in their work of revolutionary education among the peasants and the working masses. In all such co-operation, however, it is essential to take the most careful precautions against its degenerating into a fusion of the communist movement with the petty-bourgeois-revolutionary movement.”⁹

1. Comintern took up in developed capitalist countries the strategy of **class against class**.

2. There is a visible change in the attitude towards the bourgeoisie of colonies and semi-colonies. The concentration was on the policy of **united front from below**. The reformist, compromising bourgeois to some extent and at the same time will have some dispute with imperialism. Therefore to utilise this antagonism united front is necessary. But to recognize only unity and to forget about struggle is suicidal. This was proved by the Chinese developments.

The sixth Congress emphasised that the communist parties of colonies and semi-colonies should under all circumstances uphold their independence and class nature, fight with reformism particularly reformism with leftist disguise. This Congress had clearly stated that in the revolutions of colonies peasantry play an important role and the agricultural revolution is a pivot for the revolution of that country. Since CPI remained only in name, the sixth congress advised CPI to concentrate on building party.

The following delegates from India attended this Congress: Shaukath Usmani, Soumyendranath Tagore (CPI, CEC member, Secretary Bengal

WPP) and Mohammed Shafique Siddique all with voting right, and Clemens Dutt, Mohd. Ali Spasi, Luhani without voting right. (But these delegates cannot be treated as official CPI delegates because Tagore was already in Moscow since June 1927 to save himself from arrest and Luhani, Sipasi and Dutt were CPI's foreign Bureau representatives. Shaukath Usmani and Mohd. Shafique Siddique inspite of the refusal of permission by the party they went to Moscow in the beginning of 1928 for party education) M. N. Roy could not attend the Congress due to ill-health. But by this time Comintern had come to know about the failure of Roy in guiding CPI through Tagore and others. It also came to know about the real situation about the organisation of CPI. His Decolonisation Theory was subjected to severe criticism in this Congress. (See Appendix-I for Decolonisation theory of Roy.) Logically it leads to the conclusion that British rulers will themselves transfer power and political independence to India. This was thoroughly criticised.

The formation of Workers and Peasants Party was subjected to severe criticism in this Congress. It was said that WPP was mixing two different classes. The Congress warned that it is not correct to form WPP as workers party loses its class nature. Shaukath Usmani and others demanded to dissolve the WPPs. Only Tagore argued strongly for the continuation of the WPPs. He argued that Comintern is unnecessarily worrying in treating WPP as an alternative to CPI. But it is a fact that CPI and WPP are the same and are not separate parties. CPI has no organisation separately. The propaganda also carried in the name of WPP. Moreover CPI has clearly said that only WPP can consolidate all the revolutionary forces in the country and lead the national liberation movement. CPGB also argued for continuation of WPP. But finally the Congress has resolved that formation of WPP was not correct.

There was an argument that Comintern's decision to dissolve WPP is not correct and CPI lost a mass platform due to this. But this argument is not correct. Those who were arguing are forgetting the circumstances under which such decision was taken by Comintern or they were underestimating the importance of those circumstances. In fact the Comintern itself (ECCI V Plenum) suggested CPI to build a broad mass party which demands Total Independence with an anti-feudal programme. Comintern

never viewed the suggested mass party as an alternative to CPI but it expected that it could become a useful instrument in the hands of CPI in establishing working class hegemony over the nationalist movement. It means Comintern viewed this broad mass party as broad peoples open forum under the leadership of a strong, organised and secret Communist Party.

But WPP instead of becoming an instrument in the hands of CPI, it itself became de facto Party. In fact the existence of CPI itself became almost nothing more than the WPP. In the absence of a working class Party the broad mass forum of various classes (WPP) aimed at mobilising broad masses on an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme, not to say about its becoming an instrument in establishing proletarian hegemony over the nationalist movement will become rudderless.

Legalism and right opportunism was very strong in CPI at that time. These weaknesses well manifested in the opposition to form an independent and secret party organisation. As a result of which CPI remained only for name sake. The CPI leadership turned the broad based mass forum (WPP) with a limited task into the Communist Party itself. WPP that should serve as an instrument in the hands of CPI stood as an alternative to it and thus became a hurdle to build a strong, organised and illegal working class party at a time when the existence of such a Party is itself became the immediate necessity of Indian revolution. In such a situation without dissolving the WPP that stood as an alternative to CPI there was no prospect of CPI build it own organisation. So the Comintern's assessment and its resolution on WPP are correct.

The Sixth Congress of Comintern has predicted the world-wide deep economic crisis and emerging revolutions. It emphasised the necessity of forming revolutionary parties. The immediate necessity of working class party which is independent, strong and secret for the Indian revolution came forward. Already considerable delay has been taken place. Keeping this situations Comintern has advised for dissolution of WPP which existed as an alternative to CPI. As it stood alternative to WPP, Comintern criticised that workers party can not be a party of two classes. Had WPP been revived, it would have been made by the CPI leadership which already was infested with opportunism and legalism as an alternative to Communist Party.

Roy's Expulsion: Roy was expelled from Comintern in the 10th Ple-

num held in 1929. Roy who treated CPI as his personal property could not digest losing his influence on the party as Comintern's representative. It was beyond his ability to realise his own weaknesses. He joined with Brandler and Thalmer group. (Comintern directed that nobody should neither maintain relations with these groups nor write to their papers.) For this indiscipline Roy was expelled from Comintern.

Comintern depended on Roy in its efforts to build Communist party in India in the beginning. The magazines Vanguard and The Masses of India and other publications edited and issued by Roy contributed significantly in unifying the communist groups in India and in spreading the communist movement in its early years. However it was proved beyond doubt that Roy who could not get rid of his subjective assessments and careerist style of work deficient in the leadership qualities that required to fulfil the great task of building Communist party in India.

CPI got the resolution after three months of the conclusion of the Congress. In 1929 January, CPI's CEC discussed the theses of Sixth Congress. Based on that thesis and in line with the circumstances prevailing in India it was decided to work. It also decided to examine whether the party can carry on its work publicly or not.

C.E.C. Meeting:

CPI Central Executive Committee which met after the Conference of Workers and Peasants Party of India towards the end of 1928 discussed the theses adopted by Sixth Congress of Comintern on colonial and semi-colonial movements. CPI got these resolutions of Comintern three months after the Sixth Congress of Comintern. The thesis of Comintern opposed the formation of Workers and Peasants Party. The thesis emphasised the importance of exposing the left wing of the congress and the treacherous role of the bourgeoisie. CPI was required to get ready for important organisational changes. Based on the thesis and the current situation in India, CPI resolved to formulate its line. The Workers and Peasants Party was not dissolved. It decided to examine the possibilities of organising the all india conference of the Communist Party legally. (That was the time when British government prepared the stage for Meerut conspiracy case and to attack the communists and working class movements).

Before the attempts for organising the second All India Conference (legally) were completed, the imperialist government in 1929 March started attacking the Workers and Peasants Party, Communist Party and the militant Trade Unions' leaders.

CPGB also in 1929 advised for continuation of WPP. The criticism that CPI lost its foundation as a result of dissolution of WPP based on the advice of sixth congress, was not correct. CPI published the manifesto in the name of WPP for 1929 Lahore Congress. Even in 1930 it worked with the name of WPP in Bengal. The second party conference of WPP also was held in 1929. Where compared to the first conference this was a total failure. The leadership of CPI, WPP and Trade Unions was entirely arrested. This had affected very badly the WPP's working. The nationalist petty-bourgeoisie which was till then with WPP went to the Congress party with the starting of dis-obedience movement. Moreover CPI which has failed to grasp the Comintern's Sixth congress line remained away from this movement. Trade Union movement also got weakened. Due to all these reasons, the Workers and Peasants Party vanished from physical existence. It may be due to the Comintern's policy that they were not revived.

Meerut Conspiracy Case

An international economic crisis rocked the foundations of the capitalist system in 1929. This crisis furnished the impetus for a general revival of the upsurge of the working class, oppressed people's struggles and the independence movement as a whole. Comintern VI Congress tried to get ready to take up the leadership for the ensuing revolution. British government wanted to attack this upsurge of people's struggles with Black Acts and ruthless detentions. It prepared itself to shatter the possibility of the Communist Party emerging as the leader of these people's movements.

In 1929 government arrested 31 members of the Communist Party of India and Workers and Peasants Party throughout the country. This attack on the Party, at a time when it was emerging as a mass based party, with the people's support as its foundation, produced an adverse effect on Communist Party and Workers movement.

The arrests were started on 29th March 1929. CPI was completely a

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legal party. It was a party having no intention of organising it secretly. (Dange was of the opinion that in the circumstances created by Gandhi, it is not possible to organise and work with a secret party). All the communist leaders in the country were arrested. Some of the leaders of the Girni Kamgar Union, GIP Railwaymens Association, AITUC etc., were also arrested. Charge sheets were filed in all the 31 leaders. The trial of this case took four years till 16th Jan 1933. 28 leaders were sentenced for life imprisonment to three years rigorous imprisonment. Two leaders died during the court of trial (G.R.Tengadi and K.C.Ghosh). Two were acquitted. The High Court afterwards reduced these sentences to some extended.

The Communist Party utilised this prolonged trial of four years as its political platform for propaganda. The declaration made by 18 communists and sympathisers of the party can be considered as the first comprehensive party document formulated by CPI. This trial has helped for wide presentation of the CPI's line.

Main Points of Meerut Statement

1. *“Our party, the CPI, was not at the time of our arrest duly affiliated to the Comintern.”*

2. *“We are convinced.... that in a colonial country, such as India is, the revolution which will precede the proletarian revolution will be of the nature of the bourgeois democratic revolution. This will achieve the complete freedom of India from the control of British imperialism and the complete abolition of all feudal and pre-feudal forms of social organisations and will result in the establishment of an independent democratic republic.”*

3. *“The bourgeoisie represents for a time a force wavering between the counter revolutionary bloc of imperialism and its allies—the princes and landlords and the loyal upper classes—and the revolutionary bloc of the workers and peasants and the town poor, the petty bourgeoisie and the revolutionary youth. It vacillates for a time between the two great camps of revolution and counter revolution, assisting to a certain extent, especially in the early stages, in the growth of the revolutionary movement but later coming more and more to hamper its growth, to confuse the issue and mislead it and eventually as the revolution gathers strength finding itself forced*

to line up more and more definitely with the forces of counter revolution.”

4. *“The basic task of the Indian communists consists in struggle against British imperialism for emancipation of the country, for destruction of all relics of feudalism, for agrarian revolution, for establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in the form of a soviet republic — as envisaged in the colonial theses of the sixth world congress of Comintern.”*

5. *“The Workers’ and Peasants’ republic of India will not be a socialist republic. But its policy will be to develop industry on a non-capitalist basis so that it may become a socialist state as soon as possible.”*

6. *“The formation of soviets is not the immediate task in India. The revolutionary struggle has not yet developed to that pitch. But it is the duty of the proletariat to show to its allies the pitfalls of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois pseudo-revolutionary methods of struggle and to make clear to them the necessity of the development of their own mass organisations into organs of struggle and power. The constituent assembly is, as Lenin said, the highest form of democracy in a bourgeois republic. But India will not see this stage. The Indian revolution will proceed directly to the still higher democratic form, the soviets of the workers and peasants.”¹⁰*

But as the entire leadership of the Party which was in its embryonic stage was in jail, the party functioning was hardly affected. The party was shattered into small groups after the Meerut arrests. This was the result of not following the advice of the Comintern to organise a central party secretly. Due to lack of organisational unity in the party, groupism and factionalism had developed. Even the top leadership in jail also were divided and started quarrelling among themselves (Dange and Spratt were expelled from the Party). The party was divided into two outside the jail. Workers and Peasants Party remained only in the name. The sectarian policy of CPI in the working class movement had caused big loss to the party. The Communist Party had become all alone in 1930-34 in the national movement. British government expressed its happiness and satisfaction as the Meerut Conspiracy case has prevented the Civil Disobedience Movement from slipping into the hands of Communists.

First split in AITUC

AITUC right from the day of its formation was in the control of right-

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ist and reformist leaders. During the period 1927-29 communists and leftists could muster some strength in AITUC as a result of which the working class was attracted towards socialism and communism. The working class participated in the political movement actively. The reformist leaders were against the participation of the working class in political movement. By 1929 AITUC demanded for Total Independence. Militant workers movements overcoming the restrictions imposed by the leaders were on the rise. All these developments antagonised the leftist group and the right reformist group of AITUC.

In the AITUC Nagpur Congress held in Nov. 29-30, 1929 the leadership reformist group divided the AITUC. This was due to the increase of the influences of the communists in AITUC which was not acceptable to the reformists. In this Congress the issue of affiliation to international working class movement came for discussion. Reformist leader N. M. Joshi failed in his efforts to make the AITUC affiliated to **International Federation of Trade Unions** of Amsterdam. Communists wanted affiliation with the **Red International Labour Union**.

The reformist leaders assembled on 1st December 1929 and formed "Indian Federation of Trade Unions" with V.V.Giri as its chairman. This meeting formulated the rules and programme in such a way that communist and others with communist ideas are not eligible to join the Federation. It is wrong to see this division of AITUC as an internal fight of leftists and reformists. It should not be forgotten that the British imperialists and national big-bourgeoisie is one side and the International Federation of Trade Unions on the other side had encouraged the split in the AITUC. This split in AITUC should be seen as a part of the attack launched by imperialists on the revolutionary movements in the country.

Brief Summary

During the period 1926-29 the Communist movement in India expanded and the Party emerged as a significant force in the Trade Union front. During the upsurge of working class struggles that broke out in this period party gained strength among the working class. Comintern even sent its representatives in assisting CPI in building trade union movement. It was in this period WPPs were formed and they had been expanding their mass base.

Even though the INC leadership that represented the comprador bourgeoisie and feudal classes aspired for the dominion status, the demand for Complete Independence became very popular with the masses of India during this period. The struggle against the Simon Commission became an immediate cause for the out break of another nationalist upsurge. The working class actively took part in this wave of nationalist movement.

To stem and suppress the upsurge of mass struggles the government resorted to severe repression using black laws, especially on the infant Communist Party, trade Unions and on WPPs.

After the Kanpur Conference Roy and other émigré Communist revolutionaries continued to work as the foreign bureau of CPI. Sprat and Bradly of CPGB who came to India as the Comintern representatives too contributed to the growth of legalist and rightist deviations in CPI.

Despite of the achievement of considerable progress in its work in working class, the task of organising peasantry who constitute the main force of the Indian revolution however didn't got due importance. In fact the WPP, except in Punjab virtually remained as the party of working class and urban petti-bourgeoisie. The role played by Sprat and Bradly in making CPI concentrate on Trade Union movement alone, was not an insignificant one.

At that time the Party wanted to strengthen the left in INC with the help of WPP. But the CPI leadership with its desire to protect its legality

at any cost contented with the organisation of WPP and neglected building up of a strong, organised and illegal Communist Party. Comintern emphasised the task of building a strong and independent Communist Party in India keeping in view of the impending worldwide capitalist crisis and the ongoing revolutionary upsurges in the backward countries and thus it suggested the dissolution of the WPP which then became an alternative to CPI.

The Sixth Congress of Comintern rejected the **Decolonisation Theory** of Roy which enunciated that capitalism is developing independently in colonies and semi-colonies under the colonial regime itself and thus it is leading to the political independence of those countries.

Despite of the insistence of the Sixth Congress on the task of immediately building a strong, independent and illegal Party, the CPI leadership however decided to conduct an All India Conference of CPI legally and to probe the possibilities for the functioning of Party legally. At the same time the government on the other hand all set to pounce upon the Communist Movement to nib it in the bud stage itself and prepared every thing ready to enact the Meerut Conspiracy case. The Party that was working completely open when the attack took place became a sitting duck and faced severe losses.

After Fifth Congress of Comintern, both Roy and CPGB were entrusted with the task of guiding CPI. Roy failed to work in the Foreign Bureau of CPI. More over as the actual state of CPI organisation in India came to be known to everybody Roy's Prestige took a severe jolt. Roy with his strong petti-bourgeoisie egoism was not able to digest these events. At last he joined hand with the Brandler and Thalmer clique that betrayed the German Revolution and eventually expelled from the Comintern

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Upsurge of Mass Struggles: Towards a Revolutionary Path

Throughout the world the capitalist economy was subjected to severe economic crisis from the end of 1929. It was proved that Stalin's prediction was correct. This great depression led to the Second World War. When the whole world was under the economic crisis, Soviet Union was not required to face any such crisis. The development took place at a faster rate in Soviet Union. This helped for the spread of socialist and communist ideas.

In India the burden of the economic crisis had fallen on workers and peasants. With the fall of prices peasantry had become indebted to money lenders. Peasant struggles were started on a large scale for reduction and abolition of rents and taxes. Although due to the crisis trade has come down considerably but as a whole the Indian big bourgeoisie became strong. Its activities were expanded. Particularly the fall of the prices of agricultural products had helped them a lot. In fact the capitalism launched its offensive on working class even before the commencement of the great depression. In the name of rationalisation it had become common to invoke the working day, the intensity of labour and retrenchments and lay-offs. It has already been stated in the previous chapter that on these issues during 1927-28 many big working class struggles were started.

These class struggles, activities of national revolutionaries and the communist movements put together prepared the ground for another surge of independence movement. The Lahore Congress session held in 1929 December adopted the resolution for total independence. (In fact in the Madras session of the Congress held in 1927 itself this resolution was passed. But Gandhi who did not attend that session, in 1928 brought forward the demand for dominion status and thus the necessity of making the resolution again.) Gandhi even then was opposed to total independence. But he had to give in to the pressure of the left in the Congress. January 30, 1930 was observed as: Independence Day. Gandhi gave an ultimatum with 11 points

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on the eve of Dis-obedience Movement. There was no mention of total independence in that ultimatum. He wanted only dominion status. When government did not bother about the Dis-obedience movement, Gandhi launched Salt Satyagraha. The leadership tried its best to keep this movement peaceful. The movement spread through out the country and started turning into a militant movement. On one side the Dis-obedience Movement through out the country gained momentum and on the other side national revolutionaries and people started militant struggles against the British government. The people's revolutionary struggles which made the big-bourgeoisie and the British imperialists to tremble with fear emerged during this time.

Hindustan Socialist Republican Association: The HSRA formed by Bhagath Singh and others in 1928 took a decisive step towards Scientific Socialism and tried to break form the legacy of idealistic thinking of the nationalist revolutionaries by recognizing the role of masses as the makers of history. Bhagath Singh especially showed great interest in and influenced by Marxism and Communism and took up the study of them in earnest.

In 1928 HSRA annihilated the cruel British officer Sanders. In 1929 Bhagath Singh hurled a bomb in the Assembly as a symbolic of the strong desire for freedom of Indians and got himself arrested voluntarily to make use of court as the political platform to reach his fellow country men and women to spread their revolutionary message. In 1929 itself they blasted the train in which viceroy was traveling. The heroic acts of these revolutionaries helped greatly in lighting the flames of patriotism and longing for freedom in the hearts of the people allover the country. By 1930 the name Bhagat Singh became a synonym for patriotism and the intelligence reports of that period clearly stated that he became far more popular than Gandhi at that time.

Chittagong Uprising: The revolutionaries under the leadership of Suryasen attacked the Chittagong ammunition depot on 18th April 1930 and enacted a glorious episode in the history of the armed struggles of nationalist revolutionaries. Revolutionaries made the attack with lightening speed and took control of the city. They started guerrilla war in Jalalabad hills with British army. The advance of revolutionaries from individual actions to mass actions and to guerrilla war with the support of people is noteworthy. But of

the 60 revolutionaries who fought the struggle in the name of Indian Republican Army most of them become martyrs and rest of them were arrested. In the beginning of 1933 Suryasen was also arrested and was hanged to death in 1934. Inspired by this armed struggle, the activities of revolutionary organisations like HSRA and others in Bengal and Punjab were increased to a large extent.

Peshawar Struggle – Gharwali Soldiers’ Revolt: In protest against the arrest of Abdul Ghafar Khan, the people revolted and captured the capital city Peshawar of North-West Frontier province on 23rd April 1930. Hundreds people died in the fight with the armed police. 92% of the population there is Muslims. To suppress the people’s revolt government used Hindu Garhwali police. The Gharwali soldiers under the leadership of Subedar Garhwali showed great patriotism and refused to open fire on their unarmed brothers. Gandhi criticised this “indiscipline” of the army. On 4th May the government forces captured the city.

Sholapur Struggle: Gandhi was arrested on 4th May 1930. In protest against this arrest Sholapur workers resorted to general strike on 7th May. The government offices and liquor shops were set on fire. The town was captured by them. About 50,000 workers participated in this struggle. The struggle was supported by imposing martial law and resorting to severe violence on 16th May. There was not even a single point concerning the demands of workers in the 11 point programme prepared by Gandhi. In spite of this, working class in other towns too fought militantly against the arrest of Gandhi.

These struggles naturally created panic in the camp of comprador bourgeoisie and feudal forces who were leading the Congress and also in the government. Moreover, the Dis-obedience movement spontaneously and gradually was turned into national platform of different sections of the people with their own demands. Gandhi hesitated to call off the struggle fearing that he has to face many time more opposition than the opposition he had to face when the non-cooperation movement was withdrawn on the pretext of Chauri-Chora incident was called off. (In 1929 Gandhi went to Meerut jail to meet the Communist prisoners. When Communists in the jail asked Gandhi whether he would call off the Dis-obedience movement if incidents similar to Chauri-Chora are repeated, Gandhi said clearly that the move-

ment will not be called off.)

When the movement which was started for the purpose of bargaining a deal, crossed its limits and started changing into an anti-imperialist revolutionary movement, both the sides were eager to a compromise. As a result of this Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on 5th March 1931. The comprador bourgeoisie once again succeeded in dissipating the nationalist upsurge. Gandhi called off the movement without any assurances from the government. Government agreed to release those activists who had not resorted to violent actions. Gandhi agreed not to press for inquiry on the inhuman atrocities committed by police on the activists and people. Indirectly Gandhi expressed even that he will not oppose the death sentence on Bhagath Singh. On March 23, 1931 Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged.)

The Karachi Congress session unanimously accepted the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Jawaharlal Nehru, who by then branded as leftist, also conveyed his acceptance to this pact. Bose initially expressed publicly his opposition to the pact, but agreed to the Pact in the Congress session. CPI distributed in the session its document titled Draft Platform of Action. Even after the withdrawal of the Dis-obedience movement, people's struggles continued, particularly peasants struggles. In all these movements atrocities of police were committed.

Second Dis-Obedience Movement:

British government did not give any assurance regarding granting of Independence or Dominion status during the Round Table Conference. Congress was forced against its will to start the agitation again. British government as pre-planned, arrested all the Congress leaders before the agitation. Congress party was banned. Gandhi, who was not at all interested in the movement, was busy with his "constructive activities."¹ People without any leaders, fought the struggles during 1932-34. But this movement was gradually weakened. In 1934 May, AICC resolved to call off the movement. (The government released the Congress leadership only to pass this resolution). The ban on Congress was lifted in June. Congress decided to participate in the coming elections.

CPI during the Civil Dis-obedience Movement

With the Meerut conspiracy case, CPI had been completely shattered. Groupism was rampant both inside and outside the jails. Party was shattered into small splinter groups. CPI failed to remain as one united party. There was no Central Committee till 1933.

The leadership which was outside the jails was subjected to sectarian tendency due to lack of experience. The CPI implemented the policy of Sixth Comintern in a sectarian way. The Bombay Communist group was then controlling the GKU, GPI Railway Men's Union. Without listening to the non-communist opposition the party gave a general strike call of the Textile mill workers on the issues of rationalisation, increase in work load, cut in wages and retrenchment. This strike had failed. The other strikes led by the Communists were also failed. These unions went into the hands of Royists.

Roy returned to India in the middle of 1930. He tried to usurp the leadership of Communist Party of India and failed. He started disruptive activities. Taking advantage of the situation after the arrests of Meerut conspiracy case, the followers of Roy resorted to the disruptive activities particularly in the Trade Union front. Consequently, the trade union movement gradually started slipping into the hands of Royists. From his left sectarian stance Roy now degenerated in to naked right opportunism. He started supporting total unity with congress. In the later days he even went to the extent of demanding that no other parties be allowed into INC..

Bombay Communist Party split into Deshpande and Ranadive groups. Ranadive formed his own Bolshevik Party in 1931 and requested for Comintern's recognition. In Bengal too CPI which was still functioning as WPP split into various groups. Comintern Sixth Congress advised neither not to participate in the nationalist movement nor not to form a united front with Congress. It said to expose the dubious 'left' Congress and the national bourgeoisie's role. It advised the CPI to retain its identity and independence. The Indian communists have understood this advice completely in a sectarian way. They remained aloof from the mass upsurge of Disobedience Movement. Some party activists, members and sympathisers who did not agree with this policy of isolating from the nationalist upsurge however participated in the movement actively. During this time, the working class movement under the leadership of communists came out of the

AITUC and formed a separate Red Trade Union Committee (RTUC).

When the whole country was active in the people's movement, the CPI was busy in group quarrels. The leaders in the jails stoked the fires of group fights outside.

Draft Platform of Action of CPI

When the Communist Party movement was split into various small groups and remained only for namesake, a document by name Draft Platform of action of CPI was published in *Imprecor* in December 1930 under the name of CPI. This document for the first time made a comprehensive analysis of the revolutionary movement in India. This was the first comprehensive document prepared keeping in view all the classes and all social groups. This programme remained as the Comintern's policy towards CPI till the Seventh Congress of Comintern. Although this document was published in the name of CPI, it was presumed to be formulated by Comintern.

Some of the important points of the Draft Platform

1. This document correctly estimated the revolutionary stage. It clearly stated that agricultural revolution is the basis for the national liberation movement. *"In order to destroy the slavery of the Indian people and emancipate the working class and the peasant from the poverty which is crushing them down, it is essential to win the independence of the country and to raise the banner of the agrarian revolution,..... An agrarian revolution against British capitalism and landlordism must be the basis for the revolutionary emancipation of India."*²

2. This document correctly understood and estimated the nature of the comprador bourgeois which was the force behind the congress and the relationship of this comprador bourgeoisie with the national feudalism. But it treated the whole feudalism as one lot. It thought that the Indian revolution was going on in the shape of general revolt.

*"Linked up as it is with the system of landlordism and usury, and terrified at the thought of a revolutionary insurrection by the toiling masses, the capitalist class has long ago betrayed the struggle for the independence of the country and the radical solution of the agrarian problem."*³

3. It correctly reiterated the need to wage relentless struggle to remove the illusions about the Congress and particularly towards the leftist leaders of sCongress. It advocated the necessity of exposing their leftist's folly.

“The greatest threat to the victory of Indian revolution is the fact that the great masses of our people still harbour illusions about the National Congress and have not realised that it represents the class organisation of the capitalists working against the fundamental interests of the toiling masses of our country.”⁴

“Gandhi’s eleven points represented the programme of the Chambers of Commerce and similar associations.”⁵

“The Indian National Congress and particularly its Left Wing have done or doing all in their power to retain the struggle of the masses within the framework of the British imperialist constitution and legislation.”⁶

“Ruthless war on the Left national reformists is an essential condition if we are to isolate the latter from the workers and mass of the peasantry and mobilize the latter under the banner of the Communist Party and the anti-imperialist agrarian revolution in India.”⁷

While correctly emphasising the determined fight against the so-called Left leaders of INC, it failed to make a distinction between the so-called left leaders and genuine nationalist elements in it. This defect contributed to the sectarian interpretation of the Draft by CPI leadership. It also failed to take note of this caution given by Kunnison in Imprecor (March 29th 1930):

CPI’s fundamental attitude can only be the “...determined fight against the National Congress. This does not exclude but presupposes the utilisation of even the sham fights of the Indian bourgeoisie, the utilisation of its narrowly restricted conflict with the British imperialism by the CP for the purpose of mobilising the broad toiling sections...”⁸

4. *“Main Objects for the Present Stage of Revolution:*

- (1) The complete independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation of all British factories, banks, railways, sea and river transport and plantations.*
- (2) Establishment of a soviet government. The realisation of the*

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right of national minorities to self-determination including separation. Abolition of the native states. The creation of Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviets Republic.

- (3) *The confiscation without compensation of all the lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princess, churches, the British Government officials and moneylender and handing over for use to the toiling masses of peasantry. Cancellation of slave agreements and all the indebtedness of the peasantry to money-lenders and banks.*
- (4) *The 8-hour working day and the radical improvement of conditions of labour. Increase in wages and state maintenance for the unemployed labour.*"⁹

5. The Draft Platform made it clear that, Gandhi, in the name of serving harijans actually contributing to the maintenance of the caste system. "*Only the ruthless abolition of the caste system in the reformed, Gandhist variety, only the agrarian revolution and the violent overthrow of British rule, will lead to the social, economic, cultural and legal emancipation of the working pariahs¹⁰ and slaves.*"¹¹

6. "*The building of a centralised, disciplined, united, mass underground communist party is to-day the chief and basic task long ago overdue, of the revolutionary movement for the emancipation of our country.*"¹²

7. "*The C.P. of India declares with pride that it considers itself a part of the organised world communist movement, a section of the Communist International.*"¹³

Formation of Red Trade Union Committee

The AITUC was split for the second time in July 1931. In the Calcutta session of AITUC, Communists separated and formed RTUC.

The Roy-Kandelkar-Karnik group has already been carrying out the disruptive activities in the Trade Union movement. In the Calcutta session, the followers of Roy and President Bose resorted to most undemocratic methods. The followers of Roy made a pre-planned attack on the communists to throw them out of the organisation. Having lost patience, the communists under the leadership of S. V. Deshpande boycotted the session and

RTUC was formed. This division in AITUC was the result of sectarian understanding by the communists of the advice of the Comintern to wage a relentless and merciless fight against the dubious leadership of leftists in the national movement. This division in the already divided AITUC harmed the working class movement. On this split, Impricor (International Press Correspondence) Feb-March 1933 issue wrote this:

“Many Indian communists identify the trade unions and the political parties. As a result it happened that the splits in the labour movement were transferred to the trade unions mechanically. The communists forgot the distinction between the party and the trade union and therefore succumbed to the provocations of the national reformists with exceptional ease who successfully carried on the policy of splitting in the trade union movement..... The national reformists taking advantage of the mistaken position of the communists were able to split the trade unions and the congress of trade unions in Calcutta hiding behind the phrases of unity.”¹⁴

During this period attempts were made to rectify and reconstruct the party. CPI's Calcutta committee was formed. It gave a call for unity of the party. In some provinces “Young Communist Leagues” were formed and started functioning. Re-thinking on the organisation of the party and on the sectarian methods used in the national movement and working class movements had been started. Under these circumstances in May 1932 Open letter of Three Communist Parties was published. In 1933 Open Letter of CPC was published.

Open Letter of Three Communist Parties

It was presumed by some that some of the leaders in the jails requested the Comintern to formulate a document which can be used as a guideline to the Party which was undergoing political and organisational problems and that this Open letter was the result of it.

This open letter was issued in the name of Communist Parties of China, Great Britain and Germany. This letter advised CPI based on the Draft Platform document. This letter also emphasised the importance of the party organisation. It criticised the CPI's coming out from national movement. It advised, the party should come out of this isolation and should start cooperate with congress in national movement. (This was missing in the Draft

Platform). But this letter has described the formation of RTUC as a progressive step. (CPC's letter of later year tried to correct this mistake.)

Some of the important points of the letter

1. *“The general picture of the Communist movement is not satisfactory. On the one hand there is a tremendous development of the working class movement which is unprecedented in the past. On the other hand, the Communist Party as yet consists of a small number (though the number is increasing) of weak groups, often isolated from the masses, disconnected with each other, politically not united and in some places not clearly differentiated from national reformism, adopting a conciliatory policy towards it. Instead of a struggle for a united all-Indian Communist Party, we find localism, provincialism, self-isolation from the masses, etc., which, though it could be understood to some extent in 1930, now represents the main danger to the revolutionary, proletarian movement.*

“The lagging behind of the Communist vanguard must be rapidly and most decisively overcome. This is the first and the most important task for all those honest Communist revolutionaries who stand by the platform of action of the CPI, and are faithful to the cause of the Indian and world proletariat.”¹⁵

2. *“..... Thus the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of the treacherous bourgeoisie and conversion of the proletariat from an active political force into the leading force with the hegemony of the people's movement can be brought about at the present time by the exposure of the bourgeois National Congress and its “Left” wing, Bose, Kandalkar, Roy, etc., as the betrayers of the struggle for independence and can be realized only if the Communist Party takes a most energetic part in the struggle for independence on the basis of an irreconcilable struggle against the national reformists.”¹⁶*

3. *“However, while struggling against “Left” national reformism it is incorrect to separate ourselves from the mass movement of the people who appear to be under the leadership of the National Congress. A distinction must be made between the bourgeois Congress leadership and those sections of the workers, peasants and revolutionary elements of the town petty-bourgeoisie who not understanding the treacherous character of the National*

Congress followed it, correctly seeing in the domination of British imperialism the basis of their slavery.”¹⁷

4. *“It is necessary to participate in all mass demonstrations, organised by the Congress, coming forward with our own Communist slogans and agitation; support all the revolutionary student demonstrations, be at the forefront in the clashes with the police, protesting against all political arrests, etc., constantly criticising the Congress leaders, especially “Left”, and calling on the masses for higher forms of struggle, setting before the toiling masses ever more concrete and ever more revolutionary tasks.”¹⁸*

“If the existence of “United National Front” illusions played its part in maintaining the influence of the National Congress, the self-isolation of the Communists objectively assisted the reformists and retarded the process of the breaking away of the workers from the bourgeois National Congress.”¹⁹

5. *“Struggling against the bourgeois National Congress, some comrades mistakenly identify the bourgeoisie with the petty-bourgeoisie, mechanically contrasting the “class” interests of the proletariat with the independence movement as a whole, while other Communists, fighting against this mistaken conception, forget about the bourgeoisie, forget about the instability, the waverings and hesitations of the petty-bourgeoisie, sometimes in practice join with or follow the latter, thus objectively subordinating the proletariat to the leadership of the national bourgeoisie.”²⁰*

6. *“The slogan of an All-Indian illegal, centralized Communist Party, ideologically and organisationally united, a true section of Comintern, fighting for the platform of action of the CPI and the programme of the Communist International must become the central slogan for gathering and forming the Party and for the struggle against waverings, against a tendency of keeping to isolated circles, against toning down the struggle against national reformism and opportunist sectarianism, all of which hinder the victory of the working class.”²¹*

7. *“.... There can be no greater crime than if the Communists (having their platform of action of the CPI and if they agree with the present letter instead of struggle for great historical aims of the Indian and world proletariat, will follow the path of unprincipled factional struggle, fractions*

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and personal groupings.”²²

Open Letter of CPC to CPI

In July 1933 CPC wrote an open letter to CPI. It must be remembered that CPC has already attained a prestigious position in the ICM. This letter also expressed its ideas within the boundaries of Draft Platform. It also criticised the sectarian tendency followed by CPI in the Trade Union front. It explained the necessity of working in the reformist Trade Unions. Keeping their experience of united front tactics in view, it tried to explain the fraternal party about their dialectical understanding of united front. It candidly explained the need for fighting against both left sectarianism and right opportunism and for forming a centralised, secret party organisation.

Some of the important points of the letter

1. *“We are becoming more and more uneasy at the slowness of the process of the formation of the Communist Party of India. It is true that the Communists in India are faced with many difficulties. In spite of all these difficulties, we must realize that the conditions are favourable and fully mature for the uniting and rallying together of all the Communist groups, for organizing an all-Indian Communist Party. The Indian bourgeoisie, which stopped the civil disobedience campaign and continues its capitulatory policy, clears the path for the rule of British imperialism. At the same time ever wider sections of the toilers are turning their eyes towards the path of the revolutionary struggle against the imperialists and feudalists, they are seeking revolutionary leadership. In these conditions, the rapid formation of the Communist Party is the central task of the Indian Revolution.”*²³

2. *“The task of Communist is to enter and take charge of all these democratic movements, of all movements of discontent against the existing order, whatever questions cause them to arise, and to go everywhere with Communist agitation, putting forward proposals and slogans at every pretext, constantly explaining and showing in practice that the path of the national-reformists is the path of defeat and slavery.”*²⁴

3. *“Our Party became a mass Party and began to play a big role on the political arena of China. This was possible only because of the participa-*

tion of our party in the democratic movement and especially in the anti-imperialist struggle for the independence of China. The former leadership of our Party was not able to avoid the worst opportunist mistakes while carrying out the tactic of the united front. It did not sufficiently defend the independence of the Communist Party and in the interests of the bourgeoisie limited and narrowed the struggle of the masses. And however badly we carried out the tactics of the united revolutionary front with the national bourgeoisie, whatever gross mistakes we may have made, nevertheless it is thanks to those tactics of the united front that we have obtained our successes in the struggle against imperialists and the conversion of our Party into a powerful political factor..... ”²⁵

4. *“The experience of our revolution, which we wish to share with you, consists in the main in the struggle of the proletariat for the leadership of the Independence Movement, which is decisive for the fate of the revolution. But the hegemony of the proletariat presupposes the tireless work of the Party for strengthening the fighting alliance of the working class and the toiling masses of the peasants under the leadership of the proletariat. ”²⁶*

5. *“We wish here to call your attention to a most serious mistake made by some Indian Communists, who confuse the role of the Party and the trade unions and are unable to take the lead in the struggle for the unity of the proletariat. Some Indian Communists unable understand that the struggle against reformism does not necessarily mean a split in the mass organisations and should not lead to the Communists and the class conscious workers leaving these trade unions which are headed by reformists and national reformists. ”²⁷*

6. *“..... You must struggle against petty-bourgeois individualism self-centred pride, which hinders the consolidation of the Party. You must struggle against those who deny the necessity or oppose the formation of an underground All-Indian Communist Party, who neglect to use legal possibilities, who occupy a tailist position, who give up the role of the initiators in the strike struggle, who show any irresoluteness in exposing the Congressites and the reformist leaders, who draws the Communists away from the democratic movements and the anti-imperialist struggle. ”²⁸*

Efforts to Rebuild the Party

In the early 1930s Calcutta became an important centre for the Party re-organisation. The Calcutta committee formed by Abdul Halim in 1931 took the initiative and prepared the document Indian Revolution - Our Tasks based on the Draft Platform and Open Letters of the fraternal parties. The committee made efforts for Party unity and formation of provisional central committee. Young communists worked particularly in Kanpur, Calcutta and Bombay in trade union fronts when the party was at dire straits. Amir Hyder Khan, who has returned from Russia, worked very hard to build Communist Party in South India. According to the reports of the police officers, he was the most capable organiser among all those sent by Comintern to India. He also played a crucial role in the formation of provisional CC in 1933.

In early 1930, in Calcutta and its surrounding places about ten communists or socialist groups used to work. They had their own papers. M. A. Farooqi, Somnath Lahiri, Ranen Sen, Mohini Singh, Bhavani Sen and other important communist leaders started their political career during this time only. From 1933 onwards Calcutta committee started a paper The Communist.

CPI tried to come out of its isolation after the Open Letters from fraternal parties. It started working along with AITUC from 1933. Also started working with Congress. Afterwards it established contacts with CSP (Congress Socialist Party).

Because of shattering of illusions about the leadership of Gandhi and the victories of Soviet Union during the great depression leftist views have spread in Congress. The left wing of Congress and petty-bourgeois section with socialist views was strengthened. In fact favourable atmosphere for the realignment of class forces within the Congress was on. Necessary conditions for the mobilisation of national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie behind a powerful workers party were being established. Had there been a Communist Party with the backing of working class behind it, the situation was conducive for it to emerge as an alternative force to the comprador bourgeoisie. But CPI at that time existed only for namesake. Under these circumstances, in 1934 Congress Socialist Party was formed independent of CPI. In the later period this CSP helped CPI for its progress.

The Provisional Central Committee

By the end of 1933 Meerut case convicts were started coming out of jails. With this, efforts of reconstruction of Party gathered momentum. G. A. Adhikari was released in August. He went to Calcutta in November. Calcutta Committee organised a secret meeting of communists. This five days conference held in December took place at four locations. The following comrades attended the conference: Abdul Halim, Lahiri from Bengal; Adhikari, S. G. Pakkar from Bombay; P. C. Joshi from UP; Gurudutt Singh from Punjab; Jayawant from Nagpur.

The provisional Central Committee was formed with Adhikari as its Secretary. Since it was not representing the whole party it was treated as the “nucleus” to the provisional central committee.

The following decisions were taken in this conference:

1. New political resolution, and programme to be prepared;
2. To establish relations with Party groups of other states,
4. To resolve the factional fights in Bombay and other provinces,
5. To organise an All India Conference in March 1934 to elect a central committee that can function regularly

By the end of 1933 Joglekar, S.S.Mirajkar and S.V.Ghate have joined the provisional CC after their release from jail. From 1934 Calcutta Committee's paper *The Communist* started coming out as the organ of the Central Committee.

During the period 1933-34 Communist Party started reappearing as a political force. But detentions continued to follow the party. Strikes were on the rise from 1933. Communist activities started spreading to new areas. Government realised that the Communist Party was not wiped out as expected by it. Arrests were again started. Adhikari was arrested. Mirazkar took over the responsibilities as Secretary. Mirazkar and Deshpande were arrested in 1935 in Singapore on their way to attend the Seventh Congress of Comintern. Somnath Lahiri had to function on his own as secretary for some time. Such an unstable functioning of CC continued till 1936. In 1934 July CPI was banned by government. The ban continued up to 1943.

Expansion of the Party

Provisional central committee was formed in 1933. As decided by the Calcutta Conference, Draft Political Thesis and Constitution had been published in 1934. The Political Thesis has been prepared based on the Draft Platform and the two Open Letters. Discussions took place on this these through out the party organisation. These discussions helped to come out of the left sectarian mistakes. This was the first comprehensive programme prepared by CPI. The constitution stated for the first time the organisational principles required for the formation of Leninist Party. Not only that, it focused on secret party building and tech mechanism also. The co-ordination of secret and open organisation was discussed. These documents would have been helped greatly in providing the political and organisational basis for CPI to emerge as a revolutionary party. The political situation in the country after the Civil Dis-obedience movement created a favourable atmosphere for establishing working class hegemony over the anti-imperialist and national liberation movement of the people.

CEC of CPI met in Nagpur in 1935. S. Jamkbhekar, S. Jaywant from Bombay, P. Sundarayya from Madras state and Lahiri, Ranen from Bengal attended the Conference. After the arrest of Mirazkar and Deshpande in Singapore in 1935, Lahiri took over the responsibility of secretary. In the beginning of 1936 Lahiri was arrested in the Bombay party center. CEC again met in April 1936 in connection with Lucknow Congress of INC. This meeting elected P. C. Joshi as secretary. P. C. Joshi continued as secretary for the next 12 years till he met with sever criticism as a right opportunist and removed from the post and expelled from Party. Politburo was formed with P.C.Joshi, A.K.Ghosh, G.Adhikari and R.D.Bharadwaj. Joshi shifted the party centre to Calcutta.

In 1936 Communists joined the Congress Socialist Party. CSP has already functioning as mass based party at that time. CSP mustered strength first in UP, Bihar and afterwards in South India. It organised peasants also. CSP become very much useful for CPI to penetrate among the masses particularly into the peasants in the wide areas of the country. Almost all the state level organisation of CSP came under the control of CPI.

During this period Harikishan Singh Surjit, Satyapal, Dange and

Z.A. Ahmed from Punjab joined in the Party and started working. Andaman convicts (revolutionaries) Bhavani Sen and Pramod Das Gupta joined CPI. Sunil Mukherjee formed CPI in Bihar based on Purnia peasant struggle. Z.A. Ahmed, Sayyad Jaheer and Jyothi Basu who become communists while doing their higher studies in England were recruited into the party during this time.

The Party centre was shifted to Bombay at the end of 1937. From February 1938 **National Front** a weekly paper from Bombay was started. The Editorial Board of this paper is Joshi-Chief Editor, Adhikari, Dange and Ghosh. Bengali paper Gana Shakti and Marathi paper Kranti were re-started. Navashakti in Telugu, Jana Shakti in Tamil and Prabhath in Malayalam were also started.

Following the Dutt-Bradly theses of 1936 and adopting the policy of National Front CPI leadership again was being carried away towards legalism and started working almost openly.

CPI - Peasant Movement

Comintern right from the beginning was telling CPI to concentrate on the formation of peasant movements. It tried to establish contacts with peasant movements and with certain peasant leaders. But CPI right from the beginning used to neglect the peasant movement and displayed its disinterest in them. CPGB leaders Spratt and Bradley sent by Comintern gave importance to formation of only Trade Unions. Draft Platform for the first time described that the agricultural revolution is a pivot for Indian revolution. At a time when CPI after getting rid of its left sectarian policy and started trying implementing the Draft Platform revolutionary policy, Dutt, Bradley theses drifted CPI towards right opportunist policy. That is how the agrarian revolutionary programme lost the importance. The role of CPI in peasant movement has to be viewed in this backdrop.

Throughout the modern history of India we know that peasants have fought countless anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles. The severe economic crisis after First World War has resulted in many peasant struggles. From Champaran to Bardoli Congressed the peasant struggles to protect the interests of landlords and rich peasants. Peasant movements started spontaneously in southern states of Andhra, Madras, Malabar, Cochin and

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Travancore for reduction in land tax, for waiver of loan repayment, for abolition of bonded labour etc. CSP leaders N. G. Ranga, Krishna Pillai, A. K. Gopalan, EMS Nambodripad and others started leading these movements.

During the same period the peasant movements in Bihar were led by Swami Sahajananda Saraswati and CSP leaders. In 1930s South Indian states and Bihar emerged as main centres of peasant struggles. In Bengal and Punjab peasant movements started under the leadership of WPP. With the initiative of socialists, **All India Kisan Congress** was formed. Afterwards it became **All India Kisan Sabha – AIKS**. In the process of working with CSP, CPI took up the leadership of the peasant struggles spontaneously without having any specific agrarian revolutionary programme. But in line with its class collaboration politics it worked with CSP. The efforts made and the funds allocated by CPI towards Kisan Sabha activities are very meagre. As a result of this Kisan Sabha was confined to only a few areas. It could not develop into an All India level organisation that could lead wide masses of peasantry countrywide. By 1942 CPI could establish its dominance over the AIKS. But it neither attempted to develop itself as the unquestionable leader of the peasant masses nor did it use this strength to break the monopoly of congress over the national movement.

Gandhi could clearly see the dangers in allowing the workers and peasants to join the National Congress. Congress always showed its disinterest towards workers and peasants struggles. All sorts of methods were used by congress to break the kisan sabha and to reduce its influence.

Unity in the Trade Union Movement

From 1933 onwards RTUC started working with reformist trade unions. Struggles started emerging with the increase in the attacks of capitalism on the working class. The pressure from workers for working class unity was growing. In 1935 discussions were initiated between AITUC and NFTUC for working together. In the Calcutta session of 1935 the amalgamation of AITUC and RTUC took place. Strikes in the country were increasing. Governments' detentions also were growing. Government brought the Bombay Industrial Disputes Bill 1936. In 1935, 145 strikes took place. About 1,44,217 workers participated in these strikes. 137 strikes took place in 1937 and 1,68,029 workers participated. Many strikes were held in Textile mills of

Kanpur and Jute mills of Bengal. 25000 workers of Bengal jute mills lost their jobs. Digboi oil workers in Assam held strike in 1939. The Congress government imposed an inhuman detention on this strike.

Communists tried for joint leadership of these strikes. They tried to expand the trade union base. They attempted for joint action plan against the anti-worker ordinances and bills. In the Nagpur session of AITUC held in 1938, NFTU has joined again in AITUC. This unity took place with the conditions such as 'no affiliation with any international organisations', 'in the matters of strikes and political issues three-fourth majority' etc. These conditions are in addition to handing over the leadership to NFTU. The unprincipled unity achieved with NFTU was only led to split at a later stage.

The Congress governments, which came to power during this time, have clearly surpassed the British government in controlling and attacking the peasant and worker struggles.

Formation of AISF: CPI made attempts in the middle of 1930s to form student organisations in different states. Bengal Provincial Student League was formed in December 1935. Similar organisations were formed in different states. Through these organisations and with the initiative of some student leaders All India Student Federation (AISF) was formed in 1936. Right from the beginning AISF was under the control of Communists.

All India Progressive writers Association was also formed in 1936 with the initiative of progressive writers like Premchand and others.

Brief Summary

The Great Depression that began in 1929 resulted in the extreme hardships to the workers, peasants and other oppressed masses and the conflagration of general unrest among the masses engulfed the country.

The young Communist Party faced serious upheaval as its organisation was shattered due to the Meerut arrests and splintered into groups as the political, organisational and ideological unity was not attained in the party. In fact it ceased to be a centralised organisation with the groupism that was in existence since its inception became rampant.

In such a situation began the country wide anti-imperialist upsurge and the demand for the attainment of complete independence gained momentum both within and outside the INC. While the comprador bourgeoisie too took strong stance in aspiring for the dominion status the one Congress had launched the Civil Disobedience Movement. Whereas the heroic struggles of the nationalist revolutionaries reached the peak during this period. The workers and peasants took up militant struggles though largely in a spontaneous manner. In this way there developed an explosive situation. Threatening with the prospect of Civil Disobedience Movement developing into a militant and revolutionary path transgressing the Gandhian limits, Gandhi called off the movement by signing the humiliating Gandhi-Irwin pact without even getting any nominal assurances from the British.

From the beginning of 1930 the efforts for the reorganisation and rebuilding of the CPI began. The **Draft Platform of Action of CPI** that came out in such a situation tried to put the party on the path of revolution. It correctly recognised the pro-imperialist and pro-feudal reactionary nature of the leadership of Congress and the necessity of conducting an uncompromising struggle against the so-called **Left** leaders in it. This document which recognised the importance of agrarian revolution in the Indian revolution attempted to formulate a comprehensive programme to CPI. The efforts for the reorganisation of the Party by correcting the mistakes in the light of the **Draft Platform** were began and even the necessity of building a strong illegal Party was also recognised.

However the party took a left sectarian stance and stood aloof from the nationalist movement and fell into self-imposed isolation. The left sectarian tactics were in main the result of incorrect understanding and application of the tactics formulated in the **Draft Platform**. While correctly recognising the collusion of the big bourgeoisie with the imperialism, CPI failed to take notice that the draft platform rejected neither the united front nor the joint action with the bourgeoisie. This sectarian understanding even seeped into the trade union front and lead to the formation of RTUC.

The **Open Letters of the Three Parties** and the **CPC** however helped in recognising and rectifying these left sectarian mistakes. The party took decisive steps ahead towards rectifying the strong legalist and nationalist deviations that were present in it from its inception and tried to adopt a correct working class outlook towards both the national movement and the Indian Revolution as whole.

The Party started its efforts to participate in the national movement with proletarian outlook and joined CSP. It strived to achieve unity in the trade union movement and to build peasant movement. It was in this period the foundations were laid for the later day strong peasant movements in Bihar, Andhra, Kerala and other places. For the first time in its history CPI declared itself as the Indian section of Comintern and got the official recognition from Comintern as its affiliate organisation.

Before adopting the Dutt-Broadly thesis of 1936 the CPI started taking its first steps towards building a strong and real revolutionary party by coming out of its isolation and factional fights, and by rectifying its class

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The Right Opportunist Line

The period 1935-39 was the time in which the imperialism was heading fast to another world war and fascism was consolidating its strength in all important imperialist countries. Japan joined the fascist camp. In Spain fascist Franco came to power through counter-revolution. Throughout the world capitalism was taking offensive against the working class. In France with the help of united front tactics, Communists defeated the fascists. Comintern in its Seventh Congress held in 1935 gave a call for the **People's Front against Fascism**.

Seventh Congress of Comintern

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern was held during 25th July to August 21, 1935. This was the last Congress of Comintern. This was the Congress held at a time when fascism was emerging as the main danger throughout the world.

1. In all the capitalist countries **Broad Anti-fascist People's United Front** based on the working class united front was to be formed. It means the united front of the working class which includes the social democracy should be the basis for such an anti-fascist front. The anti-fascist wing of the bourgeois too should be accommodated in the people's front. In the place of Sixth Congress slogan, **turn the war into civil war** the Seventh Congress gave the slogan **Anti-fascist government**.

2. *"In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the most important task facing the communists consist in working to establish an anti-imperialist people's front. Or this purpose it is necessary to draw the widest masses into the national liberation movement against cruel enslavement, for the deriving out of the imperialists, for the independence of the country; to take an active part in the mass anti-imperialist movements headed by the national reformist and strive to bring about joint action with the national-revolutionary and national-reformist organisations on the basis of definite*

anti-imperialist platform.”¹

Dimitrov Report on India said this:

*“In India Communists have to support, extend and participate in anti-imperialist mass activities, not excluding those which are under national reformist leadership. While maintaining their political and organisational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organisations which take part in the Indian National Congress, facilitating the process of crystallisation of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the national liberation movement of the Indian people against British imperialists.”*²

*“Both within and without the National Congress the Indian communists must consolidate all the genuine anti-imperialist forces of the country, broadening and leading the struggle of the masses against the imperialist oppressors.”*³

Thus the seventh congress suggested Indian communists 1) to consolidate all the anti-imperialist forces **both inside and outside the Congress** and 2) to take the leadership of the struggles of vast masses against imperialist oppressors. The Wang Ming Speech at the Congress was more clearly stated that the efforts of Communists to mobilise anti-imperialists should not be confined to those within the INC.

The advice given in the Dimitrov report that communists must work in congress organisations in order to form anti-imperialist united front is a correct advice. But, CPI has to work without loosing its political independence. This was the crucial one. The advice of working in the Congress organisations to form national revolutionary front is also correct. But under the circumstances prevailing at that time, the specific analysis was not given about those who were branded as left wing. This report has forgotten about the warning given by Sixth Congress, Draft platform and Open Letters of fraternal parties regarding the growth of so-called Left in Congress. Dimitrov’s report completely neglected this aspect.

Wang Ming’s speech correctly depicted the sectarian understanding and practice till then the Indian communists adhered to regarding the united front tactics:

“Our comrades of India have suffered for a long time from ‘left’-

*sectarian errors: they did not participate in all the mass demonstrations organised by the National Congress ...The Indians until very recently were to a considerable extent isolated from the mass of the people from the mass anti-imperialist struggle... it was recently that the that the all-India CP.....began to rid itself of its sectarian errors and made the first steps towards the creation of an anti-imperialist united front. Nevertheless our young Indian comrades, having taken this road, showed a great lack of understanding of the UF tactics. This may be borne out even by the fact that our Indian comrades in attempting to establish a united anti-imperialist front with the National Congress in December last year put before the latter such demands s 'establishment of an Indian workers' and peasants' soviet republic', 'confiscation of all lands belonging to the zamindars without compensation', 'general strike as the only effective programme of action' etc. such demands on the part of our Indian comrades can serve as an example of how not to carry on the tactics of the anti-imperialist united front."*⁴

Nobody from India attended this congress. (Mirazkar and Deshpande were arrested in Singapore). The CPGB, which was guiding CPI, represented India. CPI got the resolutions of this Congress in January 1936. Already at that time CPI was trying to come out of isolation and to correct its left sectarian mistakes. The Following passages from The Communist Review October 1935 clearly show this:

"We are opposed to the idea of restricting the above agitation [anti-imperialist] to outside the Congress alone and also emphasise the necessity of carrying on such an agitation form within the Congress also ..." At the same time it correctly warned about the danger of over estimating the work in the Congress. *"But the possibility of working within the Congress and of changing the Congress should not be overestimated. The bourgeoisie will try its best not to lose its power by a change of the constitution and will manoeuvre its best to deceive the petty bourgeoisie again – the possibility of the communists being driven out is not also remote."*⁵

Tragically after the adoption of the Dutt-Bradly thesis CPI precisely not only made the mistake but also faced the humiliation of driven out of Congress after War. However in the light of the resolutions of the congress, CPI tried for alliance with the socialists of National Congress.

Dutt-Bradly Theses

Even before CPI received the Seventh Congress resolutions, Dutt and Bradly had started discussions with Congress Socialist Party (with Masani in Russia) They met Nehru too. However Nehru made it very clear that he will not leave the leadership and methods of Gandhi. On 29th February 1936 Impricor published the **Suggestions on the Indian Question** written by Dutt and Bradly. This is the famous Dutt-Bradly thesis.

Dutt-Bradly thesis had completely distorted the anti-imperialist united front advocated by the Seventh Congress. Dutt and Bradley in fact tried to implement the policy of CPGB which was then neck deep in legalism. They took the stand that anti-imperialist united front means congress only. They described the strengthening and spreading Congress as the task of the united front. They thought that Congress was tilting towards left when it betrayed the Disobedience Movement and was anxious to participate in the elections. (Even after the elections when Congress governments had surpassed the British government in repressing mass movements with iron fist, the attitude remained unchanged.) They reduced the task of communists to that of developing the leftwing in Congress. It is true; Lenin said that working class hegemony over the UF for national liberation movements need not be the precondition for forming such a front. But he also said that working together like that was only temporary and only meant for building a powerful Communist Party that can fight the bourgeois democracy. Dutt and Bradly not only betrayed this Leninist tactic but also hoodwinked the Comintern's direction to bring all the class organisations under the leadership of Communist Party and directed CPI to strive for joining its mass organisation in to INC. To put it straight they strived to put working class party of Indian masses in service of the big bourgeoisie.

1. Dutt and Bradly gave a call for "*the United Anti-imperialist people's Front for the struggle against imperialism.*"⁶

2. "*The National Congress has undoubtedly achieved a gigantic task in uniting wide forces of the Indian people for the national struggle, and remains today the principal existing mass organisation of many diverse elements seeking national liberation. Nothing should be allowed to weaken the degree of unity that has been achieved through the National Congress,*

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and the proposals that are here put forward are only intended to endeavour to find means to assist and extend that unity to a still wider front.”⁷

“The National Congress can play a great part and a foremost part in the work of realizing the Anti-Imperialist People’s Front. It is even possible that the National Congress, by the further transformation of its organisation and programme, may become the form of realization of the Anti-Imperialist People’s Front; for it is the reality that matters, not the name.”⁸

3. *“The first aim should therefore be to establish a united front of the National Congress with all existing mass organisations of the trade unions, peasants unions, youth associations or other anti-imperialist mass organisations, in a broad anti-imperialist People’s Front on the basis of the struggle of the masses for their immediate demands.*

“At the same time, we should seek to amend the constitution of the National Congress in such a way as to permit of the collective affiliation, with delegate representation, of the trade unions, peasant unions, youth organisations, etc.”⁹

4.. *“The existing working of the Congress machinery cannot be regarded as democratic. In practice a very small handful of leaders hold absolute control..... An exhaustive overhauling of the constitution is necessary in order to bring it into accord with modern democratic conceptions of a popular party, ... ”¹⁰*

5. *“Congress Socialists, Trade Unionists, Communists and Left Congressmen should be able to unite on the essentials of **minimum programme** of anti-imperialist struggle for complete independence, of organisation of the masses and development of mass struggle, and of the fight for changes in the Congress constitution, policy, organisation and leadership to forward these aims. The Congress Socialist Party can play an especially important part in this as the grouping of all the radical elements in the existing Congress. It is of the greatest importance that every effort should be made to clarify questions of programme and tactics in the Congress Socialist Party.”¹¹*

6.. *“The question of the elections is of cardinal importance for the anti-imperialist front it is essential that unity of the national front should be maintained against the imperialist and their allies, and there should be no splitting of the vote for the benefit of the reactionary Right-*

wing elements outside the Congress who stand for cooperation with imperialism.”¹²

7. *“Corresponding to the existing stages of the movement, the time is now undoubtedly favourable to launch as our central slogan the demand for the convening of a Constituent Assembly, based upon a universal and equal franchise and direct and secret ballot.”¹³*

8. The attack aimed at the right wing of Congress always should be in the form of convincing rather than that of leading to the rupture in the national front.

Dutt-Bradly theory has created lot of confusion among the communists in India who were then converging on the revolutionary path by shredding both right opportunism and left sectarianism. There were many criticisms on these theses which had totally ignored the need to try for the hegemony of the working class over the national movement. But PB accepted this thesis in toto. At a time when the party was coming out of left sectarian deviation and trying to establish a revolutionary line gradually, the Dutt-Bradly's thesis became a basis for CPI to fall in the right opportunism. On 7th November 1936 CPGB's Secretary Harry Pollit, Dutt and Bradley wrote **The united National Front**. They wrote in that article that all efforts must be made to make the National Congress as the foundation to the national united front. They changed the name of **united front** to **national united front** so as to give more importance to bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist national movement.

Dutt-Bradly theses has pointed out that it was the duty of the communists to transform the Congress into a militant organisation by strengthening the Left forces within it. It described Congress itself the anti-imperialist organisation and the united front. It treated Nehru as the leader of left wing in spite of his utterances that he will work only as per the methods of Gandhi. It tried to push the real nationalists, patriots and leftists of the Congress and the Communist Party under the leadership of comprador bourgeoisie. This tendency naturally led, at a later stage, to the CPI's acceptance of Gandhi as the unquestionable leader of the national movement. When, not only the ordinary congressmen but comprador bourgeoisie too losing faith in Gandhi's leadership, CPI stooped to such a level that of unconditional acceptance of his leadership.

Congress-CPI relations in the Post-Disobedience Period

The image and prestige of Congress has come down considerably after the Civil Disobedience movement. Congress started preparing for the coming elections as per the Govt. of India Act 1935. In this connection Gandhi told his close friend Birla that, there has been always one section in the Congress which wanted to participate in the councils. The leadership should be in the hands of that section only. But in the Lucknow session, Nehru, who “opposed” the rightists was made as president. (This was done inspite of very few members support to Nehru.) It was in this Lucknow session Nehru made the famous ‘socialist’ speech. In the debate, whether after elections ministries were to be formed or they should sit in opposition and create obstacles to government, Nehru, Bose and CSP opposed the formation of ministries. Right wing leaders Patel, Rajendra Prasad etc., argued in favour of taking over the power. Gandhi proposed that decision in this regard may be taken after the elections. Then Congress started preparing for the elections. Nehru accepted all the slogans of socialists and communists, but they were confined to words. All the Congress resolutions were passed as per the wishes of Gandhi. Some of the comprador bourgeoisie even got frightened with the Nehru’s Socialist rhetoric. But Birla convinced the comprador bourgeoisie that Nehru’s socialism was very much essential for their own class interests.

Based on the Dutt-Bradly’s theses, CPI started trying to change Congress as a militant organisation. For this purpose, it requested for collective membership in the Congress for Kisan Sabhas and Trade Unions. It demanded for amending the constitution of the Congress to suit this request. Nehru took this demand as his own and campaigned for it. But of course he never attempted to amend the constitution. Nehru emerged as the **real socialist** by endorsing all the slogans of CPI in words and not in deeds.

In the eyes of CC of CPI Nehru was the “*man standing at the head of the Congress high command – who is today perhaps the best exponent of the whole leftward trend inside the Congress.*” “*The stage is set for bursting the fetters of the reactionary leadership...*”¹⁴

Consequently the leadership of CPI had to change its assessment of Congress leadership as a whole, an article published in *The Communist* said this:

“the INC leadership as a whole and the section of the bourgeoisie which support it have, during the last few years, moved to the left the bourgeoisie supporting it have tilted towards left. Not only that, it further stated that.”¹⁵

With an indubitable confidence in Nehru the real representative of the reactionary leadership of the Congress as the real left leader CPI afterwards even ventured to forfeit the alliance with CSP and Bose.

CPI fallen into the muddle of opportunism to such an extent that it treated the some what real and relatively consistent nationalist forces in CSP, Bose and others as ultra leftists and disruptive elements. In the pretext of strengthening the leftwing in the Congress, CPI in fact surrendered to the Gandhi-Nehru leadership which was representing the comprador classes in Congress.

The attitude of CPI in case of Bose was a clear example of its opportunist policy. When Bose was elected as president of Congress in 1938, CPI described it as the victory of left forces. In Tripura session both CPI and CSP supported the candidature of Bose against Gandhi’s nominee Pattabi Seetharamaiah. But the same CPI cooperated with Gandhi when he tried to remove Bose in an undemocratic way. Bose was isolated and became alone due to the opportunist stand taken by CPI. Gandhi tried to finish Bose politically taking advantage of the disarray of the left forces especially of communists. The so-called socialist Nehru naturally stood by Gandhi in his shamefully undemocratic attitude towards Bose.

Congress won the 1937 elections and as expected decided to form ministries. Congress governments were formed in seven states. Although the ‘socialist’ Nehru was the president of the Congress most of the elected members to the assemblies and the ministers belonged to the rightwing. Even then CPI failed to realise that the real leader of the right camp is none other than Nehru. CPI also participated in these elections. It contested in 108 seats and won in 8 seats. Congress governments initially created lot of enthusiasm among the people. But then they started brutal oppression on the workers and peasants struggles. In this respect Congress governments behaved more horribly than British government. In Madras, Rajaji government imposed severe controls on CPI and CSP. These governments helped even as a rehearsals for the transfer of power to the big-bourgeoisie and

landlords but not to take forward the national liberation movements. (Interestingly while CSP was opposing the formation of Congress governments the CPI supported!). Even before the completion of one year of Congress governance people started resenting about these governments. The corruption and nepotism of Congress leaders increased too much and people started hating these governments. Gandhi and Nehru also realised the dangers of continuing these governments for a long time. They started thinking of that it was better to get these governments resigned on some pretext. The Second World War broke out in 1939 gave them the necessary facade to get rid of the unpopular Congress governments.

The Second World War

The Period of Imperialist War

Hitler attacked Poland on 1st September 1939. Britain and France declared war on Germany. Second World War started. Viceroy declared that India is joining with Britain in the war. Defence ordinance was issued. Big bourgeoisie jubilant over the prospects of getting opportunities of reaping huge profits as they did during the First World War decided to support the war efforts. Muslim League supported the war. Gandhi sent a message of sympathy to Britain. All the important leaders of Congress including Nehru wanted to support the war, but hesitated to extend an unconditional support openly. Congress postponed its demand for Constituent Assembly till the end of war and demanded war time government. The British government had refused even to accede this minimum demand. Congress got an opportunity to get rid of its governments which were lowering its image and prestige. As a 'protest' against the intransigent attitude of British the Congress governments resigned on 23rd October.

But Bose and the Socialists opposed the War and criticised it as an imperialist war. Bose felt that the situation emerged from War should be utilised for the achievement of freedom. Congress Socialist Party strongly criticised the 'No-war Pact' between Germany and Russia. This has further aggravated the already strained relations between CPI and CSP.

CPI correctly treated the War as an imperialist war and accepted this guideline provided by Seventh Congress: "... *the communists will strive to*

lead the opponents of war, organised in the struggle for peace, to the struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, against the fascist instigators of war, against the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of capitalism."¹⁶

The statement released by Polit Bureau of the Party declared thus:

*"The duty of the Indian people as a part of the international army of freedom and democracy is to unconditionally resist war, to achieve her own freedom, weaken British imperialism, the bulwark of world reaction, and to strengthen the forces of revolution on a world scale."*¹⁷

It further said that the revolutionary situation will inevitably emerge as a result of war and by turning the war into a civil war we should successfully complete the democratic revolution. In this way it prepared its war policy.

"Our struggle against war is inseparable from our fight for freedom, is part of the world struggle for peace, democracy and socialism." . "

*"Revolutionary utilisation of the war crisis for the achievement of national freedom — this is the central task before the national forces in the new period."*¹⁸

*"With the deepening of the war crisis and the prolongation of the war,The revolutionary process accelerated a thousand fold. What takes place in normal periods in the course of years, takes place in the new period in months.Thus opens up the perspective of transformation of imperialist of war into war of national liberation."*¹⁹

These correct revolutionary tactics were put into the opportunist framework of CPI's **National Democratic Front**, which was nothing but a policy of tailing behind the comprador bourgeoisie.

*"It must be clearly realised, however, that the movement against war and for freedom can acquire national dimensions and be rally affective only when it is led by the Congress, that the proletarian hegemony be achieved not outside and independent of the Congress but through it."*²⁰

On the one hand Congress was eager to cooperate with the British government in the war but it was in a helpless condition to extend the same unconditionally. Bose and CSP were demanding for taking up anti-war ac-

tivities independently. CPI was of the opinion that it was wrong to fight without Congress and Congress should be pressurised so as to make it implement the revolutionary tactics of war time. It even felt that the establishment of working class hegemony over the nationalist movement could become possible through Congress. With this understanding it thought that the movement of non-payment of taxes, rents etc., and the general strikes could be coordinated so as to capture power through insurrection. In this way it would be possible to pass into socialist revolution from the bourgeois revolution. It named these tactics as Bolshevik tactics! But as desired by CPI, the Congress was not prepared to launch the Civil Disobedience movement again, for that matter any movement at all.

*“No call for action however has been given, no preparations have been under taken by the National leadership for launching struggle. On the contrary, militant action has been banned.”*²¹

In 1940 when Congress was forced to launch the movement Gandhi allowed only *Individual Satyagraha* but neither he allowed any movement of non-payment of taxes and rents nor he gave any opportunity to CPI to make insurrection!

*“Even Satyagraha struggle, when launched by Congress immediately assumes mass form on a national scale and therefore acquires revolutionary possibilities; but when “call” for such action is given by one tiny group, it becomes adventurism, disrupts the national movement and dissipates our forces..... Maintenance of the unity of the Congress is the supreme need of the hour. The unity threatened both from right and ‘left’.”*²²

Thus CPI took the burden of protecting the unity of Congress on its head. It thought that any movement including *Satyagraha* would become a national level movement only if it was fought under the leadership of Congress. According to CPI the call given by smaller parties would become an adventurous act and it would only split the national movement and disrupt the forces. On the pretext of consolidating left unity and establishment of working class hegemony over independence movement it started criticising Bose and CSP who were some what consistent nationalists, as the disrupters of unity of Congress and in practice it stood to the right of Bose and CSP.

In the imperialist war period, CPI launched anti-war campaign. About 90,000 workers in Bombay participated in a strike on 2nd October 1939. Many strikes took place afterwards. CPI participated actively in all these strikes. During the entire period AISF worked very actively. It emerged as a major students' organisation. The Purnia peasant movement of 1941 started under the leadership of CPI. In March 1941 *Koyyuru Comrades* (Kerala) were hanged to death. Peasant struggles developed in Mysore and Travancore states.

The Ramgar session of Congress held in March 1940 passed a resolution to re-launch the Civil Disobedience movement under the pressure of left wing, CSP and communists. At that time in Europe Hitler's army was scoring victories. Congress was thinking to cooperate with the British government which was in a very critical position, if it could assure the Congress that constituent Assembly would be formed and independence would be granted after the war. But British government did not give any such assurances. Having no other alternative, Gandhi started *individual satyagraha*. He took up this action so as to create an impression that he is fighting against government and at the same time without creating any problem to British government. In spite of this about 20,000 were arrested throughout the country in this agitation.

When Ramgar session of Congress was taking place, Bose too organised there itself the **Anti-Compromise Session** and criticised the Congress leadership for its indifference. When Bose wanted to take part in *individual Satyagraha*, Gandhi rejected it. In March 1940 CSP expelled communists alleging that communists were capturing all the units of CSP.

Although CPI was sinking into right opportunist mire, it still remained as a nightmare to the British government. Government resorted to large scale arrests. CPI was not prepared for such an attack when it was started in 1940 January. The entire leadership was arrested. It is quite obvious that CPI leadership did not have any faith in its own tactics of insurrection; otherwise it would not have functioned so legally. By March 1940, about 700, including 480 communists were arrested under Defence of India rules.

On 22nd June 1941, Hitler suddenly attacked Russia in a large scale and the very character of War itself changed. The alliance of anti-fascist forces, which could not be materialised for a long time, came into being.

The period of People's War

When the imperialist war was transformed into an anti-fascist people's war, all the communist parties through out the world had to take up anti-fascist united front tactics. CPI, after Hitler's attack on Russia also for some time continued with the tactics of imperialist war and failed to recognise the change in the character of the war. The communist leaders in the Deoli detention camp, realising the people's war character, formulated a document. (The **Jail Document** was formulated based on the CPGB line.) Based on this document Polit Bureau on 15th December 1941 adopted a resolution **Forward to Freedom**. It correctly recognised the character of the people's war and gave a call to the anti-fascist people's front.

It was not an easy thing in India under the circumstances prevailing at that time for a shift from the anti-war tactics to the anti-fascist united front tactics. It was a very tough job to co-ordinate the national and international tasks in the given situation. When, on one side the opposition to the British imperialism was reaching to crucial stage, on the other it became necessary to build the anti-fascist united front. CPI had to face a situation similar to the one European Communist parties had to face when Soviet Union entered into no-war pact with Germany.

*"The Soviet entry into the war isolated fascism as the main enemy of mankind....it transformed the war of the imperialists into a war of the peoples and opened the gate to a worldwide people's unity....."*²³

By saying so CPI correctly estimated the character of the war. But keeping the view that it was necessary to have a united front with Great Britain, it overlooked all other issues. It was required to co-ordinate carefully the international and national tasks and to form a united front with British imperialists on the basis of both unity and struggle. But, CPI in practice adopted a policy of unconditional cooperation with British government. To justify its stand, it formulated that that there was no difference between anti-imperialist united front and anti-fascist united front and that the war against fascism is itself the national liberation movement of India.

*"We can no more fight for our freedom by opposing war. We have to realise our freedom by winning this war."*²⁴

"The all people's war is India's war."

*The international front against fascism is India's front for freedom.
The war of world liberation is India's war for national liberation.”²⁵*

P.C. Joshi thought that after the end of war, British government would on its own have to concede independence. He described the strength of imperialism in colonial countries as a big zero. CPI only wanted national unity, that is, the unity of Congress and Muslim League. Its idea was through this national unity to achieve the national government and to take up national defence.

With the above understanding, it took the stand of unconditional support to British government. It vigorously implemented the **Policy of No Strikes**. It took up the program of increasing the production and campaigned for the unity of Congress and League and for the formation of national government.

“The National Congress is the premier political organisation of our people, representing the greatest national unity of Indian people achieved so far. The Muslim League is the political organisation of the second largest community in our country. The immediate unity of all popular organisations within one joint front will be the widest mobilisation of India's unity.”

“The entire national movement has to make the decisive turn to forge all-in mass mobilisation.”²⁶

CPI decided to cooperate with British government as it was in the anti-fascist united front. It thought by this the fascism could be defeated and Soviet Union could be protected. It started negotiations with the government for release of Communists from jails and for lifting of ban on the party so that it could take up the activities in a big way towards helping the war. P. C. Joshi personally initiated discussions with the officers of the Home department. Party prepared the **Memorandum on Communist Party's Policy and Plan of Work** and submitted to the government on 23rd April 1942. Though CPI changed its policy, government continued to hesitate to accept the offer of the CPI. But by the end of 1941 Britain reached a very difficult situation. Japan captured Malaya, Singapore and Burma. News started reaching that Japan was about to attack India. Under these adverse situations, British government satisfied with the offer of CPI

and agreed to release the Communists from jails. Government lifted the Ban on Communists on July 1942. Some communist volunteers were given training in civil defence and guerrilla warfare for a brief period. However, immediately after the threat of fascism was receded the military training was stopped.

Quit India Movement

While on one side CPI was formulating its stand to cooperate with the British government, Congress was in the process of taking some what confrontationist stand against the government. In the beginning of 1942 war had reached the precincts of India. Surrendering to the pressures of America, Britain sent Cripps mission to India. Cripps came to India in March 1942. Gandhi, who always used to be willing for tasks with British government, was this time totally against the Cripps mission. But Nehru wanted to reach an agreement with the government and to cooperate with it in the war efforts by mobilising people. He was ready to join the Central Executive also. But Britain was not prepared to give this small concession also as it was not prepared to give up its colonial authority over India. Only to pretend that it was trying for a settlement, it sent the sCripps Mission. It must be remembered that Cripps Mission was not failed due to the intransigent demand of Congress for independence after the war.

The rightist leaders C.Rajagopalachari and Bolabhai Patel etc., who were arguing from the beginning for supporting the war efforts unconditionally, resigned from the Congress. Under pressure from Gandhi, Nehru and others were also forced to take anti-Britain stand. One section of the comprador bourgeoisie and the landlord class has come to the conclusion that defeat of Britain was inevitable. Gandhi also predicted Britain's defeat in the war. He, therefore, described the Cripps Mission's offer as "*a post dated cheque on a crashing bank.*" His close confident, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah commented "*should India make herself a trailer to a sinking ship or hitch her wagon to a falling star.*" Gandhi and some industrialists started worrying about the 'scorched earth policy' in the event of Britain's defeat. Gandhi, in his draft resolution to Allahabad AICC session of 27th April, stated that, "*the AICC is of opinion that Britian is incapable of defending India.....Japan's quarrel is not with India..... If India were freed her first*

step would probably be to negotiate with Japan.....This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation.....

It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to scorched earth policy.....it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.”

“.....the British should withdraw from India”, “remove these foreign legions and henceforth stop further introduction of foreign soldiers.”²⁷

Patel, Prasad and Kripalani and others supported this resolution. Nehru criticised this resolution. He said that *“if Bapu’s approach is accepted we become passive partners of the Axis Powers....the whole thought and background of the draft is one of favouring Japan.....It is Gandhiji’s feeling that Japan and Germany will win. This feeling unconsciously governs his decision.”²⁸*

Rajaji who was branded as strong rightist and the ‘socialist’ Nehru both shared the same view in opposing this resolution. Differences reached to such an extent that Rajaji had resigned from Congress. Gandhi directed Nehru and Azad to resign. Nehru and Azad who had no courage to stand alone opposing Gandhi had to surrender and support Gandhi. Nehru had to himself propose the **Quit India** resolution. Quit India resolution was adopted on 8th August. Gandhi gave the call **Do or Die**. They only passed the resolution but did not prepare any action program. Moreover, on the very next day of passing the resolution, Gandhi went to meet Viceroy (Viceroy refused to meet Gandhi). They had no intention of starting any agitation. British government started arrests through out the country. It dumped the Congress leadership up to the lower levels in the jails. Kosambi, the historian, described the Quit India call without preparing any plan of action as a brilliant tactic in the interests of big bourgeoisie, wrote this:

“If the British won the war it was quite clear that the Congress had not favoured Japan: if on the other hand the Japanese succeeded in conquering India (and they had only to attack immediately in force for the whole of the so-called defence system to crumble) they could certainly not accuse the Congress of having helped the British.”²⁹

Gandhi knows the pulse of the people very well. He realised that the

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growing frustration of the people in the process of war, the agitation of socialists for independence and Bose's activities are going to ignite a tremendous people's rebellion. He thought instead of opposing the people's struggles and getting humiliated, it is better to initiate at least for name sake some struggle against government. By giving this nominal call of **Quit India**, Congress at a later period could not only wipe out the entire bad name it earned due to the bad deeds of its governments, but also earned great prestige of leading the big people's struggle without actually doing any struggle at all. Throughout the history of Independence movement the bourgeoisie leadership was always in the frontline, when compared with the working class party CPI, in formulating the tactics in line with the circumstances and based on the mood of the people at every stage. It was clearly visible in case of Quit India movement.

The entire leadership of Congress was sitting in the jail after giving the Quit India call without any concrete programme to the people to follow. People at various places fought in their own way. For about ten months from August it appeared that there was no government at all. Government property was destroyed by people at many places, particularly communications were badly damaged. The movement which was confined in the beginning to the towns spread to villages gradually. CSP and Forward Block, from underground, tried to provide leadership to the masses as far as possible. Middle classes and intellectuals of urban areas actively participated in the movement. The movement was growing in Bihar, UP, Midnapur, Orissa, Maharashtra and Karnataka. In UP and Bihar guerrilla struggle took place till 1944.

Especially in the areas where the *Kisan Sabha* was strong the struggle was intense. Even though the CPI took the stand of cooperation with the British the activists of *Sabha* in large numbers under the leadership of CSP leaders participated in the struggle. In North and Central Bihar around 80% of the police stations were either taken over by the rebels or evacuated. In East U.P. and Bihar the movement was wide spread and intense. Even after the brutal suppression unleashed by the police and military the guerrilla activities were continued till 1944. The rebels in these areas formed local governments and established relations with the Provisional Indian Government established in the borders of Nepal by J.P and Lohia.

The National governments were established in Tamluk of Midnapore and Tamralipta and the police stations of Tamluk, Mahisahdal, Sutahta, Nandigram and Bagabanpur were attacked.

In Balasore of Orissa a local revolutionary organisation *Raktha Vahini* lead the struggle. Mass upsurge swelled in Koraput. The non-payment of taxes against the Zamindari of Jaipur, occupation of reserve forests and attacks on police stations took place in an extensive scale. The guerrilla struggle continued in Talcher till 1943. The *chasi-maulia* (peasant-worker) *raj* conducted an attack on Talcher town in 1942. The government took the help of air force to repel this tack.

The struggle in Eastern India was mainly peasant struggle where as in the Bombay province the middle class took active part and under the leadership of socialist leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali under took several revolutionary acts. In addition to these there had been peasant revolts in Khandesh, Satar, and Jhambusar areas also. In Karnataka the communications and railways were targeted on a large scale.

However due to the lack of leadership that can coordinate and lead the movement on an all India level the government was able to suppress this movement by unleashing fascist repression on the masses.

About 10,000 persons died in police firings by the end of 1943. Government tried to suppress the movement brutally and employed at least 57 battalions of army. It did not hesitate to use helicopters and machine guns to open firing on the people. It used air force to suppress the struggles in Patna, Bshagalpur and Manger of Bihar, Nadia and Tamluk of Bengal and Talcher of Orissa.

People destroyed 208 police stations and outposts, 332 Railways stations and 945 post offices. The movement which came into being spontaneously, become weakened by the end of 1943 due to lack of proper leadership.

Gandhi who gave the call **Do or Die** and the Congress which passed the **Quit India** resolution criticised the movement from jails. They declared repeatedly that they have no relation with the movement that was then being carried out in the name of Congress. (But the same Congress leaders after their release from jails shamelessly boasted that they lead those

struggles.) CPI not only remained aloof from this great people's movement but also opposed it. It blamed Congress for giving the call for the movement. It attacked CSP and Forward Block who to some extent took the leadership of the movement.

“Bands of honest but blind patriots are seeking to lead this mass upsurge by organising as a Congress struggle for freedom of the country”.

“The path along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defence inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even loot and arson.....it creates a mass basis for fifth column activity in the name of patriotism. It is a path, in short, which strikes at the very root of that people's unity which alone can be the means of securing national government and ensuring successful national defence.”³⁰

CPI campaigned for the release of Gandhi and formation of National Government, advocating that was the only way of facing the critical situation of that time.

“The only way out of this perilous situation, is to stop this offensive of repression against the people and the Congress, to release Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders, to lift the ban on the Congress and to open negotiations with the Congress and the other political parties especially the Muslim League, for the establishment of a Provisional National Government, fully empowered and determined to unite and mobilise the people for the defence and the freedom of the country in a close alliance with the United Nations.”³¹

CPI agitated for the release of Gandhi and other Congress leaders. It wanted Congress to accept the demand of Muslim League for separate Pakistan (Muslim League passed a resolution demanding Pakistan in 1940 Lahore session). It requested Congress and Muslim League to form national government (under the control of British) It took up the **No strike Policy** in view of the war needs and started campaign for increasing the production. It started agitation against black marketers in view of scarcity of food grains.

First Congress of CPI

The first Congress of CPI was held in Bombay from May 23 to June 1, 1943. 139 delegates attended this Congress. (Among the 139 delegates, 86 belonged to intellegentia; 25 came from peasantry, 22 industrial proletariat and 15 women). Congress adopted political resolution and constitution. There was no change in CPI's policy after this Congress. The only significance was that Congress was held for the first time representing all the party members throughout the country.

With the decisive victory of Soviet Russia over Hitler's army at Stalingrad, the whole war situation changed. It became clear that the defeat of fascism was inevitable. This victory turned out to be a big blow not only to Germany but to Japanese fascism. Stating that Stalingrad victory was an important turning point in Second World War Mao wrote the following :

".... following the battle for the defence of Stalingrad, the situation will be totally different from that of last year. On the one hand, the Soviet Union will launch a second winter counter offensive on a vast scale, Britain and the United States will no longer be able to delay the opening of the second front (though the exact date cannot yet be foretold), and the people of Europe will be ready to rise up in response. On the other hand, Germany and her European accomplices no longer have the strength to mount large-scale offensives, and Hitler will have no alternative but to change his whole line of policy to the strategic defensive. Once Hitler is compelled to go over to the strategic defensive, the fate of fascism is as good as sealed. From its birth, a fascist state like Hitler's, builds its political and military life on taking the offensive, and once its offensive stops its very life stops too. The battle of Stalingrad will stop the offensive of fascism and is therefore a defensive battle. It is defensive for the whole world war."

"These developments will have a direct impact on the Far East. The coming year will not be propitious for Japanese fascism either. As time goes on its headaches will grow, until it descends into its grave."

"All those who take a pessimistic view of the world situation should change their point of view"³²

The CPI leadership felt that the independence of Indian can be achieved without any effort as the defeat of fascism and the unity of League and

Congress became the talisman for it which could open the way to realisation of the independence.

In 1941 when Malaya, Singapore and Burma fell to Japan the War reached the backyard of India. However the advancement of Japanese was restricted by 1942. And when the First Congress was taking place the Japanese imperialism too like its German counterpart forced into a defensive position. The threat of aggression either from Germany or from Japan almost all receded.

Just a day before the Congress started, on May 22, 1943 ECCI announced its decision to dissolve Comintern (It was abolished on June 10). The first Congress of CPI was held at a time when there were rapid changes in international and national situation and a stage was starting where in the communist parties had to analyse the national and international situation and formulate the political line and tactics by themselves. This congress should actually have become the most important historical event in the history of CPI. But except the consolation that CPI could hold its first congress during the life time of Comintern, it had no importance at all as far as the progress of Indian revolution is concerned.

CPI leadership which never had the habit of independently analysing the changes in the national and international situation in Marxist- Leninist way and formulate tactics suitable to that situation with initiative, completed the congress as a formality (that too thanks to the legal opportunities earned by extending its unconditional unity with British imperialists).

The Congress gave its stamp of approval to the class collaborationist and opportunist tactics of the **Policy of Peoples War** which were formulated by the Secretary of CPGB Harry Politt and R.P. Dutt and had been followed by CPI. Political Resolution adopted by the Congress was in fact the reiteration of the political line and tactics CPI adopted in February, 1942 in the name of **Forward to Freedom**.

We have seen that CPI leadership has a strong tendency of showing reluctance about the independence of proletarian party, the hegemony of proletariat on independence movement, and mobilising peasantry with the programme of agrarian revolution. Instead of creatively implementing the general guidelines of Comintern based on the study of concrete conditions,

CPI leadership had a strong tendency of putting into practice the suggestions of Comintern based on their subjective estimations, that too only those acceptable to them (even that in quite a mechanical way). Dutt-Bradley thesis only helped to strengthen these weaknesses in CPI. Though “the anti-imperialist united front tactics” formulated by the Seventh Congress of Comintern were basically correct, CPI followed them in its own opportunist and mechanical way. With the result during the stage of imperialist war even while accepting revolutionary tactics on one hand it became a tail of big bourgeoisie in practice and suffered political initiative.

The opportunism, class collaborationism mechanical approach of CPI leadership reached its peak during the time of people’s war. The political Resolution of the first congress stands as the best example for pure opportunism, class collaborationism and mechanical method. Decorating the dais of the Congress with the flags of National Congress and Muslim League and placing the life size portraits of Nehru and Jinnah clearly shows the class collaborationist policies of CPI leadership.

By the time of People’s War CPI leadership completely lost its class outlook. It perfected the habit of repeatedly emphasizing national unity instead of exposing the class nature of Congress and League. The class collaborationism it was practicing towards comprador bourgeoisie was now extended towards British Imperialists as well. It started cooperating with British imperialism unconditionally in the name of country’s defence and people’s war. Though it was becoming clear to even common man that the danger of occupation of India either by Germany or Japan and threat to Soviet Russia, the socialist base were over, not only did it not attempt to rethink about its approach but it firmly opposed any struggle with British imperialism. It vied for class collaborationist unity with comprador bourgeois parties on the one hand and British imperialism on the other.

It was ready to sacrifice the struggles of working class, peasantry and oppressed people altogether for that purpose. Always fearing aggression of fascists on the country and imaging “fifth column” of the fascists everywhere, CPI considered the massive upheaval of people’s struggles as disruptive activities. The congress gave the stamp of approval to the suicidal tactics of becoming a tail to imperialism and comprador bourgeoisie. It lost the excellent opportunities to emerge itself as the leader of the massive post

war revolutionary upsurge.

Some of the important points of the Political Resolution

1. During the period of people's war CPI invented the non-existing contradiction between British imperialism and its bureaucracy. It blamed the bureaucracy for all the sins, misdeeds of British government. It tried to reduce the people's dissatisfaction, upsurge against imperialism into one of bringing pressure on bureaucracy. It held bureaucracy responsible for everything right from the failure of Cripps Mission to food crisis.

*".....when under the pressure of the British and American people the Cripps Mission materialised, these reactionaries sabotaged it. The Cripps Mission failed mainly because the bureaucracy refused to part with real power to the Indian people and prevented the formation of a National Government capable of mobilising people effectively for diffence.They took advantage of the Congress threat of struggle and non-cooperation"*³³

2. It blamed the Socialist Party and Forward Bloc, which were leading the anti-imperialist people's struggles that broke out spontaneously during and after Quit India movement, as fifth column of the fascists and aimed its attack on them making them the main enemy.

*"The groups which makeup Fifth Column are the Forward Bloc, the party of the traitor Bose; the CSP, which betrayed socialism at the beginning of the war and pursued a policy of opportunism and disruption and ended in the camp of the Trotskyite traitors; and finally, the Trotskyite groups; which are criminal gangs in the pay of fascists. The Communist Party declares that all these groups must be treated by every honest Indian as the worst enemies of the nation and driven out of political life and exterminated."*³⁴

*"Fifth Column which wanted National Government to negotiate with the Japanese and not for national defence, and thus drove a wedge between the people of Britain and America and those of India. The ghastly repression launched by the bureaucracy on the one hand and the sabotage movement organised by the Fifth Column and with the help of the angered patriotic masses on the other, created a situation of the gravest peril to India as well as to the cause of the United Nations."*³⁵

“The Fifth Column entered and sought to seize control of the same and attempted to organise it as a wide spread mass sabotage movement directed against national defence. The Fifth Column got the ear of the patriotic masses. It led them into acts of sabotage against communications and transport. It instigated strike and deadlock movement against production. It organised provocative bomb outrages against the police and the people. It let loose anarchy, loot and terrorisation in the villages, and incendiary acts in the educational institutions. It justified all this in the name of “freedom revolution”.A situation was created which was extremely favourable to the invader.”³⁶

3. *“National Government for national defence”* – this was CPI’s basic slogan. Its argument was to co-operate with imperialist war efforts unconditionally in the name of national defence and the National unity (i.e., unity of Congress and League) towards that end. It is the bureaucracy which is the root cause of the all the evils such as food crisis created by war and therefore these issues can be resolved by bringing pressure on bureaucracy but we should not resort to agitation against British government.

While on the one hand bourgeois class was getting fatter with profits during war time, working class or peasantry, on the other, should not fight for maintaining their living standards or on any other day to day demands. This was its **No Strike** Policy. It was economism if working class or peasantry resorted to any struggle for their immediate day to day issues; to work relentlessly to enhance production was the duty of working class and peasantry. To say it in brief-big bourgeois, merchant classes and landlord classes will become fatter with the profits exploiting war and British imperialism protects its empire. For this purpose working class and peasantry should produce more day and night with starved stomachs. They should carry the entire war burden. CPI overlooked the basic fact that even for increasing production it was required to provide minimum standard of living for workers and some respite for peasantry from feudal oppression.

“The basic slogan of today is national unity for national defence to win National Government of national defence. To implement this slogan, to win National Government. The urgent need today is to build unity in action for defence, food and production. That alone would lead to freedom

and victory.”³⁷

*“It is the patriotic duty of the worker to strengthen defence by taking initiative for organising more production and better transport, and against stoppage of work irrespective of what the boss or bureaucratic does.”*³⁸

*“The Fifth Column appears on the scene, inciting hoarding by all and sundry and inciting food riots. “Government is robbing your food, so keep your grain”, “Riot for food”, and “Loot, that is the only way to food”, are its slogans. This is how disastrous the food crisis and deepens against the background of the political crisis.”*³⁹

*“Unless the working class itself girds its loins and comes forward to implement a patriotic production policy, for raising production for the army, and for the people, the anti-working class policy of the bureaucracy, sabotage and restriction of production by profiteering owners and the nefarious activities of the Fifth Column cannot be finally defeated.”*⁴⁰

4. The deadlock, resulting because Congress and British government and Congress and League could not come to an understanding, pushed the country into political crisis. To end this deadlock, Congress leaders should be released. The task before CPI was to press for this demand. To end this political deadlock, Congress should unconditionally co-operate for national defence and the government should release Congressmen. Congress should agree to the demand of Pakistan and help for unity with League. This way Congress and League should help the formation of national government. Political crisis will thus be resolved. Thus CPI lifted to its shoulders the task of bringing out an agreement between comprador bourgeois parties and imperialism.

*“In the second phase, namely, that of building national unity in action, continuance of left-nationalist deviation is a far greater drag on progress. For instance, a food campaign which reduces itself to a mere exposure of the bureaucracy coupled with formulation of general demands, leads not to food but to riots.....”*⁴¹

“..... the main deviation is to completely miss the patriotic political basis of the production policy. The tendency is to carry out work on the Kisan front as well as on the working class as of old, i.e., under the slogan, unite the Kisan and the worker to win partial demands. This is sheer

economism. Refusal to rouse the worker and the Kisan to the patriotic task of defending the country by raising production, leads to failure to win the demands as well as to strengthen organisation. This would leave the worker and the Kisan helpless against the fifth column and the production front both industrial and food, exposed to the danger of sabotage.”⁴²

*“The key slogan which we place in the forefront in the course of this campaign before all is **end dead-lock**. It must be brought home to them that this alone is the key to the release of leaders and no other. In winning the support of the League patriots to this campaign, we must explain how the release of Congress leaders and Congress-League unity alone is the way of winning self-determination and no other.”⁴³*

“.... Our patriotic parties pursued, the policy of rejecting the only patriotic duty which the situation demanded, viz., the duty to unite the people to defend the country, which enabled the bureaucrat to run riot and gravely imperil the fate of our nation. The two great patriotic parties of our country, namely, the National Congress and the Muslim League, instead of realizing that their first, unconditional and paramount duty was national defence. Instead of going forward to unite the people for the same, waited for the imperialists to give them power. They did not base their policy on the strength of national unity which was now possible on the broadest scale ever achieved, for the most simple reason that a common peril now faced every class, every section of the people.”⁴⁴

“We are the only party on whose shoulders rests the task of pulling the nation out of the bog of demoralization and getting the patriotic parties together to turn away from the barren path of disunity to the only patriotic path possible today, namely, for all-India unity for national defence.”⁴⁵

In the Constitution adopted by the Congress all aspects relating to tech mechanism, building of secret party, coordinating legal and illegal organisations etc. were given up. (All these had been included in the Statutes formulated on the basis of Draft Platform in 1934.) British government, doubtful that CPI may adopt secret organisation after war, expressed satisfaction after going through the Constitution. Its estimation that British government will have to give independence on its own after the war, its inability to contemplate the massive upheaval of people in the post-war period and its love for legalism right from its birth made CPI bid farewell to

secret party building.

The report on production, **Working Class and National Defence**, submitted by B.T. Ranadive to the Congress mentioned in the following words about the **No Strike Policy** being implemented by CPI.

“On the heels of the national crisis came the food crisis and the economic crisis, leading to an out burst of a spontaneous wave of strikes which, but for us, would have spread all over the country.”

“Comrades, who averted an all-India railway strike when the Railway Board was refusing to grant additional allowances and when strikes were breaking out in railway workshops? It was we who conduct some of the biggest railway unions like the South Indian Railway and conduct other unions in co-operation with other elements. But for our firm hold on the railway workers, there would have been spontaneous actions spreading all over India. We held back the strike wave. We roused the workers to defend production, the keybase of national defence against the suicidal policy pursued by government.

“We prevented strikes from spreading; or intervened in spontaneous and speedily settled them; or withdrew them pending settlement of disputes.”

“That was because we had realised that we could not make merry with strikes when the nation required our workers to be at their job for all the 24 hours.”⁴⁶

Ranadive blamed the comrades who argued to link production with economic demands of left nationalist position.

“It is no wonder,if some of us have slipped into the left nationalist position of conditional support to production. Gradually, step by step, economic demands are put forward as conditions of increasing production.”⁴⁷

The Congress elected a 22 member central committee. They are:

1. P.C. Joshi, 2. A.K. Ghosh, 3. S. V. Ghate, 4. S.A. Dange, 5. Iqbal Singh, 6. Somnath Lahiri, 7. Bhavani Shankar Sen Gupta, 8. S.K. Krishnan, 9. Arun Bose, 10. Manzur Rizvi, 11. S.G. Sardesai, 12. Dr. G.M. Adhikari, 13. R.D. Bhardwaj, 14. P. Sundarayya, 15. B.T. Ranadive, 16. E.M.S. Namboodripad, 17. Ranendranath Sen, 18. Sajjad Jaheer, 19. Mohana Kumara Mangalam, 20. S.S. Batliwala, 21. Biswanath Mukherjee, 22. D.S. Vaidya.

A Polit Bureau was formed with Joshi, Adhikari and Ranadive. Joshi was re-elected as secretary.

By 1 May, party membership was 15,563; Trade Union membership 3,01,400; Kisan Sabha 3,85,370; students 39,155; women 41,100; children 9,000; and volunteers 31,166 as per the secretary's report.

During the whole period of peoples war, as CPI adopted the position of unconditional support to British government, it got completely isolated politically and lost prestige. During the same period however it could extend the party organisation and its mass organisations. P.C. Joshi claimed that this expansion vindicated that the party's political line is correct. It is ridiculous to be content with this expansion itself while losing the opportunities to emerge as the leader of the mighty countrywide mass upsurge. Even this expansion too achieved when INC was out of the political arena and on the basis of legalist and opportunist politics.

CPI's relations with CSP and Bose

CSP was mainly a petti-bourgeois reformist party. It had socialists of various hues ranging from Jayprakash Narayan and Acharya Narendra Dev who professed their alliance with scientific socialism to the ilk of Second internationalists. CSP became a forum for anti-imperialist and bourgeois patriotic forces with inclination towards socialism. CPI joined it and worked with it. In the initial years they had good relations.

Bose was an anti-imperialist bourgeois nationalist and a patriot. At first he opposed any struggle against feudalism. In Congress he fought Gandhian leadership rather vacillatingly. Gradually while working with communists he developed positive attitude towards Russian revolution and communism. He participated in the Left-Co-ordination Committee along with CSP and CPI. He even recognised socialism as the goal. With the help of communists and CSP he won Congress presidential elections defeating Gandhi's candidate. CPI even depicted it as the victory of left forces.

When Gandhi undemocratically averted Bose assuming the leadership of Congress, CPI abandoned the left unity that it was advocating till then and took an out and out opportunist stand in the name of unity of Congress and left Bose. Instead of trying to build an alternative to Gandhian leader-

ship and to break the monopoly of comprador bourgeoisie on the freedom movement it prepared to sacrifice unity with Bose and CSP.

Before war CSP and Bose actively participated in anti-fascist united front and supported Soviet Union's stand. But they failed to understand the no-war pact Russia made with Fascist Germany. When the war broke out defying Congress leadership they came forward to take up anti-war activities. Whereas CPI argued that taking up any struggle separately from Congress is wrong. In the peoples war period when CPI went to one extreme, CSP went to another and completely ignored the necessity of anti-fascist united front. In this way CPI and CSP took opposite stands during people's war period.

Bose who was isolated in Congress, during war with the help of communists escaped from country and reached Russia. However he did not get help from Russia to implement his plans to liberate the country by building an army as it was then in the anti-fascist united front. He then approached fascist Germany for help. Bose who often confused in understanding international issues this time blundered. With the naïve approach of enemy's enemy is friend he took a suicidal path and entered into united front with Germany when it became a menace to entire world. No doubt expecting fascist victory to deliver freedom is too naïve and unwise. Despite the good intentions of Bose the tactic he adopted during the period of people's war could have helped the fascists. However it is wrong to consider him as fascist. It must be noted that he directed I.N.A. not to fight with Russian army.

During Quit India movement both CSP and Forward Block tried their best to lead the masses. CPI then tailing behind British accused them of sabotaging the people's war and took an antagonistic attitude towards them. It denigrated them as fifth column, disrupters, betrayers, etc. In this way it not only distanced itself from the relatively reliable allies in the national movement but also considered them as enemies. When comprador bourgeoisie and its political representatives at the site of transfer of power launched an all out offensive against CPI, it was completely isolated.

The Post War Revolutionary Upsurge

All the Congress leaders were released in June 1945 when the war was coming to an end. Congress leaders gained recognition as national heroes who have spent two and a half years in jails, though they had condemned Quit India movement, more over they started owning up the movement. Negotiations with the government began, but they failed to clinch an agreement as League took an intransigent position on its demand of Pakistan. Even though the British government tried to constitute a Central Executive with all Indian members except Viceroy it was not yet ready to transfer power. Japan surrendered in August 1945.

Anti-imperialist people's upsurge started throughout South East Asia. Especially in Vietnam and Indo-China struggles advanced. In India also another revolutionary upsurge was ready to burst out. But Congress was no more ready for any struggles. CPI was not in a position to think about the coming post-war upsurge as it was under siege by the Congress leaders who started attacking CPI as soon as they were released. Several P.C.C.s resolved to expel communists from Congress. Joshi tried and failed to pacify the Congress leadership by exhibiting his untainted loyalty and devotion towards Gandhi and Congress.

*"It is the Congress that planted the banner of Indian freedom; it is from Congress leaders that we got our early lessons in patriotism and it is today congress men who want to deny us the privilege of fighting shoulder to shoulder with them for the cause they taught us to accept as our main aim in life. To us the Congress is our parent organisation, its leaders our political fathers, its followers our brothers-in-arms."*⁴⁸

Congress constituted a committee to inquire into the activities of communists during Quit India period. That committee under Nehru's leadership recommended expelling communists. Thus communists resigned from Congress.

The main allegation was that CPI worked contrary to the policy of Congress during Quit India period. Congress leadership could not digest even the fact that CPI supported Pakistan demand. But it did not take any action against people like Rajagopalachari who took almost similar stand as that of Communists. Moreover they were brought again into leadership. A

congenial atmosphere existed to strike at communists and the Congress utilised the opportunity. Comprador bourgeoisie class saw the fulfilment of its main demands within sight and therefore thought it necessary to get rid of CPI and isolate it politically.

While Congress leadership was severely attacking communists (including physical attacks) calling them traitors to the nation, P.C. Joshi announced loyalty to Congress leadership and prostrated at the feet of Gandhi in the most shameful manner. Shredding off all shame he sought after unity even after being expelled from Congress.

“You are the oldest political leadership of our greatest political organisation of which we have been very proud to be members. A generous heart and a tolerant mind should have been your natural possession. But things in India as they are, are not what they should be. You have called us what no fellow countryman of ours, however much he differed from us, ever called our party - a party of traitors. You tell the people that we betrayed the country to the British. We could say with equal justification that you tried to sell it to the Japs. But we do not because it would be a lie. Tit for tat is not the communist way, that is the law of the jungle.”⁴⁹

“The more you slander our party the more we shall keep our head for we know how bad is the future for our country when you, its foremost leadership, are reduced to uttering political slanders instead of making political arguments and when all your practical plans are for fighting each other and you do not even think of a common plan for fighting our British rulers.”⁵⁰

Owing to the wrong tactics adopted by CPI during the period of people's war, it lost political initiative in the post-war period. CPI almost played the role of a spectator in the post-war revolutionary upsurge which forced British government into such a helpless position that it could no longer rule India.

Wave of Strikes

Working class struggles erupted throughout the country in the post-war period. Working class took up even militant political struggles. The following table gives a picture of the wave of strikes during that period.

| Years | Number of Strikes | No. of Workers Participated in Strikes | Man days Lost |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1943 | 716 | 52,508 | 23,42,287 |
| 1944 | 658 | 55,051 | 34,47,306 |
| 1945 | 848 | 7,82,192 | 33,40,892 |
| 1946 | 1,616 | 19,61,948 | 1,27,17,762 |
| 1947 | 1,811 | 18,40,784 | 1,65,62,666 |

Trial of INA

Government took up open trial of hundreds of prisoners belonging to the Indian National Army built by Bose and sentenced them too. Big mass movement erupted against the trial and the sentences. In Calcutta the struggle raged with militancy where students and workers heroically fought street battles and 84 died in police firings and 200 were injured.

It is true the INA built by Bose never gave a material blow to the British imperialism but people recognised it as their own liberation army. Therefore there was such a big popular movement. The British were worried about the threat posed by the 20,000 strong INA prisoners. More over the government caught up with the fear that these rebellious ideas of INA may spread in the military.

Mutiny of Royal Indian Navy

Royal Indian Navy revolted in February 18-23, 1946. The strike that started in a ship, *Talwar*, in Bombay spread to all ports. By 23rd February the strike spread to 20,000 navy men of 70 ships in 20 ports joined the strike. In Bombay the workers struck work in response to the call given by CPI in support of the navy men. Though the Congress and League opposed the all 30,000 workers participated in the strike and they built barricades and fought street battles. 228 civilians died and another 1046 injured in police firings. CSP too supported the strike while Congress opposed it though

it could not dare to condemn it openly.

The future home minister Patel wrote to Tanneti Viswanadham a prominent leader of Congress “*discipline in the Army cannot be tampered with.. We will want Army in free India.*”⁵¹ While the mutiny was going on Nehru was “*impressed by the necessity for curbing the wild outburst of violence*”⁵² He later of course, in his unique style hailed the revolt saying it demolished the **iron wall** between the people and the army. Navy withdrew the strike after Patel persuaded them. Patel who promised the strikers of ensuring that no victimization shall take place against them, simply had forgotten it in the next moment itself. Naval Central Committee, while withdrawing the strike, announced this: “*Our strike has been a historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of men in the Services and in the streets flowed together in a common cause. We in the Services will never forget this. We know also that you, our brothers and sisters, will not get. Long live our great people! Jai Hind!*”⁵³

Peasant struggles

Peasant struggles also played an important role in the post-war revolutionary upsurge.

Tebhaga peasant struggle: In 1946 the Kisan Sabha launched the famous *Tebhaga* peasant struggle. Under the leadership of the Sabha the tenant cultivators demanded to reduce the rent of the landlords to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the produce from the $\frac{1}{2}$ or more of it that was then prevailing rate. In fact the Flood Commission itself recommended the rent reduction and the peasantry under the leadership of Sabha started demanding the implementation of the recommendation. The Communist activists comprising the urban student went to the countryside and started mobilising the vast masses of tenant cultivators who largely lost their lands because of the depression and drought. North Bengal became the hot bed of peasant unrest where 60% of the rural population. The movement gained momentum by November and peasants took the harvest to their houses instead of those of the landlords. The poor *Rajbansi* tribal peasantry and the other poor farmers mainly took part in this struggle. Muslims too in considerable number participated in the movement. The peasant volunteers took up lathis and stood against the violent attacks of the *jotedars* and police.

From 1947 onwards the League ministry unleashed brutal repression on the movement. 20 Santhals martyred fighting the police at Balughat. The peasant activists demanded to take up arms to fight back the landlords and state. However the CPI which was leading the struggle neither had any arms nor it was prepared to take up arms. CPI gave a call to observe general strike in support of the Tebhaga struggle on March 28th. However it was not materialised due to communal disturbances that erupted as the *Hind Maha Sabha* launched agitation demanding the division of Bengal.

Punapra-Vayalar peasant struggle: This is the heroic struggle waged by the peasants and workers under the leadership of CPI in the princely state of Travancore (Kerala) against feudalism. Though the struggle lasted for a brief period it remains a glorious chapter in the annals of communist party history.

By 1946 the communist party established good mass base in Shertalai-Aleppy-Ambulapuja area. The party had strong base among the workers of coir industry, fishermen, toddy-tappers and agricultural labourers. The Communist Party launched a political agitation against the proposed introduction of an 'American model' constitution formulated by the Divan of the State Ramaswamy Iyer with the aim of remaining independent after the transfer of power. The communists gave a call to throw the constitution into the Arabian sea. From September 1946 onwards the state government started hunting the communists and attacked trade unions in the Aleppy area. Police camps were established and tortures in custody and jails became rampant. (In response to the barbaric repression unleashed by the government the party started volunteer camps and basic military training in defence of the movement. The party gave a call to general strike in Aleppy-Shertalai area on 22nd October. After two days the volunteers conducted a raid on the Punapra police station and seized the weapons. The government imposed martial law and launched military attack on the volunteer head quarters on 27th. In that brutal attack at least 800 martyred, virtually the tyrant government took a blood bath. The movement died down in the rivers of blood. But the political impact of the heroic struggle was so immense that the State had no option but to accept the merger in the union. Because of the heroic fight and the sacrifice and valour shown by communists in it in the entire Kerala the prestige of the Communist Party had been held high.

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Telangana peasant armed struggle: The historic Telangana struggle of 1946-51 is the most important one among the post-war peasant struggles. The struggle that started against Nizam and turned in to a movement for land and liberation caused panic in imperialism and Congress leaders too.

Warli peasant struggle: Tribal peasantry of Warli in Maharashtra launched struggle under the leadership of CPI against corvee labour and atrocities of landlords.

The post-war revolutionary upsurge was so severe that British government was in a hurry to transfer power as soon as possible. It realised that if another wave of independence movement erupted it would not be able to crush it. British government announced its willingness to transfer power within 18 months. Ultimately the time came for the comprador bourgeoisie to realise its dream of **power** for which it had been so long pleading the imperialists under the guise of nationalist movement.

Transfer of Power

While the Congress was getting ready for elections the country was being overwhelmed with post-war revolutionary upsurge. Nehru led the election campaign like he did in 1937 elections. CPI participated in the elections independently. Election results widened the rift between Congress and League. Forming an interim government at the centre and constituting Constituent Assembly came into the agenda. Transfer of power turned out to be a very complex problem. Congress argued that it is the representative of Indian nation as a whole. League argued that it represents all the Muslims in the country and that Congress like wise represent Hindus. With this argument it wants to attain the status of the sole representative all Muslims in British India and was trying to form **Pakistan** with all the Muslim majority states. Jinnah's desire was to form Pakistan comprising Punjab, Sindh, Bengal, North-Eastern Frontier Province and Assam as they were Muslim majority states.

Muslim League right from its formation remained as an organisation of a few elite and educated classes. It had always used the patronage of British for furthering the interests of Muslim comprador bourgeois and landlord classes. British rulers also encouraged League according to their divide and

rule policy. In fact League did not emerge as the unquestionable leader of the Muslims in all these states. Even in the elections with only 17% of population having voting rights, it could not form governments in NWFP, Assam and Punjab. Seeing from any angle the claims of League to be the sole representative of Muslims were false. Moreover people of all those states did not desire to form into Pakistan and the demand essentially remained as that of Muslim comprador bourgeoisie at that time. Therefore Jinnah was opposed to democratic solutions like plebiscite with universal franchise.

On the other hand Congress was eager to have political control over whole of India by projecting itself as the national representative of undivided India. Therefore, it was not ready to be recognised as the representative of caste Hindus. In the name of undivided India comprador bourgeoisie wanted to have the control over whole of British Indian market. It was obvious that Jinnah's Pakistan demand was not reflecting the Muslim people's will. But Congress was not in a position to counter it by democratic means as it was neither willing to accept India as a multinational country nor ready to the formation of voluntary federation of India with all the nations having right to self-determination as it was completely against the interests of Indian comprador bourgeoisie. As Muslim League was wishing to build Pakistan, Congress leadership was also wanted to build undivided India in collaboration with imperialism without any regard to the wishes of the peoples of various nationalities. These two counter-opposed stands inevitably lead to a deadlock. The innumerable meetings and discussions the British cabinet mission held for 4 months from March 1946 failed. Interim government and Constituent Assembly could not be formed.

Congress became restive about the delay after power came so nearer. As nationalities question and the question of self determination became a matter of discussion Sikhs started demanding Homeland. The slogan of independent Bengal came forward. Gaffar Khan announced that NWFP would want to be an independent country if Pakistan is formed (Congress was in power in that state with 97% per cent Muslim population. In the 1946 elections, League got only 32% votes). *Visalandhra* and United Kerala movements started demanding the formation of linguistic states. Comprador bourgeoisie started realising that it faced with dilemma – weather agree to

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the formation two separate prison houses of nationalities in collusion with imperialism? Or to recognise India as the multinational country and form a voluntary federation of nationalities based on the right to self determination? From the position of one nation and one country Congress conceded reconciled to the formation of two countries on the communal basis and started demanding bifurcation of Bengal and Punjab states and merge the Hindu majority areas in the Indian union.

Jinnah on the other hand realised that the strength of Congress lies in its mass mobilisation capacity and it is able to bargain for a strong place by resorting to mass struggles. He also realised that Congress has been feared of launching any struggle keeping in view the danger it posed due to precarious situation and British imperialism then was fearing the consequences that might arise if Congress again resorted to agitation. (In April 1946 police strikes took place in Malabar, Dhaka, Andaman and Bihar and Delhi. There was postal strike in July. Calcutta Bandh called by CPI in support of the strike was a grand success. There were 1629 strikes in 1946, in which 19,40,000 workers participated.) Jinnah gave a call for **Direct Action** from 16th August. Notwithstanding the dissent of Jinnah, Congress unilaterally formed interim government at centre with Nehru as the prime minister.

With **Direct Action** of August 16th the most barbaric and tragic homicide in the history of the country started. Rivers of blood flowed through the streets of Calcutta between August 16th and 19th. Unprecedented communal riots erupted. These riots reached Bombay at the beginning of September. On October 10 *Novakhali* (East Bengal) communal genocide started. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab were also overwhelmed with communal frenzy. Thousands were massacred. This communal genocide was only the beginning of “independence”. Lakhs of people were killed in both the countries in communal riots that erupted on the occasion of transfer of power in 1947. Crores of them were displaced. Lakhs of people were massacred to share the power obtained through the “non-violent” struggle.

Partition

The Indian big bourgeoisie represented by INC strongly aspired to have control over undivided British India market. In the name of Indian nation it wanted to make a prison house of nationalities. It always opposed to federal constitution that provides autonomy to nationalities. The INC

leadership never showed willingness to share power with Muslim League, even in the nominal governments which had no powers at all. The unitary constitution prepared by Motilal Nehru in 1927 and the INC leadership's Hindu communalist leanings showed these aspirations of the big bourgeoisie. Thus the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord classes of Muslim minorities which represented by Muslim League had no option but to opt for Pakistan to get their pound of flesh. Whereas the intransigent and undemocratic attitude of Congress on the one hand and the communal carnage created by Hindu communalist forces on the other together forced Muslim masses to accept Pakistan. Indian big bourgeoisie's failure in accepting a voluntary federal system that assures the fulfillment of the nationalist aspirations of various nationalities. It was in fact the failure of the big bourgeoisie in accepting to form a voluntary federal system that could fulfill the aspirations of various nationalities made partition of country inevitable.

The Hindu revivalism and communalism fostered by comprador bourgeoisie and feudal forces inside congress and outside of it during the freedom movement and after it instigated riots and pogroms against Muslim minority. The Muslim communalism that strengthened as a corollary to the Hindu Communalist onslaughts too on its part deepened the Hindu-Muslim divide. During partition and after lakhs of people were butchered in the communal inferno.

CPI leadership failed in understanding the class nature and interests of Congress and Muslim League. Likewise it failed in grasping the Hindu revivalist roots behind the Hindu-Muslim question. It took up the slogan the unity of Congress and League is the unity of India losing all contact with reality. Coupled with its right opportunism this failure forced CPI to play a helpless spectators role during partition.

Mountbatten Award

Between 1946-47 massive peoples struggles broke out in all princely states. British Prime Minister Attlee announced on February 20, 1947 that power will be transferred before June, 1948. Mountbatten swore in as viceroy on 24th March. He also pursued the same old policy of Britain to divide India and transfer of power. Congress and League leadership realised that it is better for both the sides to come to some agreement as early as possible

and share India. Therefore his job was made easier.

Pakistan was formed by dividing Punjab, Assam and Bengal. Pakistan was imposed on the people of NWFP in contrary to their aspirations. “Independence” was announced for princely states as well along with India and Pakistan. It was decided that formal transfer of power will take place on August 15th.

CPI while criticising the imperialist designs of the division of the country and pitting India and Pakistan one against the other on the one hand and at the same time accepted the Award and recognised the “independence” as real on the other hand.

Gandhi proposed that Mountbatten should act as common Governor General for both the independent countries. Nehru, the ‘socialist’ and the ‘democrat’ supported this proposal with much enthusiasm. Mountbatten became India’s first Governor General. However Jinnah did not agree to this and he himself became the Governor General of Pakistan. By August 15th itself, Patel used all the persuasive, threatening and divisive methods and made the princely states join Indian Union (only Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagarh did not join the Union). While rivers of blood were flowing on both sides of the border, comprador bourgeois and feudal classes assumed power in the midnight of August 14th.

Mountbatten Award and CPI

Immediately after Mountbatten award was announced, P.C. Joshi released a statement that this is a cunning plan of British imperialists to continue its hold by balkanization of India. This statement gave a call to the people to reject this award and fight for complete independence. Thus he declared that CPI will direct its efforts towards the *“single aim of defeating at all costs the new dangerous imperialist manoeuvres, and towards ensuring victory to the cause of full and final independence for the whole of India.”*⁵⁴

However, he remained silent about the role of Congress and League which were parties to the award. By stating the common plan of British government, Congress and League as the conspiracy of imperialists, leaving out Congress and League this statement turned out to be self-contradictory.

Right from war period CPI was praising Congress and League as people's parties and their governments as peoples' governments. It had been telling that the unity of Congress and League itself is the national unity and this national unity as the path for achieving independence. It was clearly visible for the past two years that Congress and League were collaborating with imperialisms for sharing power. More over Congress and League governments were resorting to brutal repression on working class and peasantry. Congress was especially trying by all means to push out CPI from political arena. It was only with the consent of Nehru ministry that British government attacked Communist party throughout India with a plan in the name of *Operation Asylum* in January 1947. Prakasam government even banned CPI in Madras Province. During the same time Telangana armed peasant struggle was advancing rapidly and turned out to be a nightmare for both Indian comprador classes and imperialism. CPI leadership however was so neck deep in the quagmire of opportunism that it could not even imagine that it can have independent existence other than being a tail to the big bourgeoisie and its representative National Congress.

“Mountbatten Award and After”

Without change in the estimation of CPI about the class nature of Congress and League and their close relation with imperialism, it is not possible to mention Mountbatten award as imperialists' conspiracy. This internal contradiction in the statement of Joshi was resolved by the political resolution in the name of “Mountbatten Award and After”, formulated by the central committee meeting of June 1947. This very cleverly drafted resolution, even while mentioning that Mountbatten award was an effort not to grant real independence to the country supported it. By announcing independence not only to India and Pakistan but to the princely states, it stated that, imperialism may try to continue its grip on the country and disrupt the independence. To counter this threat to the country's independence it preached national unity, that is unity with Congress. It described this traitorous agreement of imperialists in collusion with Congress and League leaders as a victory of Indian national movement. It hailed it as winning new opportunities for the progress of India. It announced unconditional support to Congress.

Important Points

1. Mountbatten Award was mentioned as the concession imperialism was forced to give bowing to the pressure of national movement.

“The Mountbatten Award does not give India real independence but is the culmination of a double faced imperial policy, which, while making concessions to the national demand to transfer power, sets in motion disruptive and reactionary forces to disrupt the popular upsurge, obstruct the realisation of real independence, throttle the growth of democracy and destroy the unity and integrity of India.”⁵⁵

“The very fact that British imperialism does not hope any longer to rule India directly is a recognition of the undisputed strength of the Indian freedom movement. Its desperate manoeuvres reveal not its strength but its utter weakness which has forced it to make important concessions to the urgent demands of the national liberation movement.”⁵⁶

2. It opined that new opportunities have been won for national advance. Moreover it mentioned Congress and League governments, representing only 17% of the country and not elected by universal franchise, as peoples governments. It described the constituent assemblies formed on the similar basis as strategic weapons in the hands of national leadership.

“The Communist Party is of the opinion that new opportunities for national advance have been won. The two popular Governments and Constituent Assemblies are the strategic weapons in the hands of the national leadership. It is the task of the national movement to ensure that they are used for the rapid realisation of national aims.”⁵⁷

3. Appealing to the people to rally behind Congress and League which had betrayed the freedom movement and were sharing power with imperialism, it announced its complete support to them. It was even ready to water down workers and peasants struggles.

“National unification behind the popular Governments for the realisation of complete independence demands that people’s vigilance be roused against the compromisers in the national leadership, people’s indignation against the vested interests, and national conscience against communal provocateurs. the national forces against reaction in each state is the only guarantee against imperialist manoeuvres.”⁵⁸

“While making every effort to settle industrial and agrarian disputes amicably, the Communist Party will give full support to workers’ strikes and peasant actions for their just democratic demands against the growing offensive of the owners and landlords.

“The Communist Party shall mobilise popular and Ministerial support behind these democratic struggles of the toiling people and compel the capitalists and landlords to meet their demands.

“The Communist Party reciprocates whole-heartedly the recent appeals of the national leaders for mutual co-operation in the great task of nation-building.”⁵⁹

4. Making it clear that it wanted to remain as a tail to comprador bourgeoisie even after the transfer of power, it again gave the call for **National Front**. R.P. Dutt who acted as the ideologue to CPI even advised that communists and socialists should participate in the government. But, comprador bourgeoisie was not ready for any power sharing with CPI. All of Dutt’s efforts (at the end of 1946) for coming to an agreement with Congress leaders including anti-communists like Patel and S.K. Patil failed.

“In the coming critical transitional phase it will be the task of the Indian working-class and peasant movements to see that the fight for real independence, full democracy and Indian unity goes forward to final victory and they play their full part in forging the unity of the National Front shoulder to shoulder with all progressive and Left elements in our country.”⁶⁰

From its birth to transfer of power left nationalism dominated CPI. The leadership mainly came from petty-bourgeoisie, rich peasant and land lord classes. It failed to declassify and fostered left nationalism in the party and confined it to legalist and economist limits. Leadership did not grow beyond the trade unionist consciousness. It mainly tailed behind the bourgeoisie

CPI never had political and ideological unity achieved through internal debate and struggle on the basis of Marxist-Leninist democratic centralism. It is quite natural rather than not in such a situation differences of opinions among leadership degenerate into factionalism. From its inception CPI was fraught with factionalism. Groups formed among leadership on the basis of

opportunism. The internal debates that should be conducted on the firm foundations of politics, ideology and practice in class struggle degenerated into abstract arguments and counter arguments of factionalists who lost all contact with real conditions and mass movement.

However at the same time CPI wrote a glorious chapter of great sacrifices and heroic struggles in the modern Indian history. It was only due to those sacrifices and struggles CPI remained a night mare to both colonial rulers and comprador classes. Treacherous leadership of Congress at the sight of transfer of power not only used the mass strength of CPI to its own ends but also tried its best to wipe out the party by considering it as its main enemy. Fighting back these attacks the party not only succeeded in keeping its vigor and valor but also advanced on the path of retrospection and rectification of the right opportunist line it was pursuing.

Brief Summary

During 1935-39 imperialism prepared for another world war. Comintern adopted united front tactics as fascism came to the fore as the main enemy. Dutt and Broadly in the name of applying united front tactics to India formulated a right opportunist line. The right opportunist elements in the leadership of CPI adopted their line as it was in line with their class collaborationist thinking. They thus drew the party which was then in the process of establishing a revolutionary line with retrospection and with the help of the suggestions of the fraternal parties in to the mire of right opportunism.

During the period of 1936-48 when this right opportunist line was fallowed, CPI accepted INC's indubitable leadership over national movement ignoring the treacherous nature of its leadership. It reached to the stand that independence of our country is possible only under the leadership of Congress rather than aiming to establish proletarian hegemony over national movement. Even it shred off the nominal mentioning of class hegemony and tailed the party to the comprador bourgeoisie. The

CPI leadership rallied behind Nehru, who was the most important leader of the bogus left against which **Draft Platform** asked for a determined and concerted struggle. Instead of mobilising and leading masses into militant anti-imperialist struggles it participated in 1937 elections. It took far more right position regarding the formation of ministries.

Due to the right opportunist line and policies it pursued during Second World War it lost the opportunities for breaking the monopoly of INC over the leadership of nationalist movement. Moreover in the name of preserving the unity of Congress it abandoned the left unity that it was striving to build till then and sacrificed its alliance with CSP and Forward Block. Thus rather than building an alternative leadership to Gandhian leadership it in fact strengthened it.

In the beginning of war even though it correctly took up anti-war tactics it by adopting an absurd attitude of forcing the Congress leadership to put those tactics in to practice, took a rightist position – far right to CSP and Bose. During the people's war period, in the name of anti-fascist front by giving up the interests of the working class and masses it took the stand of absolute unity with British and opposed any struggle against it – even the day to day struggles of the working masses. As a result, it stood aloof from the great mass upsurge of Quit India movement. The leadership miserably failed in formulating and implementing united front tactics with the two aspects of struggle and unity with a realistic view by co-ordinating its national and international tasks. Thus it bungled with the opportunities of becoming the leader of the mighty revolutionary mass upsurge in the post-war period and badly damaged its prestige.

After nearly two decades of its existence CPI finally in 1943 could hold its First Congress. The congress endorsed the right opportunist line pursued by the leadership. Even though Comintern was actively trying to build revolutionary party in India since 1920, CPI however failed to establish live relations with it. CPI could not send its official delegation to none of the Comintern Congresses. Thus the most significant achievement of the congress remains that CPI succeeded in holding it in the life

time of Comintern.

Mighty upsurge of mass struggles and upheavals of the post-war period made direct colonial rule over India impossible. Hence British imperialism transferred power to comprador classes and safeguarded its own interests. The Hindu communalism along with the intransigent and undemocratic attitude of INC in sharing power with Muslim League lead to the partition of the country and unprecedented communal carnage. While comprador bourgeoisie and landlord classes assuming power in the name of independence CPI played the role of a helpless spectator. More over it recognised the transfer of power as the real independence.

At the sight of transfer of power Congress after war launched a broadside against CPI by considering it as the main threat. Despite this CPI shamefully pleaded for unity with Congress. However a serious retrospection about the right deviation in the party too started.

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The Left Sectarian Adventurist Line

Since Dutt-Bradley thesis was accepted in 1936, CPI was deeply sinking into right opportunism. CPI reached to such a stage where it could not realise that in the name of transfer of power imperialism is continuing its hold indirectly by transferring power to comprador bourgeoisie. It could not realise that the anti-imperialist task of Indian democratic revolution was yet to be completed. It thought that “*the threat to independence from imperialists*” has to be fought against. It proposed to support Nehru government even while fighting ‘rightists’ in the Congress.

It completely neglected the anti-feudal peasant struggles erupting in the country. It worked among peasantry through AIKS, but did not realise the role of peasantry in revolution. It gave leadership to spontaneously erupted peasant struggles but did not make any attempt to mobilise peasantry throughout the country based on agrarian revolutionary programme. It did not realise the significance of Telangana peasant struggle started in 1946. Anti-feudal task of the democratic revolution was never taken up by Indian bourgeoisie. Even the CPI too by neglecting the agrarian revolution contributed to the un-fulfillment of the anti-feudal task of the democratic revolution.

It is true that CPI demanded that the right of nations to self-determination should be recognised, but as it lost ground by neglecting the peasantry, and lost the opportunities to establish proletarian hegemony on national movement and became a tail to comprador bourgeoisie; it remained only a spectator as India and Pakistan were emerging as prison-houses of nationalities. No doubt it was only by betraying democratic revolution comprador bourgeois and landlord classes succeeded in ascending to power though it is subservient to imperialism. But it should not be ignored that CPI’s failure to fulfill its historic task of leading the oppressed masses of India to successfully overthrow feudalism and imperialism, too was an important factor that contributed to their success.

CPI leadership completely failed in understanding and defeating the

dubious nature, cunning tactics and betrayal of comprador bourgeoisie and in leading the oppressed masses forward. It did not strive to study the concrete economic, political and historical situation of India in Marxist-Leninist methods and to emerge as the political leader of the broad masses by training itself *in the school of peasant struggles*, as told by Lenin. It tried to lead Indian revolution by subjective and dogmatic methods. While assessing the rightist deviation in CPI, the role played by the CPGB's guidance in submerging the CPI leadership in the mire of opportunism should not be underestimated.

However deep the CPI leadership may have sunk in opportunism, party cadres and workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and women fired with the high ideals of Communism and patriotism made unmatched sacrifices and continued and furthered the glorious tradition of heroic struggle and spirit of sacrifice of Indian national revolutionaries. Despite all its weaknesses the CPI remained a nightmare to the imperialism and to the comprador classes of India. Naturally such a live organism would try to fight back the germs of disease with which it was infected.

Right Opportunism was Challenged

CPI's right opportunism did not go unopposed. Severe differences were expressed in 1936 itself over Dutt-Bradley thesis. When it was decided that peasantry and workers should join Congress party, an opinion that this would liquidate the party was also expressed. Doubts were continued to be expressed about CPI's stand towards Congress. But party was dominated by rightist leadership. By 1946 Ranadive, Adhikari and others tried to change the stand of CPI towards Congress. In the central committee resolution of August 1946, a tendency of opposing the party's stand towards Congress was expressed. But as it was a compromise resolution, P.C. Joshi could implement his own line in practice. This opposition of Ranadive and others towards right was also not a consistent one. In any case, by 1947 dissatisfaction grew throughout the party about the line it was pursuing. Especially the severe repression the Congress governments which came to power in 1946 resorted to on workers' and peasant struggles and thus started proving that CPI's estimation about big bourgeoisie was wrong. Nehru and Patel continued their anti-CPI tirade. It was admitted by

British officials themselves that Patel, the home minister in the Nehru cabinet was intending to ban CPI in 1946 itself.

Congress government in Bombay enacted Industrial Disputes Act, 1946 to suppress workers movements. AITUC resolved condemning this. To oppose strikes Congress split AITUC and formed INTUC in May 1947. INTUC started its disruptive activities in the trade union movement with the help and support of industrialists and government. Congress attacked communists in Kisan Sabha, and in students movement every where.

Congress government resorted to severe repression on communists in Madras Province and the CPI in Madras province refused to implement the official line towards Congress. Prakasham government that banned CPI in 1946 itself unleashed severe repression in Andhra districts neighboring Telangana which were acting as active rear to the Telangana armed struggle that was advancing rapidly at that time. The Andhra party that was leading the Telangana peasant struggle came in as a strong support to the struggle against right.

Central Committee met in the second week of December, 1947. In this meeting P.C. Joshi was ousted from the post of general secretary and B.T. Ranadive was elected in his place. Exactly a week prior to this meeting Congress government in Bombay laid restrictions on CPI's magazines and other publications. The debate in the party over the nature of Nehru government and the attitude of communists towards it came to a conclusion and CC repudiated the view that the Nehru government can be influenced by building mass pressure, as opportunism. It was resolved that the policy of government will only leads to the subservience to the Anglo-American camp of imperialism. It was clearly stated that Indian big bourgeoisie colluded with imperialism and the bourgeoisie government is supporting it.

Second Congress of CPI

Second Congress of CPI was held in Calcutta from February 28 to March 6, 1948. 919 delegates were elected to the Congress, but only 632 attended. 565 among them were whole timers. While 75 delegates were to attend from Telangana, only 4 or 5 could make it. Fraternal delegates from Australia, Burma, Ceylon, and Yugoslavia attended. Yugoslavian delegation

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actively participated.

This Congress elected 31 member central committee: They are: B.T. Ranadive (General Secretary), Bhavani Sen, Somnath Lahiri, G. Adhikari, Ajay Ghosh, S.K. Krishnan, C. Rajeswara Rao. M. Chandrasekhara Rao and S.S. Yusuf (all members of PB).

Ranen Sen, S.A.Dange, S.V.Ghate, D.S.Vaidya, P.Sundarayya, E.M.S.Namboodripad, Arun Bose, S.G.Sardesai, Biswanath Mukherjee, P.Krishna Pillai, K.C.George, M.Basavapunnaiah, D.Venkateswara Rao, L.K.Oak, S.V.Parulekar, M.Kalyanasundaram, B.Srinivasa Rao, Muzaffar Ahmed, Biresh Misra, Sunil Mukherjee and Ravi Narayana Reddy.

At a time when Nehru government was preparing for an all-out attack on the party and it was already banned in some states, not only the congress held legally but also with a huge number of delegates. The size of CC was also too big considering that the CC had to hold its meetings in future in secrecy in urban centers. Ranadive despite his revolutionary rhetoric it seemed that instead of building an effective highest political body that could lead the revolution, just like his predecessor Joshi made it an exercise to accommodate and balance all the fractions in the party. It only indicates the deep rooted legalism that was rotting the party organisation at that time, to which the new leadership which proved to be that of left sectarian and adventurist was not an exception.

A seven day congress session with such a huge delegation particularly at a crucial juncture when the party was charting a new course by rejecting the long standing right opportunist and class collaborationist line and practice certainly would have reduced the scope, depth and level of the political, theoretical and organisational debate. But the congress succeeded in bringing out the pent up anger and frustration in the party all over the country against the right opportunist policies and practice of the party.

“The delegates who came to the congress were mostly mass leaders who had their finger tips on the pulse of the rising struggle of the masses. They knew what the hesitations and vacillations of the foregoing period and meant for their work among the masses. They came to the congress with the firm determination to end the vacillations and mistakes of the past and to make a collective effort to evolve correct revolutionary line.”¹

“The second party congress gave a rude shakeup to right reformism which.....had eaten away the very vitals of it during the long period of its grip over the party.”²

Even though the congress succeeded in rejecting the right opportunist understanding regarding the transfer of power, the nature of bourgeoisie and Nehru government, not only it failed in chalking out a revolutionary line but also failed in recognising the necessity of reorganising the entire party machinery which then only existing as a legalist organisation. These failures were proved to be fatal and even squandered the positive achievements of the congress.

Political Thesis

The congress adopted the Political Thesis prepared by Ranadive. As correctly assessed by June CC later, it was a document that attempted to *“rescue the party from the mire of reformism in which it had been sunk for a longtime”*, but it also contained *“some dangerous roots of left-sectarianism which the polit bureau subsequently developed into a full fledged Trotskyite thesis..... nullifying all the positive achievements of the second congress.”³*

1. The thesis clearly stated that Indian national bourgeoisie and its representative Congress have compromised with imperialism and playing a reactionary role. It correctly recognised the transfer of power as fake independence that facilitated the indirect rule of imperialists.

“The postwar revolutionary upsurge forced imperialism to change its strategy”⁴ “The Mountbatten award does not signify a retreat of imperialism but its cunning counter offensive against the rising forces of the Indian people”. “Faced with the alternative of quitting India, it has given a share of power to the capitalists and landlords”⁵ “What the Mountbatten Plan has given to the people is not real but fake independence....”⁶

“The leadership of the National Congress representing the interests of the Indian capitalist class, thus betrayed the revolutionary movement.”⁷

“Indian bourgeoisie.....has given up its oppositional role and has become collaborationist and therefore reactionary.”⁸

Ranadive failed to learn from and Chinese experience and to distin-

guish between the comprador or big and the national or middle bourgeoisie sections of Indian bourgeoisie and the different roles they play in the democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism. As the right opportunism used the differentiation of bourgeoisie as progressive and reactionary section only to tailing the party to big bourgeoisie, Ranadive considered the bourgeoisie as a single whole – comprador and reactionary - and ruled out the possibility of the existence of any section of bourgeoisie that could play any revolutionary role opposing feudalism and imperialism.

2. Regarding the stage of revolution the thesis took a Trotskyite position of single stage revolution and paved the way for left sectarian line. Ranadive equated proletarian hegemony with dictatorship of proletariat.

“...people’s democratic revolution has to be achieved for the completion of the tasks of democratic revolution and the simultaneous building up of socialism.”⁹

“On behalf of the central committee it was made clear that a people’s democratic state itself meant the dictatorship of the proletariat.”¹⁰

3. It suggested a three class alliance that excludes national bourgeoisie or middle bourgeoisie and rich peasantry.

“To defeat the combine of imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to marshal the forces of the revolutionary people in a new way.” “The democratic front....is an alliance between the working class, the peasantry and the progressive intelligentsia.”¹¹

4. On the nature of the national government headed by Nehru and on the much talked about differences between Nehru and Patel, the theses unequivocally rejected the reformist understanding.

“The policy that the government follows can only be described as one of supporting feudal reaction and sabotaging the revolutionary, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist struggle.”¹²

It stated that *“in the matters of minorities, the government follows a communal policy.”* Showing the *“open encouragement given to communal reaction”* by the government it concluded that there was *“the strong pull of communal reaction on the national government.”¹³*

“It must be clearly understood that Nehru is as much a representative

of the bourgeoisie as Patel is. They both defend the class policies and interests of the bourgeoisie which is now collaborating with imperialism.” “It is anti-Marxist for the working class to base its strategy on ‘differences’ within the bourgeois camp such as ‘Patel-Nehru’ differences.”¹⁴

Telangana’s path is our path

Bhowani Sen, the chief lieutenant of Ranadive, while speaking on Kashmir said this: *“The heroic people of Telangana, the great example of their fight against autocracy not only show what will happen inside the states but also what will be the real future of India and Pakistan. That is the way the victorious people must march to freedom and real democracy.”¹⁵*

Under the leadership of P.C. Joshi CC completely neglected the Telangana struggle. But Ranadive eulogised that *“Telangana means communists and communists mean Telangana.”* He gave the slogan *“Telangana’s path is our path.”* But he failed to recognise the real significance of Telangana – the path of protracted people’s war emerged out of it.

“the strongest criticism of all, from a number of delegates from Telangana, pointing out that the revolutionary significance of the Telangana struggle for the present epoch of maturing democratic revolution in India was absent in the thesis.”¹⁶

To give proper representation to Telangana struggle, four from Andhra elected into the central committee and two into the Polit-Bureau. But the Telangana experience was actually viewed from two diametrically opposite stand points. The Andhra leadership was seeing in it the Chinese way of revolution where as to Ranadive it represented the precursor to a country-wide insurrection. Thus after the congress two different lines emerged as alternatives to the right opportunist line both calling for the establishment of many Telanganas all over the country.

Like P.C. Joshi, Ranadive also failed to recognise the line of Indian revolution being established by Telangana armed struggle. Though he praised Telangana struggle in the Congress as well as later repeatedly, it was only to support his leftist estimation. Therefore the central committee leadership did not attempt to seriously study Telangana struggle.

Ranadive presented to the congress, the **Report on Reformist Deviation** in which right reformism of the P.C. Joshi period dealt in detail and it

was condemned. P.C. Joshi “*mercilessly criticised his own mistakes and traced their ideological roots to the repudiation of Marxism and Leninism*”¹⁷ He even accepted the **Political Thesis** fully. However the later course of events proved beyond doubt that neither the self criticism of Joshi nor the conviction of most of the top leadership in parting with the long practiced right opportunist collaborationism was not long lasting.

Though P.C. Joshi’s rightist line and reformism were condemned very sharply, it can not be assumed that the right opportunism lost its ground. Because all those who stood behind Ranadive were not those tried to fight the right and establish a revolutionary line. In the later period none other than the ideologue of right opportunism R.P. Dutt himself admitted that it was Dange who imported the left sectarian line from Yugoslavian party and thus he called Dange as ‘Titoist.’ Dange who remained throughout his life as the most right wing leader how became an advocate of left sectarianism? It should be remembered that there were factional fights in the party from the beginning. Many of the rightist leaders including Dange stood by Ranadive only to settle scores with Joshi using the widespread discontent in the party’s rank and file against right opportunism. Thus the success of the second congress in rejecting right opportunism cannot be overestimated as the core of it remained strong and bidding for time. After the congress Ranadive actually helped those right opportunist forces to regain their strength by adopting left sectarian and adventurist tactics and undemocratic dictatorial organisational methods.

After the congress Ranadive led the party into left sectarian adventurism. While correctly recognising that the post war revolutionary upsurge and economic crisis continuing both internationally and nationally, he completely ignored the subjective preparedness of the revolutionary forces. Ignoring the agrarian nature of the Indian revolution he traversed the path of left adventurism in pursuit of realizing his dream of countrywide insurrection. In a bid to enact country wide insurrection Ranadive line in fact made the legalist party organisation easy prey to the all out attack of Nehru government and the line proved to be more disastrous in terms of organisational disaster it caused.

Ranadive Line was Challenged

Not satisfied with the political thesis’s positions regarding the stage of

revolution and the class analysis and the alliance it proposed, provincial leaders of several states tried to probe the question from the point of view of Chinese experience. Apart from Andhra leadership, Bengal provincial committee too inclined towards the Chinese path whereas Assam Comrades had also suggested it in a general way and the United Provinces P.C. made a resolution to conduct the agrarian struggle in Azamgarh district on the path of Telangana.

But principled fight and fundamental criticism on Ranadive's line was carried out by Andhra leadership. Andhra leadership who played active role in defeating Joshist reformism felt that the line formulated by Second Congress was not in accordance with the experience of Telangana struggle and that the revolutionary line being established in Telangana was in fact the line for the Indian revolution.

One month after the congress, in April 1948 Andhra provincial committee secretariat formulated an alternative revolutionary line keeping in view of the experiences of Telangana struggle and submitted to the central committee. That letter which became famous as **Andhra Thesis** or **Andhra Letter** clearly stated that Indian revolution will follow Chinese path of revolution. For the first time in the history of Communist Party of India it was formulated that Indian revolution will follow the path of protracted people's war with peasantry as the main force. This was a different line from both that of left and of right. Andhra secretariat in this draft despite some important weaknesses for the first time in India detailed tried to apply Chinese experience to Indian situation and detailed the path of Chinese Revolution for India in a comprehensive manner.

Ranadive however not only dogmatically stuck to his positions stated in the Political Thesis regarding the stage of revolution and the revolutionary alliance but also developed those erroneous left positions into a full blown left sectarian adventurous line. Ranadive on the one hand undemocratically suppressed the criticisms leveled against his left adventurist line, sectarian methods and the arguments in support of Andhra Thesis by not circulating the Andhra documents to all CC members even to some of the PB members and on other severely attacked the Andhra Letter, Chinese Path of Revolution and Mao by dubbing them all as reformist. From this left sectarian understanding he launched a broadside against the Andhra leader-

ship and Andhra Thesis from the middle of 1948.

Andhra Thesis Vs Ranadive

Refuting Andhra Thesis as reformism Ranadive wrote three documents in which he elaborated his left sectarian positions. They are: **Strategy and Tactics of People's Democratic Revolution, On People's Democracy and On the Agrarian Question in India**. PB accepted these documents in its three month marathon meeting at the end of the year 1948. Rajeswara Rao the main proponent of the Andhra Thesis made "*an opportunist surrender in accepting the three PB documents, which gave the PB a green signal to embark upon adventurist tactics on all fronts. But within a couple of months....he raised controversy on almost all the main points of the PB documents....*"¹⁸ Thus after second congress party witnessed a fundamental debate on the basic issues however the debate largely confined to the narrow circles of PB and CC.

Ranadive differed with almost every important aspect of **Andhra Thesis**. He made a scathing attack on it saying it was reformism and right opportunism. (Along with the Andhra theses the official document of Andhra secretariat, the dissent document of Sundarayya was also presented for discussion).

1. Stage of Revolution: Andhra thesis recognised the stage of revolution as new democratic revolution and the path of revolution resembles that of China. It will be protracted civil war in the form of agrarian revolution but not the insurrection scripted by Ranadive.

*"Our country is not an independent capitalist state but only a semi colony. Hence our revolution is in the main an agrarian revolution; not the agrarian revolution of the old type under bourgeois leadership, but agrarian revolution of a new type under proletarian leadership. Hence correctly classified as new democratic revolution."*¹⁹

"Our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian revolution; and is to a great extent similar to that of the Chinese revolution. The perspective is likely not that of [sic] general strikes and general rising leading to the liberation of the rural sides; but the dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of an agrarian revolution culminating in

the capture of political power by the democratic front."²⁰

Ranadive brushed aside the China Path by saying that the Chinese Revolution traversed the path of protracted people's war not out of necessity but only "*....because the leadership of the Chinese CP at times failed to fight for hegemony of the proletariat; for bringing the majority of the masses in alliance and under the leadership of the proletariat, because it followed tactical policies which led to disaster*"²¹

2.On United Front: It suggested a four class alliance, basing on the class analysis of China by Mao, which includes the rich peasant and middle bourgeoisie against imperialism, feudalism and big bourgeoisie.

*"The proletariat must carry to completion the new democratic revolution by allying itself with the mass of peasants in general and poor and middle peasants in particular in order to crush by force the power of resistance of the imperialist-big business-feudal combine and paralyse the instability of the middle bourgeoisie, upper middle class and a section of the rich peasantry."*²²

In this alliance under the leadership of proletariat, the Andhra leadership considered that the peasantry will be the main force due to the agrarian nature of the revolution.

Ranadive mechanically criticized that considering the peasantry as the main force in revolution is nothing but denying the leading role of working class. It should be noted here that both the left and the right used same arguments to refute the Andhra Line. The rightist trio's letter of September 1950 that "accepted" the Chinese path of revolution, against Andhra Line, and the Tactical Line of 1951 that opened doors to the ascendancy of right opportunism too continued the same argument.

Middle peasant and Rich peasant: "*Because the present stage of the revolution is the new democratic stage, not socialist stage, the middle peasant is a firm ally in the revolution who participates in the revolution. The rich peasant who has no feudal tails can be neutralised as a class but in areas like Telangana and Rayalaseema, where feudalism is very strong, it is even possible to get sections of rich peasantry in the struggle(though vacillating).*"²³

Ranadive vehemently attacked this characterization of middle peasant

and rich peasant. He considered the agricultural workers and poor peasantry as the firm allies and middle peasant as the vacillating ally. His conception of entire bourgeoisie as reactionary and collaborating naturally led him to the conclusion that the rich peasant being the rural bourgeoisie too reactionary.

“How can rich peasants, even in feudal areas, really play an anti feudal role when the entire bourgeoisie wants to compromise?”²⁴

“The stand taken by Andhra comrades.....only serves the purpose of protecting the rich peasant who along with the landlord is the enemy of the rural masses.”²⁵

On Middle Bourgeoisie: Depending on the division, Mao made, of bourgeoisie into comprador bourgeoisie or big bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie or middle bourgeoisie the Andhra thesis came to the conclusion that Indian big bourgeoisie has colluded with imperialism where as the middle bourgeoisie can be neutralised.

To Ranadive such a differentiation of bourgeoisie was nothing but reverting to the Joshist reformism. Thus he alleged that Andhra leadership was on the old reformist road.

“The Andhra secretariat want to achieve the same thing [transforming the party into an appendage of the bourgeoisie] after the party congress by advocating collaboration with the rich peasants, middle bourgeoisie, in the name of neutralisation, i.e. a basic strategy based on difference between big business and the other sections – based on collaboration with certain sections of the bourgeoisie in the name of neutralisation.”²⁶

“The Andhra documents reveal right reformism in its crassest form.”²⁷

5. Andhra Draft tried to clear the confusion regarding the peoples democratic state and dictatorship of proletariat. In his clarification to the congress Ranadive held:

“On behalf of the central committee it was made clear that a people’s democratic state itself meant the dictatorship of the proletariat.”²⁸

The Andhra Draft basing on Mao’s New Democracy clearly distinguished two stages of revolution and the two forms of the revolutionary state. It also rejected the erroneous formulation of Ranadive that without

proletarian dictatorship there will be no proletarian hegemony.

“Proletarian hegemony is distinctly different form that of the proletarian dictatorship.”²⁹

But According to Ranadive People’s democratic state means proletarian dictatorship, because without proletarian dictatorship it is not possible to establish proletarian hegemony over the state.

4. Andhra Thesis advocated initiating armed struggle on the lines of Telangana in various parts of the country where the party has mass base.

“...in areas where we are a good proportion in the masses like certain parts of Andhra, Kerala. Bengal, the time has come to think in terms of guerilla warfare (Chinese way) against military onslaughts of Nehru government which is bent upon mercilessly liquidating us.”³⁰

5. Mao Thought was for the first time (outside China) recognised as the continuation of Marxism-Leninism. Andhra Thesis recognised that revolutions in colonial countries will advance in the path of new democratic revolution, formulated by Mao.

“Mao, the leader of the historic Chinese liberation struggle, from his unique and rich experience and study, has formulated a theory of new democracy. This is a new form of revolutionary struggle to advance towards socialism in colonies and semi-colonies. Mao advanced new democracy as distinct form the dictatorship of the proletariat.”³¹

Ranadive attacked the **New Democracy** that formed the basis for Andhra thesis and Mao.

“It must be admitted that some of Mao’s formulations are such that no Communist Party can accept them; they are in contradiction to the world understanding of the communist parties.”³²

He even characterised the formulations of Mao as “reactionary”, “counter-revolutionary” and “horrrifying.”

Ranadive who himself imported Tito’s line into India did not hesitate to blame Mao as Titoist (after Tito was expelled from International Communist movement).

It is interesting to note that at the beginning of 1950, after the editorial

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of “Lasting Peace” the organ of Cominform, that vindicated the Andhra Thesis, Randive completely made an overture and started praising Mao like this:

“For the Indian liberation struggle....the lessons of the Chinese revolution, the teaching of its great leader Comrade Mao Tse-tung, will be an unfailing guide.”³³

China revolution achieved victory in October 1949. **Andhra Thesis** was formulated in April 1948 itself. While leading Telangana peasantry, Andhra leadership realised from practice that Indian revolution resembled Chinese revolution. Cominform for the first time announced in 1950 that revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries should follow China’s path. Till then Andhra Thesis was attacked both from left and right and the Telangana struggle from which it was emerged continued to be neglected and doggedly fought with the Nehru military. Ranadive meanwhile took the party on the road of disaster with his left sectarian tactics.

The Left Sectarian Line of Ranadive

In the three documents of PB Ranadive mainly tried to refute Andhra Thesis, and to elaborate his left sectarian line.

1. Single Stage Revolution: Ranadive later mentioned that he borrowed the concept of mingling two phases of revolution from Yugoslavian party. He came to the conclusion that the phase of socialist revolution has mingled with that of democratic revolution as the whole of the bourgeois class is mentioned as the target of revolution and the main enemy.

“Is the present phase of the Indian revolution comparable with the February or October Revolution in Russia? It is neither. It is mixed.”³⁴

“....it will be found that the stage of revolution in which we are partly shares the characteristics of both stages of the Russian revolution.”³⁵

“The people’s democratic revolution is thus the democratic revolution which is more than ever interlaced with the socialist revolution in each country and in the world.”³⁶

“People’s democracy is thus not qualitatively a new element. It is the delayed democratic revolution ripening into socialist revolution in the midst

of sharpened world conflict.”³⁷

*“People’s democracy representsthe struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism get intertwined in single revolutionary struggle.”*³⁸

Ranadive said this while giving a clarification on the Draft Political Thesis in the congress:

*“....it has been characterized in the document that the struggle for democratic revolution gets intertwined in the struggle for socialism and there can be no two stages of revolution. It is the same type as in Yugoslavia.”*³⁹

According to R. P. Dutt it was Dange who was instrumental in importing this Titoist formulation to India. Ranadive in practice pursued the strategy and tactics of socialist revolution.

2. The **strategy of Indian revolution** at that stage was outlined by him like this:

*“What is the strategy that we have outlined for our stage of the revolution? It is given in a nutshell in the slogan of democratic front which is defined as an alliance of working class, peasants, oppressed middle class, against bourgeois-feudal-imperialist combine”*⁴⁰

*“The proletariat must accomplish the people’s democratic revolution by allying to itself the agricultural workers and poor peasants—followed by the middle peasants, in order to isolate the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance by force.”*⁴¹

In contrast to the Andhra Draft he proposed a three class alliance that considers both middle bourgeoisie and rich peasant as the enemies of revolution

He considered entire bourgeoisie as a whole without any differentiation that can influence the strategy of the working class at the present stage of revolution. Like wise he considered the rich peasant too reactionary.

*“The main force of the revolution: the proletariat, immediate reserves: agrarian workers, poor peasants, middle peasants (also oppressed section of petty bourgeoisie in towns).”*⁴²

3. Ranadive in his Strategy and Tactics revised the assessment of Po-

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litical Thesis regarding the ruling bourgeoisie and characterised it **as the active partner in the ruling combine** contrary to the formulation of *junior partner* by the former.

*“The Indian bourgeoisie is the most fighting, active partner in the bourgeois-feudal-imperialist combine. In relation to the people it is the strongest of the threeto day.....the Indian bourgeoisie comes forward as the leading member of the combine....the fight for revolution means the fight to over throw the Congress government. It is so because the congress government and the bourgeoisie are not mere puppets but because in reality they are active partners and leading forces in the combine.”*⁴³

“The point to be noted is that the bourgeoisie has improved its position, it has secured direct control of the state unlimited freedom to exploit, which makes it a ferocious defender of the state and collaborator of imperialism.

*“It logically follows from this that it is not only ‘big businesses’ but the entire bourgeoisie that is interested in defending the new state – collaborationist state.”*⁴⁴

The real significance of the above formulation lies in its interpretation by Ranadive. As he himself admitted later, he deducted from it that the Indian bourgeoisie as the main enemy of Indian revolution and ignored both imperialism and feudalism. And thus he from his left sectarian point of view in fact entered into a self contradictory position of actually conceding that bourgeoisie won real independence and thus remaining the sole or all the important target of revolution. With this understanding he singularly pursued the line against bourgeoisie i.e. socialist revolutionary strategy and tactics, and in the process he found the “neutralisation” tactics of Andhra Draft regarding rich peasant and middle bourgeoisie were nothing but class collaborationism.

4. In his **On the Agrarian Question in India** he argued that due to the increasing number of agricultural workers and the growth of capitalist relations considerably in rural areas, the slogan **“nationalisation of land and land to the tiller for use”** should be the central slogan.

*“Nationalisation of land – with land to the tiller for use – should be our slogan along with abolition of landlordism,”*⁴⁵

“Because the basic masses of rural population on which we have to rely are....the agricultural workers and poor peasants who have been or are being rapidly expropriated because of private property in land. The same is happening to the middle peasant, though he desperately clings to the illusions of a small property holder and dreams of better world on the basis of small property.”⁴⁶

“He [rich peasant] is one of the main enemies in the rural areas- in fact, the spear head of the counter revolution.”⁴⁷

5. Rejecting the protracted people’s war as the form of revolution in India Ranadive mechanically attempted to follow the Russian path. More over he completely lost all contact with the reality while assessing the revolutionary situation and the political and organisational preparedness of the working class. Despite the repeated utterances about the illusions prevailed in people regarding the fake independence and the national government headed by Nehru, Ranadive actually underestimated the strength and stability of the ruling classes in relation to the revolutionary forces. More over he grossly neglected the strength of subjective forces and arduous task of preparing masses and the vanguard both politically and organisationally to make an insurrection. He considered the situation such an explosive one that the big strikes and general strikes would lead to general uprising and to the successful conclusion of insurrection. The armed peasant struggles like Telangana should of course complement the working class revolutionary action. Ranadive mentioned in a circular after Congress that there would be a general uprising in the country within six months.

“The forms of struggle are determined both by our strategic objective and the revolutionary period. The objective of overthrowing the bourgeoisie combined with the existence of the revolutionary period and the rapidly moving revolutionary developments impose on us the militant and revolutionary forms of struggle and organisation. Hence strikes, agrarian struggles, general strikes, political strikes, rising to higher forms of struggle and to a general rising — such are the forms of struggle that flow from the situation”⁴⁸

“The partial struggles of the present period, therefore, become wide mass battles, miniature civil wars, which, when they are organised on a sufficiently big scale, easily develop into political battles and throw up

embryonic state forms (Telangana) — such is the logic of the situation. No Chinese wall divides the two as it did during the period of stabilisation.”⁴⁹

6. He revealed what he really meant by the slogan “*Telangana’s way is our way.*”

*“Telangana all over the country means armed insurrection of the people against the government.”*⁵⁰

Dubbing Andhra thesis as nothing but reverting back to the old Joshist reformism, Ranadive took the party on a disastrous course with his left sectarian and adventurist political and tactical line .

Ranadive Line in Practice

Immediately after the congress the party had to face severe repression in various states Nehru government started attacking communists even before Ranadive’s line came into practice. In March, April Communist Party was banned in several states and Communist party offices were raided and searched. Nehru government continued this attack with country wide co-ordination. Many leaders were jailed. With these attacks unexpected by party leadership, lower level party units were thrown into confusion and were disrupted. Party magazines were proscribed in Bengal, Kerala and Andhra. Nehru openly defended these attacks.

Within a few months, many of the top party leadership were arrested (Dange, Jyothi Basu, Muzaffar Ahmad, Miraj Kar, Sohansingh Joshi, Bharadwaj, Dinakar Mehta, Ajay Ghosh, Sardesai, Ramesh Chandra, S.V. Ghate, S.S. Yusuf and others). Party was banned in Bengal, Mysore, Indore, Bhopal, Chandra Nagore, Madras, Hyderabad, Travencore and Cochin. Virtually the party was banned in all the states where it was in existence except in Bombay.

A party head quarter was allowed to function with restrictions. They allowed publication of *People’s Age* from Bombay but banned it in all the states! In the later period, citing this example of publication of magazines from Bombay while Nehru’s army was unleashing a fascist terror on Telangana, R.P. Dutt commented that “*Indian Communists really don’t know the meaning of white terror*”!

In the post war period actually the influence of the party in the working class was considerably reduced and the working class unity too weak considering the influence of Socialists on trade union front and the INTUC role of a strike breaker.

The socialist-Communist rift still widened in the post war period as the socialists more and more distancing themselves from socialist camp and taking the stand of the extreme right wing social-democrats of west. They joined the bandwagon of the baiters of Soviet Union accusing it as a totalitarian state, etc. Even though there was still possibility of joint action on the day to day issues and other partial demands the divide was becoming sharp with their adherence to the way of constitutional reforms to socialism and their tendency towards confining themselves to that of parliamentary oppositional role. Even some were openly leaning towards the American imperialism. So the CPI had to strive for trade union unity to fight for the day to day struggles of the working class in the face of growing economic crisis and at the same time had to extend its own base by fighting the reformism and the disruption.

The CPI no doubt recovered in several states and gained its prestige especially in Telangana, Andhra, Kerala, and Bengal and in some other provinces. But it was still far from capable of creating a countrywide insurrection through waves of militant working class struggles and with the all important general strike.

Ranadive mentioned in a party letter in August that within six months there will be a nationwide insurrection. Ranadive gave a reckless call for an all India railway strike on 9th march 1949 *“imagining an insurrectionary situation round the corner. It did not bother to take stock of the white terror with a cool head or of the illusions of the railway workers in the socialist leaders,,... of their organisational loyalties to the All India Railwaymen’s Federation and of the decrepit state of the party organisation, etc”* ⁵¹

Communist party hectically prepared for a countrywide railway strike. It was making preparations for countrywide strike through AIRF (All India Railway Federation). But Jaya Prakash Narayan, the president of AIRF which is the most influential one in the railway workers, reached an agreement with government and withdrew the strike call. Undeterred by it the Communists pursuing the Ranadive line desperately tried for the strike. The call

which was not at all reflecting the mood of the workers at that time naturally ended as a fiasco. In other fields also giving strike calls with subjective wishes continued. All non-communists left AITUC, under the leadership of CPI.

Starting with railway strike of 9th March 1949, party obstinately tried for country-wide general strike and popular uprising. All this effort including the railway strike failed. There were massive arrests. By 11th May, 25,000 were detained. 50,000 faced trial. The entire party organisation was damaged. Active cadre was jailed.

When AITUC and Party were fast losing ground the PB concluded that *“the strength of the working class led by the party and the AITUC is far greater than that of the capitalists and the capitalist Congress government.”*

The Congress party and the reformists are *“thoroughly isolated as enemies of the toiling people and friends of capitalists.”*⁵²

*“thus the situation is thus ripe for an all-India assault on the capitalists and their government.”*⁵³

In an effort to implement this adventurist line though countrywide general strike and uprising were nowhere in sight, the revolution sank to the level of violent incidents of small groups. If we keep in mind the fact that the organisation that CPI had at the time of Second Congress was not at all an organisation capable of making a countrywide uprising, we can understand why this line failed so miserably. Ranadive just told that the path of Telangana struggle should be followed, but did not take into consideration the conditions which aided the development of the struggle and the efforts to organise for that end. Only one Telangana remained. Telanganas everywhere were not prepared.

Even though Ranadive produced a voluminous document called *Strategy and Tactics for PDR*, it was in fact mainly the refutation of the Andhra Thesis. Due to lack of well defined tactics the party in various states and fields had to work out their own tactics to implement the left sectarian line and the calls given by Ranadive. Thus in the face of failures and state repression soon the insurrectionary drive of Ranadive degenerated into individual violent acts. The legalist party organisation crumbled under the

fascist repression unleashed by the Nehru government.

Right opportunism in the form of legalism and economism was most predominant in the trade union front. A large section of the leadership of TU front was the strong adherents of reformist line. Over all the organisation was completely legal and it has no illegal apparatus worth mentioning. Not only in the TU front but overall the organisational situation was in such a mess that it needs complete reorganization on the basis of principles and strict secrecy. But Ranadive never bothered about the state of organisation and threw it open to the onslaught of the government.

Nehru severely condemned the “murders, loot, arson and disruptive activities” of communists. He alleged that communists were hatching conspiracy to create famine in the country by disrupting railways.

Party faced severe losses during 1948-50 in the course of implementation of Ranadive’s line. The entire party organisation and mass organisations were badly damaged. Membership of the party fallen from 1,00,000 to 20,000 and of the AITUC 8,00,000 to 1,00,000. 2,40,000 textile workers of Bombay to whom CPI was the unquestionable leader till then went on strike in 1950 under the leadership of Socialists, largely ignoring the call given by the former previously.

Even organisationally Ranadive followed utter sectarian and undemocratic methods. All those who differed with him were condemned as ‘rightists’ and ‘reformists’. All the central committee members except two were some time or other time blamed as reformists, traitors or incompetent. He threatened every body with disciplinary action. He scrapped and changed P.Cs per his wish. He never tried to convene a central committee meeting. Ranadive took all the decisions along with his one or two confident Polit Bureau members.

Ranadive’s line faced severe opposition. Ajay Ghosh and other rightists fought from jails. Ranadive threatened Ajay Ghosh with expulsion. Expelled P.C. Joshi also attacked from the other side. Though P.C. Joshi was open, he was not arrested. In the later period government thought it necessary to allow P.C. Joshi and “Party Head Quarters” to function openly to attack the Telangana line. The government even expected P.C Joshi could split the party when it was under the leadership of **June CC** by rallying behind the

disgruntled. Dange, when his followers were being expelled from G.K.U which was in his control, openly published handbills accusing Ranadive to be a 'Trotskyite' and attacked.

Ranadive and his adventurist line came under fire from all sides. Though he was dogmatically obstinate in pursuing his line, he had to step down when the Andhra Thesis and Chinese path for Indian revolution were vindicated by Cominform. First time after the Second Congress the CC met in May-June 1950 and the committee was reconstituted. Chandra Rajeswara Rao, the then secretary of the Andhra unit which was by then became the heart of the party, was elected as the General Secretary of the CC. The **June CC** accepted the New Democratic Revolutionary Line – the essence of **Andhra Thesis** that was brought forward by the glorious Telangana armed peasant struggle.

Brief Summary

The wide spread discontent on the right collaborationist line of Joshi finally lead to the change in the leadership of the party. Ranadive became the general secretary of the party. He led the party into left sectarian adventurism.

The second congress of the party held in 1948 though succeeded in refuting the reformist Joshism failed to formulate a revolutionary line. It even failed to recognise the revolutionary line of India that was then emerging out of the heroic Telangana armed peasant struggle. It also failed in recognising the legalist and economist rot that was then gobbling up the entire party organisation and thus in chalking out a course of reorganising the party into a real revolutionary organisation capable of leading revolution.

Though Ranadive correctly recognised the independence of India as sham and the nature of Congress as reactionary pursued a single stage revolution that is a revolution in which both democratic and socialist revolutions were intertwined into one. He aspired to enact the

revolution by combining the peasant revolts in countryside with the armed insurrection in urban areas. He dubbed the new democratic revolution and united front with rich peasantry and middle (national) bourgeoisie as reformism and class collaborationism.

Andhra leadership that leading the Telangana peasant armed struggle fought the left sectarianism of Ranadive. The Andhra secretariat formulated an alternative line on the basis of its experiences in leading the Telangana struggle. The Andhra Thesis despite of some weaknesses attempted for the first time in India to apply the new democratic revolutionary line and the path of protracted people's war. Just like the right opportunism the Ranadive's left opportunism too failed to grasp the fact that the revolution in India traverse the path of Chinese Revolution. Thus Ranadive launched a broadside against the Telangana path, the Andhra leadership and Mao.

During the period 1948-50 when Ranadive line was followed the party suffered serious losses. Even though the party neither had the numerical strength nor the organisational capability to enact a country-wide insurrection Ranadive with his subjective assessments and aspirations drove the party in that direction. Naturally it proved to be a disaster. The legalist party organisation and mass organisations were fallen prey to the countrywide anti-communist swoop of Nehru. Coupled with the sectarian organisational methods followed by him the Ranadive line in practice led to serious setback.

In its December 1950 meeting CC adopted the Andhra Thesis and elected Rajeswara Rao as its secretary.

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The Telangana Line

The June CC headed by Rajeswara Rao accepted the **Andhra Thesis**. For the first time in the history of Communist Party of India it correctly recognised that the revolution in India took the different course as it happened in China. The main postulates of the Andhra draft that emerged out of the glorious armed peasant struggle that began as the struggle against feudalism and despotic rule of Nizam and continued to fight the armies of Nehru government to establish people's power.

The Glorious Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle

The princely state of Nizam was a big state consisting of Telugu, Marathi and Kannada speaking areas. The eight Telugu speaking districts of the state comprised Telangana. The feudal oppression and exploitation was severe in Nizam state. The peasantry and other masses were trampled under the cruel oppression of big landlords such as *jagirdars*, *deshmukhs*, *deshpandes*, etc. who owned thousands and even lakhs of acres of land. These landlords who often had their own private armies hold complete sway over the rural life in all its aspects. *Vetti* – a feudal coercive free service in one form or other was in practice for which the high cast Brahmins too was not an exception.

As Nizam the *nawab* was Muslim all affairs of government and courts were conducted in Urdu. The medium of instruction in educational institutions was also Urdu. The great majority of the people of Telangana are Telugus but they were deprived of education in their mother tongue. The Nizam rule severely restricted Telugu language and cultural development as Nizam's permission was needed even to establish Telugu libraries and cultural organisations.

The national movement up surging countrywide made its impact on the state too and lead to the spread of liberal and democratic ideas. At first Congress was opposed not only to the formation of its units in the princely

states but also to conduct any movement on the pretext that their rulers are Indians. Being the representative of landlords Congress always opposed any struggle against feudal forces. Thus *Andhra Maha Sabha* was formed by Madapati Hanumantha Rao and others independently of Congress. The *Andhra Maha Sabha* was started as a liberal bourgeois organisation with the demands of development of Telugu language and culture and opportunities for education in Telugu.

The communist party started its work in Telangana since the end of 1930s. In the beginning the communists participated in the activities like spread of literacy and education, library movements, etc. Soon the cruel feudal oppression and exploitation in the rural areas brought them into anti-feudal struggles. At first they tried to form peasant associations to mobilise and consolidate peasantry and to work in Congress considering *Sabha* as a rightist organisation. But due to the bans imposed on them they joined *Sabha*. By that time some of the important leaders and activists became communists and thus soon the impact of communists on it became visible. Communists made *Sabha* to take up the peasant problems. With it, it acquired mass character and the *Sabha* as *sangam* (association) widely spread in to thousands of villages.

As *sangam* – *Andhra Maha Sabha* was transforming into a forum and united front for anti-feudal struggle, peasantry started bringing before it their problems of forceful occupation of their lands, *bedakhal*, exorbitant rents, *vetti*, etc. The problem of *bedakhal* became more acute as the peasants were evicted on large scale from the lands they were cultivating from generations. As *sangams* under the leadership of communists started transforming into organisations of anti-feudal struggle the communist party itself emerged as the leader of broad peasant masses. As a result the influence of communists and other left forces became more profound in *Sabha*. From 1942 communist party got the opportunity to work legally and communist activists, determined and sacrificing, expanded the activities of *sangam* to vast expanses of rural Telangana. It was in the period when CPI opposing any struggle in the name of people's war tactics, in Telangana communists took up militant anti-feudal struggles such as abolition of *vetti* and *bedakhal*, reduction of rents, etc., and emerged as the leaders of peasant masses. Even though some leaders felt that it was wrong to build mass

struggles in this way as it was contradictory to the people's war tactics, Andhra party as a whole in this period concentrated on mobilising peasantry into struggles in a big way.

The growing influence of communists and other left forces in *Andhra Maha Sabha* and its transformation as a peasant organisation for conducting anti-feudal struggles were naturally unpalatable to the rightist forces in it. By 1944 communists established their leadership over *Sabha*, mainly due to their success in transforming it as a forum for conducting anti-feudal struggle. In the process of emerging as the leader of broad peasant masses the communist party emerged as the leader of anti-Nizam struggle too. *Andhra Maha Sabha* which started off as a liberal organisation too was transforming into a broad united front against Nizam and feudalism. In 1944 the rightist forces exited from *Sabha*. By then the communist party emerged as the indisputable leader of the united front – the *Sabha*.

The experience of *Andhra Maha Sabha* once again proved the formulation made by Lenin that the communist parties in colonies by emerging as the leader of broad peasantry masses and by basing themselves on this strength can establish leadership over the united front for national liberation struggle, is completely correct. The Andhra party succeeded in this regard rather spontaneously of course. But CC leadership neither studied this success in earnest nor tried to understand it fully. It continued to follow its class collaborationist united front policy and ignored the role of peasantry in Indian revolution.

The peasant struggles waged under the banner of *sangam* naturally became an eye sore to the landlords. As the foundations of feudalism were undermined by the anti-feudal peasant upsurge the goondas and private armies of landlords launched indiscriminate attacks over peasantry and *sangam* activists increased rapidly. The feudal Nizam state too was resorting to severe repression. Peasantry and activists started pressurizing the leadership to take up arms to resist these attacks. Thus the situation reached to a stage wherein arming of the anti-feudal struggle that began with the demands of abolition of *vetti*, *bedakhal*, reduction of rents etc, became inevitable.

In Andhra area the communist party started training its volunteer squads in repulsing the attacks of congress goons since 1945. In Telangana too the

party started training volunteers as the attacks of the goons of landlords and that of state repression rapidly growing. During 1946-47 the communists led the masses in the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggles with this training itself. In the mighty upsurge of peasant struggle against feudal oppression people everywhere took up *lathis* and *vadeselas* (slings for throwing stones generally used to keep the birds and animals away from crops) defended themselves, resisted and attacked the enemies. In this people's resistance women played an active role. Thus the Telangana peasantry started its resistance by using their traditional weaponry. Even though locally made fire arms were available the rightist leadership of the party did not allowed using them. As the party failed to build armed resistance in time, the enemy increased its attacks and the people and party faced sever repression. It was only at the end of 1946 when the attacks of both the military of Nizam and goons of landlords became severe the CC permitted the usage of fire arms. The movement was rebuilt in the first four or five months of 1947.

How the CC headed by P.C. Joshi, the hard core right opportunist permitted to conduct armed struggle in Telangana even for the sake of self-defense? In the view of communist party, at that time, Telangana struggle was the specificity of Nizam state and it could not affect the rest of the country and the party's class collaborationist unity with Congress. Thus the right opportunist central leadership had neither the interest nor the ability to recognise the path of Indian revolution that was emerging out of the Telangana peasant struggle. This was evident from the fact that the central leadership swiftly swung into action to withdrew the militant people's struggle initiated in the Andhra area in 1946, against the Zamindars and for the occupation of *banjar* lands.

People's Power in Telangana

With the transfer of power the situation was transforming swiftly. The leadership of the party however preoccupied itself with the discussion weather to extend full support to the independent national government headed by Nehru to defend the newly won freedom from the imperialist conspiracies of Britain and to fight the narrow minded and rightist clique of congress under the leadership of Patel. On the one hand the central leadership of the party with its right opportunist polices was playing the role of a

spectator by losing its initiative in the post-war mass upsurge. On the other hand in Nizam state the anti-Nizam and anti-feudal struggle was rapidly advancing in the post-war mass upsurge.

The importance of rapidly developing peasant armed struggle in Telangana was realised by Nehru government more than that of the CPI leadership and it was apprehending that Telangana might become an example to the anti-feudal liberation struggle countrywide. The landlords and big bourgeoisie were demanding the Union's intervention. But all the princely states got independence at the time of transfer of power and Nehru government was pressurising Nizam to integrate the state into Indian Union. Nizam, who was aspiring to integrate with Pakistan or to remain independent, asked for one year time to decide upon the question. However Nehru's main concern was not about Nizam's decision but the prospect of emergence of an alternative people's power that could unmask the fake independence. Thus he considered communist party his main enemy rather than Nizam and imposed ban on CPI in the Andhra area that actively playing the role of a rear to Telangana armed struggle.

After transfer of power Congress party took up agitation demanding the state's integration with Union. CPI actively participated and mobilised people in a big way to the calls given by Congress. However communists demanded the dissolution of the state and integrate various parts of it into their respective linguistic states in the union by reorganizing and forming linguistic states.

While the movement for the integration of Nizam state was gaining momentum the anti-feudal struggle reached its peak as the party decided to take up the agrarian revolutionary programme and to intensify the struggle against the feudalism. In this way the movement for the integration of the state in to union acquired a militant anti-feudal nature. Under the leadership of communist party lands of the landlords were confiscated on a large scale and revolutionary land reforms were carried out extensively on the basis of 'land to the tiller.' (The Polit Bureau accepted to the occupation of the lands of landlords rather reluctantly only under the pressure from the lower level party leadership, peasant masses and *sangam* activists.) The agrarian revolutionary upsurge that spread like a prairie fire engulfed the Nizam rule and threatening to overthrow the decadent feudal regime.

Desperate Nizam organized and sent *rajakars* – the Muslim communalist lumpen armed bands to perpetrate attacks on villages and atrocities on people especially on Hindu masses. Along with the police and military forces these *rajakars* launched indiscriminate terror. Looting, burning houses, rapes, killings, tortures, etc., became the order of the day.

The people under the leadership of the party took the *rajakars* to task. People now began voluntarily every where came forward to form into armed village protection squads and seized arms from landlords. Peasant guerilla squads too formed in a big way. Even *talug* and district level squads were formed. Without modern weapons and proper military training the peasant guerilla squads heroically fought under the leadership of the party and resisted and repulsed the Nizam's armed forces and *rajakar* bands. Landlords and Nizam officials fled the villages. In this period there were about 100 guerilla squads and 2000 guerillas. By the time Nehru military entered the scene the guerilla forces were on offensive and were wiping out the Nizam military and *rajakar* camps. In Telangana Nizam rule was tottering to fall. The struggle spread to one third of Telangana.

The Congress and the union government were naturally worrying about the course the Telangana struggle was taking. Congress not only withdrew from the struggle for the integration of the state into union and formed "squads" to defend the landlords in the name of resisting *rajakars*. These Congress squads generally formed as lumpen gangs under the leadership of landlords resorted to atrocities on people. The peasant guerilla squads had to take these lumpen squads to task. All these events pointing to one thing with certainty that, after the integration of state with the Union Nehru was going to handover the power to landlords in Telangana. However communist party continued its demand – dissolution of the state and its integration with union. Thus even the communists who were strong force in the adjoining Andhra districts too considered the Telangana armed struggle as the struggle against Nizam and not even imagined that it had to struggle against Nehru military.

The slogan 'land to the tiller' became instrumental in creating the peasant upsurge. The land thirsty peasantry not satisfied with the initial distribution of land based on the reformist understanding of 1946 agrarian programme. On the demand of peasantry by the middle of 1948 the land

ceiling was reduced to 100 acres of dry land and 10 acres of wet land. (After the withdrawal of the struggle the Hyderabad government took up “land reforms” and fixed the ceiling at 50 acres of wet and 250 acres of dry land.) Around 10 lakh acres of land was thus distributed in this revolutionary land reform programme. It is necessary to note the fact that the central leadership allowed the occupation of surplus land at the end of 1947 only. Till then the land occupation was confined to reoccupation of the lands of peasants illegally occupied by the landlords, occupation of waste lands, government lands, etc. and against the eviction of tenants.

In the liberated villages the people’s power started blooming. The **Grama Panch Committees** elected by village masses assumed power in villages and took up land distribution and village administration. The conception of people’s own power and state deeply rooted in the hearts of masses. But a clear cut distinction between *sangam* and *panch* committee was not appeared then and people used to consider both as one and the same. However the peasantry was clearly realising the relation between land and state power. And it was increasingly understanding the fact that without overthrowing the feudal state power and replacing it with that of people’s power it is not possible to realise the demand ‘land to the tiller’.

While the people’s power started sprouting in Telangana Andhra communists were began to study and apply the Mao’s New Democracy and the protracted people’ war path of Chinese revolution. They started seeing the path of Indian revolution in the revolutionary line emerging from the Telangana struggle. Where as the central leadership was busy in defending the national “independence” by co-operating with and strengthening the “progressive” Nehru against the “reactionary” Patel. The leadership’s right opportunism was faced with severe criticism all over the country. The Andhra party which was facing Congress government’s bans and repression since 1946 probed an alternative to the right opportunist line in the Telangana peasant struggle that it was leading.

In these circumstances the Ranadive line came into force. But the party’s second congress failed not only in studying and recognising the revolutionary line emerging from Telangana struggle but also in giving it any concrete direction for its further development. Ranadive who gave the slogan “*Telangana’s path is our path*” in fact did not extend any help to it. After the

congress the state secretariat of Andhra met and discussed about the future of Telangana armed struggle. The crucial question was the future of the struggle after the integration of Nizam state into the Union. But the central leadership failed to give any clear cut stand about it. Except in Telangana every where in Andhra party the understanding that the Telangana issue will be resolved with its integration with the Union was prevailed. In such a situation the Andhra secretariat formulated the **Andhra Thesis** as an alternative political line and it was submitted to CC in May 1948. The CC did not take up the matter and made any decisions till December, after the “police action” in September.

Anyhow the line of protracted people’s war for the first time came up for discussion in CC, but the discussions on Andhra Thesis limited to CC itself. Even the members of the Andhra state committee except the secretariat members were not aware of it. Thus the opinion that Telangana was fighting against Nizam still prevailed even when people’s power was establishing in the liberated villages under the leadership of the party.

When Ranadive line came in to force from the beginning of 1948 the assessment of CPI on Nehru government and India’s independence changed. But Ranadive considered the Telangana struggle as a peasant armed struggle that could complement the countrywide insurrection he was dreaming about. Only with this view he gave the call to create Telanganas everywhere. But he neither recognised the New Democratic Revolutionary line emerged out of Telangana struggle nor that in Indian revolution the peasantry is the main force. Moreover he unequivocally rejected the both. He launched a broadside on China path and slandered Mao who propounded the path as “peasant socialist” and “Asian Tito.” Thus though it seemed that after second congress the Telangana struggle got due recognition, actually the central leadership was completely failed in getting at the essence of Telangana experience.

Thus, in leading Telangana struggle the Andhra party at every turn had to take decisions and lead the struggle spontaneously. The right opportunism that had been in practice for a long time and Ranadive’s left line were stood as the prime cause of an important weakness of the party in leading Telangana Struggle – the spontaneity.

Fascist Repression and Heroic Resistance

Nehru government initiated “police action” on 13th September 1948 and sent its military into Nizam state, before the completion of the one year time it had given to Nizam, fearing the rapid advances of peasant guerillas under the leadership of communists. Nizam immediately, without putting up any resistance, surrendered and the action was completed within no time. But the real target of the Nehru government was not Nizam but the peasant struggle led by communists and the people’s power that was then establishing in 3000 villages. Thus the Nehru government immediately banned communist party, *Andhra Maha Sabha* and trade unions led by the party in the state and unleashed an unprecedented brutal fascist repression both in Telangana and Andhra. The Telangana peasantry and the peasant guerilla squads were hunted by the military. The party and the squads who were completely unprepared for it faced a series of serious losses.

The situation was described in a report submitted to CC in 1949 by a representative of Andhra like this:

“We faced this (police) action at a time when our organisation was not prepared. Nobody expected it either to happen or complete so soon..... In such a situation we had to believe all types of rumors as we did not know what was going to happen exactly. Our squads deprived of the opportunity to seize arms from the enemy who was demoralised and fleeing. Weapons we got in the week from September 13th to 20th were only those thrown aside the roads and were collected and handed over to us by people.”

“When the Union armies entered the state they first not attacked communists, but they killed Muslims and rajakars. They even arrested some innocent Muslims. In urban areas when the houses and shops of Muslims were looted they remained indifferent towards it. Many Muslim women were raped by them. In villages too the Union military personnel raped Muslim women and looted the houses of Muslims.... In some places the military even forced the Hindu men to rape Muslim women and tried to convince them that it was the retaliation to rapes perpetrated by rajakars on Hindu women. But in general the villagers not heeded to their arguments anywhere.

The atrocities perpetrated on Muslims were especially on a large scale

in the areas of Telangana and Marathwada to where the struggle was not extended and many were killed and raped there. Looting took place in a big way. Who resorted to these included both Hindu men and the military.”¹

The state Congress leaders expected that after the entry of Nehru military into the state the Congress government would be formed. But the task of the military intervention was to wipe out communists and people’s power and hence no effort was made to form any civil government and military rule was imposed.

“With the entry of military there was a great upsurge in peasantry. They came forward demanding land and animals. Peasantry came forward to occupy the lands of desmukhs even in the areas where they were not prepared for that before. More over in the areas where we are strong the agricultural labourers and poor peasantry started demanding land distribution on a far larger scale and far more fundamentally.....”²

The land occupation struggle extended to other areas such as Karimnagar, Medak and Nizamabad. As the wrath of people over feudalism erupted like a volcano the landlords sheltered under the union government and reincarnated as Congressites. Soon the Nehru military had to give up its drama of “Liberation struggle to free Hyderabad State” and launched war on people. The situation was described by the report like this:

“The thinking that as Nizam rule had gone land can be taken back, might be the partial cause for this upsurge. They might not know that Congress will repress them and they had to wage a strenuous struggle. However in the old areas when the repression was launched the people were rejecting to give back the land and animals to desmukhs and landlords. And they were determined to fight.”³

“In this stage generally both the people and our squads throughout the struggle area had illusions that Union government would not be so cruel and its repression too would not be that much as those of Nizam. Thus they thought we had not to continue the armed struggle and some laxity entered into our vigilance, technical precautions and training.....

“ In Janagama area all the military squads were dissolved. Small squads with five or six members were formed and they were given one modern weapon each to their self-defense. These quads were instructed to conduct

political propaganda. As we laid down arms in this way the exploiters again reared their heads again in villages....

“The experience of one month (October) in which we laid down arms reveled to us how disastrous this policy is. The oppressors who reared their heads again started hunting our comrades. Our local activists and squad leaders were deceived and captured by them and were handed over to police. Then the people and squad members came forward with the demand to take up arms again.”⁴

We have already mentioned that the Party leadership of the Telangana struggle was thrown into an adverse situation in which it has to formulate its programme and tactics on day to day basis by spontaneously following events due to callous attitude adopted by the central leadership from the beginning towards the struggle. Thus naturally the lower leadership was in great confusion in understanding the situation arising after the police action. It is not to say that the leadership not at all recognised that it has to fight against the Nehru military. Even though it expected such an eventuality nominally, neither had it prepared necessary tactics to be adopted in such an eventuality nor did it make preparations to conduct such a struggle. Ranadive who pre-occupied by dreaming about insurrection never bothered to think about how to defend Telangana from the onslaughts of Nehru military which was reared by imperialists and had the experience of many a battles including those of two world wars. As a result the leadership of Andhra party had to adopt an attitude of wait and see. Thus the Nehru military succeeded in inflicting heavy blows on guerilla forces. It was after facing severe losses only the retreat plans were prepared.

Some leaders like Ravi Narayana Reddy started arguing to withdraw struggle when the police action began. Some small landlords and a section of rich peasantry who participated in the struggle against Nizam now naturally left the struggle. Showing this and arguing that the Telangana people as a whole welcomed the Nehru military is nothing but falsification of history. The poor and middle peasantry stood firmly in the struggle and behind the party and they prepared to fight the Nehru military to defend the land and people's power they were establishing.

The Union military entered Telangana was deployed in to the every nook and cranny of rural Telangana and within two weeks started attacking

communists. They tortured people to know the whereabouts of communists. They used to encircle five or six villages and gather all the people at one place and tortured them and conducted combing operations. They resorted to concerted attacks on the families of communists and guerillas. To suppress the heroic Telangana peasant struggle the Nehru military and police together with the “Congress rajakars” resorted to such savage and brutal methods of attacks even the Nizam and rajakars never. In the struggle areas of Telangana military camps were established at every five miles. The military used to conduct daily two or three attacks on the surrounding villages and comb the forests, groves and hills. The Congress rajakars cooperated them in conducting these attacks and combing operations. Nehru governments even resorted to implement the Brigg’s plan on the pretext that the people living in the forest areas were cooperating to communists and tried to force the people living in forest to live in the concentrations camps. People however resisted this attempt heroically. By burning down hundreds of villages they implemented this plan. In the districts of Nalgonda, Warangal, Khammam, Karimnagar and Hyderabad three lakhs of people were tortured., 50,000 were arrested, 5,000 were years together rotted in jails and 3,000 were killed.

The party correctly decided to resist this serious repression by extending the movement and there by dispersing the enemy forces and ultimately to force the enemy into a defensive position to defeat it. But the decision was made when the enemy was conducting incessant attacks without any letup and party, squads and people were facing setbacks. Thus the extension was not possible immediately. However by 1950 the movement spread to the Nallamala forest areas in Kurnool district and by 1951 to Adilabad district and the Maharashtra forest area adjoining it. If leadership had the foresight and extended before Nehru military intervention the party could have repulsed the attack with minimum losses.

Party gave a call to drive out landlords, *desmukhs*, *zamindars* and village officers from rural areas and to deal with enemy agents firmly; and to force the enemy to wind up his camps from our strongholds or to destroy them and to see that it was impossible for enemy to enter into those areas.

It gave a call to its cadres to intensify mass struggles by taking up all the problems of people. It was decided that Andhra Maha Sabha should

function as the people's democratic revolutionary front of all revolutionary forces.

The squad organisation and method of work were changed. The small guerilla squads learned to withstand and operate amidst the incessant military attacks and combing operations, and gradually they reached to the stage wherein they could conduct raids on military and resist its attacks. They dragged the Nehru military that boasted to wipe out communists and guerillas within two weeks into an unending war for three years till the struggle was withdrawn by the party in 1951.

These tactics and decisions despite the spontaneity in formulating them and enormous losses in consequence of it were lead to the recovery of the party and movement as a whole from the initial setbacks. The illusions of people about Congress were melted down soon, as landlords returned to villages with the backing of Nehru military and started grabbing the lands from peasantry. They resorted to concerted attacks on the activists of sangam and members of the *panch* committee. The masses realised that the Nehru military entered the state only to seize the lands they occupied and the people's power they built by sacrificing their blood and that their land, liberation and people's power will survive only through the continuation of liberation struggle against the Nehru government. The oppressed and poor peasantry who were trampled under feudalism from generations stood firmly behind the party. In the white terror unleashed by Nehru thousands of people, activists, guerillas and leaders died. The sacrifices of people and party were not wasted. By 1951 not only the movement succeeded in extending itself to other areas but also reached a stage wherein it could conduct attacks on the military.

Towards the New Democratic Revolutionary Line

After the victorious completion of the Chinese revolution the international communist movement increasingly recognised the importance of Chinese experience in relation to the revolutions in the backward world. The **Peking Conference** (Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australian Countries) held in November 1949 was a significant one in this regard. In its opening speech Liu Shao-chi said that the path of Chinese revolution "*is the path that should be taken by the peoples of the various colonial and semi-*

colonial countries in their fight for national independence and People's Democracy." Cited in Communism in India, p.295 Ranadive decided not to publish the Manifesto of the Peking Conference as it was clearly supporting the Andhra Thesis. The decisive blow came to him in the form of the editorial of the Cominform organ FLPD (For a Lasting Peace, For a People's democracy) in 27th January 1950. The editorial **Mighty Advance of the National Liberation Movement in Colonies and Dependent Countries** clearly stated that revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries follow Chinese path. This editorial proved to be of decisive influence on the debate in that was going on in CPI regarding the path of revolution and strengthened the position of Andhra leadership.

Important Points of the FLPD Editorial

1. *"The path taken by the Chinese people.... is the path that should be taken by the people of many colonial and dependent countries in their struggle for national independence and people's democracy."*

2. *"A decisive condition for the victorious outcome of the national-liberation struggle is the formation, when the necessary internal conditions allow for it, of people's liberation armies under the leadership of the Communist Party."*

As the example of China, Vietnam, Malaya and other countries show, armed struggle is now becoming the main form of the national-liberation movement in many colonial and dependent countries."

3. *"The mass movement of the peoples in the colonies and semi colonies, the movement that unfolded after the war and developed into an armed struggle, forced the British imperialists to make a tactical retreat. A sham independence was bestowed on India. But the interests of British imperialism remain 'sacred and inviolable'. The Mountbattens have departed but British imperialism remains and octopus-like grips India in its bloody tentacles."*

4. *"In these conditions, the task of the Indian communists, drawing on the experience of the national-liberation movement in China and other countries, is, naturally, to strengthen the alliance of the working class with all the peasantry, to fight for the introduction of the urgently needed agrarian reform and —on the basis of the common struggle for freedom and*

national independence of their country, against the Anglo-American imperialists oppressing it and against the reactionary big bourgeoisie and feudal princes collaborating with them—to unite all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India.”⁵

The June CC

Even the confidants of Ranadive, Bhavani Sen, Adhikari and Lahiri started distancing from his line. Ranadive was still adamant to make any serious retrospection about his adventurist line tried to reconcile his line with that of the FLPD editorial. Some leaders both from right and left doubted the editorial's applicability to India as it said about "many" not all colonial and dependent countries. The editorial however played a decisive role in the refutation of Ranadive line.

Central committee met for the first time after second Congress in May-June 1950. Of the 35 members elected to CC in the second congress one died, six were in jails and two were by then removed from CC and the remaining two were absent and the rest attended the meeting. Ranadive's adventurist line and his sectarian methods were condemned and Andhra line was adopted. Central Committee was reconstituted. A nine member CC of which four from Andhra secretariat was elected. They were: (1) Rajesswara Rao (General Secretary), (2) M. Basava Punnaih, (3) Brijesh Mishra, (4) P. sundarayya, (5) D.Venkateswara Rao, (6) Somnath Lahiri, (7) Moni Singh, (8) E.M.S. Namboodripad, (9) S.V. Parulekar. The first three constituted the PB.

The new leadership felt that *“The CC if it has to be a functioning body under the present condition of white terror, has to be a considerably smaller body say 11 to 13.”⁶*

The May-June CC meeting that elected the June CC endorsed the Andhra line and accepted two documents prepared by Andhra CCMs with some modifications. They were: **Report on Left-Sectarianism in the Organisational Activities of the Polit-Bureau and the main Organisational Tasks before the CC and Directives for the Proper Functioning of the CC and PB in Future and Report on Left Deviation Inside the CPI.**

The newly constituted June CC promptly withdrew the Left sectarian documents of Ranadive and issued the Letter of the New Central Committee to All Party Members and Sympathisers elaborating the new line and the critique on Ranadive's line.

It would be a mistake if one thinks that finally CPI put itself on the correct path of Indian revolution. From the inception of CPI, dogmatism, neglecting the role of peasantry and agrarian revolution and right opportunism were strongly entrenched in the leadership. In the long period in which party tailed behind the Gandhian leadership legalism and economism strongly entrenched in the party especially among the leadership. Despite its revolutionary rhetoric many of the top leaders like Dange sunk so deep in trade unionism that they were not in a position to perceive how an agrarian revolution can become the axis of Indian revolution and the peasantry as its main force. The preparedness to conduct a dogged protracted guerilla war in the process of victory- defeat- victory was of course the least expected thing from them.

These chronic ailments of the party were not simply solved with a revolutionary line gaining majority in CC with the absence of real commitment to implement it. An arduous and long political, ideological and organizational struggle had to be waged. By the time Rajeshwar Rao became secretary it should be recognised that there were only a few CC members who had firm belief in the revolutionary line the Telangana struggle was establishing and interest in seriously studying the movement. Before taking the decision to withdraw Telangana armed struggle, no CC member from outside Andhra visited Telangana. Therefore it is not proper to say the constitution of June CC as the victory of Chinese line. It should be realised that under some conditions it gained upper hand temporarily.

While Telangana was fighting a life and death struggle entire party was thrown into chaos in the name of debate on the basic policy of the party. No doubt the new line has to be discussed thoroughly in the rank and file of the party. But it should be conducted on the principle of democratic centralism and on the lines of Marxist-Leninist methods of two line struggle. The June CC actually initiated such a debate. But the right and left factions needed disruption. By September itself, even before the June CC was able to produce its policy statement, the right opportunist clique produced the document **A Note on the Present Situation in Our**

Party. The Three P's (Ajay Ghosh, Dange and S.V. Ghate) document made a scathing attack on June CC accusing it that it was continuing the left sectarian line and organizational methods of Ranadive. The rightist trio's document in fact pointed out some of the weaknesses of the Andhra leadership's formulations including that of the overestimation of the disillusionment of the people all over India with the Nehru government. However the document's main aim was to paralyse the party to dislodge the Telangana line and its advocates from the leadership. So instead of contributing to the healthy debate on the basic policy of the party it lead to the widespread confusion apprehension in the party.

The Policy Statment of June CC

In November PB brought out the new leadership's policy statement, **Indian People's Democratic Revolution and the Communist Party of India**. The document for the first time formulated the New Democratic Revolutionary line of India in a clear cut manner basing firmly on the Chinese experience and Mao's teachings. Perhaps the document was the only significant achievement of the June CC. The document was breaking from the past, refreshingly straight forward and clearly presented the new line.

Apart from rectifying its earlier weak formulations regarding the class analysis it clearly emphasised that the armed struggle remains the principle form of struggle in Indian revolution and that the armed struggle that it envisaging is the peasant war under the leadership of proletariat i.e. protracted people's war which is distinct from that of the classical insurrection. The document for the first time tried to formulate a military line for the party.

*“..... it is utopian to think of legal existence of the revolutionary forces with their peaceful normal forms of struggle or the path of armed insurrection, capturing the cities first and then liberating the countryside; but our path is just the opposite, i.e. capturing the countryside first, leading to liberating of cities next.”*⁷

“..... this type of armed struggle will necessarily have a number of phases and stages according to the specific conditions obtaining in each case. In our case it has to traverse through the stages of guerilla resistance with whatever available arms that the people can lay their hands

on, through the formation of extensive guerilla areas, the establishment of liberation bases and formation of liberation armies whenever conditions permit, advancing to the stage of final offensive for complete victory with regular warfare.

Accordingly the form of this armed warfare also will change, i.e. from the armed guerilla resistance by small squads to the positional warfare passing through different stages and forms of warfare.”⁸

“..... while conducting this form of protracted armed struggle, there might arise a situation whereat the liberated bases might be occupied by the enemy's overwhelming armed forces and have to be transformed into guerilla districts and resistance areas for a time;”⁹

“..... the problem of establishment of liberation bases is to be constantly kept in mind and a resolute struggle to realize them has to be carried on because without liberated bases guerilla warfare of such a protracted and cruel nature can not be continued for long.

“The topographical and terrain conditions occupy a great prominence, besides the political, economic and social and such other objective factors, when the question of liberation bases comes into serious consideration.” Further it said that in establishing liberated bases “the mountainous and forest areas, which offer exceptionally favourable conditions, occupy the first place; next the territories, which are criss crossed with rivers, lakes, etc. also offer protection making the speedy movement of the enemy difficult. The plains come under the last category, where it is extremely difficult to create liberated bases, especially in the earlier periods of armed warfare However it would be a great mistake to do so [concluding], that armed guerrilla resistance is only possible in forest and mountainous areas and impossible in plains.”¹⁰

“..... any cut-and-dried rules for the questions of where, when how to begin [the armed guerilla struggle] can not be framed. But on whatever issue the guerilla armed struggle is begun, unless it linked up with the questions of land and people's power, i.e. village people's committees, it can neither be sustained for long nor can it be extended and deepened.”¹¹

“The armed struggle remains the main form and does not cease to be so even though the party is immediately capable of organizing and conducting over a large or small territory - whether it is half or one-tenth

or one-twentieth party of our country, it remains and does not cease to be so even though the stage and form of this armed struggle or its extensiveness is a preliminary stage of guerilla resistance.”¹²

“It would be erroneous to think that this principal form is the only form of struggle because without simultaneously adopting that coordinating all other conceivable forms of struggle, such as economic and political strikes, demonstrations, agricultural labour and tenant struggles, signature collections for peace pledge, election contests and so on the so forth, the armed struggle alone can neither be conducted for long nor ultimately can success be attained.”¹³

The June CC faced an uphill task of revitalizing the party organization and reorganizing it on the Marxist-Leninist organizational principles and on the basis of secret functioning of the main leading bodies apart from the onerous task of mustering the support of the entire party to its new line. But history proved that it was not capable to deliver the task. The document depicted that pathetic state of the party at that time as follows:

“Coming to the present position of the party it has to be characterised as extremely serious. It faces an all round crisis - political, organizational and financial. All the evil affects of years of both right reformist and left-sectarian politics and methods of organization, all the unbolshevik practices and style of work have now burst forth like a volcano creating an all-round inner party crisis.

“Politically great confusion prevails inside the party while the new line is under discussion. This confusion has almost paralysed the party into inaction..... the party members have come to a stage where they are not able to put faith in any leadership at any level - from the Central Committee down to the lowest unit, nor able to act with conviction and determination.

“Organisationally a tendency to anarchy has been raising its head inside the party throwing to winds all party forms. In the name of inner party democracy and fighting bureaucracy, anti-party, opportunist and disrupt trends have been raising their head.

“..... It is not an exaggeration to state that the majority of the party members are not yet reorganized in properly functioning cells or other party units. Generally speaking, no proper illegal tech apparatus exists which

can withstand the cruel onslaught of the enemy which is mounting its offensive against the party in most parts of the country.”¹⁴

*“..... real inner party democracy, i.e. ranks and lower party units **effectively** participating in moulding the inner party life on correct party principles has not yet been established. The low ideological level of the party as a whole due to the lack of proper education in the fundamentals of the Marxism-Leninism and their application to the practical problem facing the party, stands as a big hindrance in the way of effective participation of the ranks in shaping the inner party life and taking **proper** share in moulding the decisions and policies of the party.”¹⁵*

June CC tried to build a leadership committed to the new democratic revolutionary path. But its efforts were rather backfired due to the method in which it undertook the task. First it reconstituted the CC with the provision brought about by Ranadive authorizing the CC to reconstitute itself. It left out most of the congress elected CC members. More than that, it set the adherence to the line it was pursuing as the criteria to become CC members. It took two lesser known members into CC because of their experience with the peasant movement and guerilla struggle. With all its eagerness to build a secret illegal party it advocated and tried to form shorter committees and reorganise the committees that were disrupted and defunct. In all these efforts the right wing found the continuation of the sectarian methods and made a big issue out of it and tried to equate the Telangana Line with that of Ranadive. Even CPGB too took the CC to task demanding to form a representative CC. The shortcut methods adopted by June CC to build a fighting revolutionary leadership committed to the revolutionary line actually helped its adversaries who were the real disruptors never bothered to follow the party forms and discipline.

Precarious State of Telangana Struggle: Telangana was facing hard times by the time of formation of June CC. Squads heroically fought the military of Nehru. People were protecting the squads without fearing the fascist killings and atrocities. Squads were learning to withstand Nehru's military and learning to fight back. Small landlords and a section of rich peasantry left the struggle. Ravi Narayan Reddy and Yella Reddy opined that it is wrong to continue struggle, after the entry of Nehru's military. Rich peasant section was playing an important role in party and mass organisations due to the opportunist, reformist line CPI followed for a long

period. This section distanced itself from the party and the movement after the onslaught of Nehru's fascist repression. Shortly after the formation of June CC Ravi Narayana Reddy fled to Bombay without even providing any information about his whereabouts to the party and started publicly denouncing the Telangana struggle and leadership with the support of PHQ.

Because of the spontaneous growth of Telangana movement and the negligence of central leadership, the struggle inevitably faced severe losses after military action. Though initially the squads were altogether wiped out, as the oppressed peasantry stood firmly with the party, slowly squads were able to function deftly amidst the continuous combings and attacks of the military. It was true that Nehru's military would not be beaten back immediately but it was already being proved that it was impossible to distance the people from the party and wipe out squads and the party. Even the efforts to extend the struggle to other areas were also showing results. The June CC for the first time trying to establish a military line for the advancement of the protracted people's war. It was now be able to recognise that the liberated villages did in fact not constitute the liberated areas in the proper sense. It set the task of establishing base areas. And it also recognised the relationship between the establishment of people's power and the people's army. However to firmly establish the Telangana line the whole party had to be mobilized around the line. Irrespective of the question weather the June CC or Andhra Leadership had such capabilities or not, one thing is certain that the June CC was not at all provided with the opportunity to make such an effort.

June CC Under Seize

The right wing of the leadership was so degenerated that it scared about the armed revolution and losing legality and open activity without which it cannot even imagine its existence. It was eagerly aspiring to shelter behind Nehru. Where as the left adventurists were not in a position to digest the Chinese path in which the petti-bourgeois peasantry is the main force. Both of them found one thing in common, rejecting the role of peasantry in revolution on the pretext of hegemony of working class. After the FLP&FPD editorial both the right and left factions of the leadership while openly declaring their endorsement of the Chinese path tried in every way to undermine the June CC and its line.

The rightist leadership panicked with the Telangana line in majority swung into action. It launched an all out attack on June CC and even mustered the support of CPGB and R. P. Dutt. Within no time the right wing paralysed the party at a crucial juncture when it was fighting a life and death struggle in Telangana, by making a hue and cry about 'sectarian functioning' of the June CC which was in fact never allowed to function at all.

Even before the formation of June CC PHQ (Party Head Quarters) group launched its attack on Telangana struggle and Andhra Leadership. It now started functioning with redoubled vigor against June CC and Telangana struggle. The first betrayer of Telangana, Ravi Narayana Reddy joined this PHQ. Ravi Narayan Reddy who argued, as soon as military entered in the Nizam state, that struggle should have been withdrawn, fled away from his den to join the PHQ clique. He announced through Bombay Radio that Telangana struggle should be withdrawn. A campaign continued that what Andhra leadership was telling about Telangana struggle were all lies. This campaign was so intense that Major Jaipal Singh who later came to Telangana mentioned that they considered the statements of Nehru and Radio news about Telangana struggle were more reliable than the reports of Andhra comrades! To the trade union leadership by then tuned themselves as 'Gandhian communists,' he became a trump card. PHQ through its Open Forum propagated his malicious propaganda in the name of debate.

In July Dange, immediately after his release from Jail issued a statement denouncing June CC accusing that it was strengthening the wrong impression that CPI is planning an armed revolution by its "ill-planned behaviour." The statement was published in **Cross Roads** (20th July 1950) the weekly run by the Bombay group. **Cross Roads** too functioned as a platform for malicious propaganda against June CC and Telangana struggle.

P.C. Joshi who was formally expelled from the party and continuing close relations with right wing within the party immediately swung into action dubbing June CC as the same old left sectarian adventurism with the only difference of copying the Chinese revolution. To him his expulsion became a blessing in disguise as he could propagate what ever he likes against the leadership without bothering about the party discipline. Apart

from various publications he started a magazine **India Today** and led open offensive against June CC. By December decks were cleared for Joshi's reentry into the party with the appointment of a commission on him.

CPGB, which was always acting as a big support to the right opportunism in CPI, also now entered the arena. It wrote a letter to CC almost all endorsing the rightist accusations bracketing the June CC with that of the Ranadive leadership and asked for it to purge its 'Titoist' methods.

Not satisfied with this PHQ contacted R.P.Dutt and brought his advice in the form of question and answers for the "correct" interpretation of the FLP&FPD editorial. He actually endorsed the Three P's document and directly contributed to throttle June CC. R.P. Dutt wrote that party organisation and its base among people were wiped out in Telangana. Even while saying that he did not know the situation in Andhra and therefore unable to suggest in what form the struggle should continue there, he commented that had correct forms of struggle been taken up in Andhra after second Congress then party would not have disrupted. That means he indirectly told that Telangana armed struggle which heroically fought against Nehru's military was wrong. Based on Cross Roads, PHQ Open Forum and reports of Ravi Narayan Reddy, R.P. Dutt criticised Telangana struggle and Andhra thesis. Preaching that the task before CPI was to build peace movement with Nehru he suggested CPI to build its old class collaborationist "National Front." He advised CPI to prepare for the coming general elections. His suggestions were printed and circulated throughout the party by the PHQ.

Both R.P.Dutt and Rightist clique inside the party were in unison adopted a deceptive attack on the Telangana Line hailing the FLP&FPD editorial and the Chinese path of revolution for India on the one hand and denigrating the Telangana Line which is nothing but the Chinese path as sectarian with false accusations on the other. The future course of the rightist clique clearly vindicated that it actually attacked the Chinese path of revolution in the name of adhering to it. It misinterpreted the Telangana line advocated by June CC and accused that it was subjectively advocating to begin armed struggle immediately every where and tried to show the pathetic state of the party and mass organisations at that time as if it was the June CC responsible for it.

Thus in the name of inner party democracy and thorough going debate on the basic political line the right wing attacked the revolutionary line brought forward by Telangana. The June CC's own mistakes too helped the right wing in mustering support.

But the June CC under seize from its inception within six months conceded its defeat to the rightist onslaught. In December CC meeting it accommodated five members of the second congress CC who were out of June CC. The 13 member CC consisted of these: C.Rajeshwara Rao, D.Venkateswara Rao, P.Sundarayya, M.Basavapunnaiah, M.S.Namboodripad, Biresh Misra, Moni Singh and S.V.Parulekar from the June CC and Ajay Ghosh, S.A.Dange, S.V.Ghate, Ranen Sen, Muzaffar Ahmad and S.S.Yusuf from the earlier second congress CC.

Of these a five member PB was formed with Rajeswara Rao, E.M.S. Namboodripad, S.S.Yusuf, Ajay Ghosh, and S.A. Dange. Despite the continuation of Rajeswara Rao as General Secretary and the decision to consult the fraternal CPSU by December meeting itself the right wing consolidated its the dominance and bidding for time to implement its class collaborationist line with official sanction. By December itself the Andhra leadership succumbed to the rightist pressures and on the course of ditching the Telangana armed struggle.

In the CC meeting held in December 1950 it was decided to send a delegation to Russia to solve the deadlock. (Naturally Andhra leadership wanted to take suggestions from CPC.) CPI delegation comprising Rajeshwar Rao, Basavapunnaiah, Dange and Ajay Ghosh went to Moscow at the beginning of 1951. CPSU commission Mikhail Suslov, V.M. Maltov and G.M. Malinkov under the leadership of Stalin held discussions with CPI delegation. Commission tried to resolve the differences. It appealed to preserve the unity of the party.

P.B. formulated two documents **Draft Programme**, and **Tactical Line** in April 1951. It was said that the documents were prepared on the basis of the discussions with the CPSU leaders. For the legal publication of the tactical line, it was slightly changed and release in the name of **Statement of Policy**. (It seems they had to do that keeping in view the coming parliamentary elections and to get the ban lifted on party in Hyderabad, Cochin and Travancore states.)

Draft Programme

This is similar to Andhra thesis for most part.

It rejected the second congress formulation that the revolution is an amalgamation of two phases. It correctly characterised the stage of revolution as peoples' democratic revolutionary stage.

It rejected the formulation of the second congress that the whole of Indian bourgeoisie is reactionary. It called for a united front of all anti-imperialist, anti-feudal forces including national bourgeoisie that desires country's independence.

The government formed by transfer of power is one serving imperialists. The independence we got is sham independence. Nehru's government is the "government of landlords and monopoly capitalists." Nehru government is not only serving British government but allowing American imperialism to penetrate India. It is mainly following the foreign policy of British imperialism.

As far as country's freedom is concerned, British imperialism is the main enemy. For world peace, however, American imperialism is the main enemy.

*"Our party calls upon the toiling millions, the working class, the peasantry, the toiling intelligentsia, the middle classes as well as the national bourgeoisie interested in the freedom of the country and the development of a prosperous life to unite into a single democratic front in order to attain complete independence of the country, the emancipation of the peasants from the oppression of the feudals....."*¹⁶

Tactical Line

1. It correctly explained the similarities and dissimilarities between India and China.

Similarities were: (a) The character of our revolution: Our revolution is anti-feudal, anti-imperialist; (b) the agrarian and peasant question is of primary importance in both the countries; (c) like China India has vast expanses; (d) like China India has a vast peasant population.

Dissimilarities were: (a) China had an army which it inherited from the split in the revolution of 1925; (b) China had no unified and good communications system; (c) India has a far bigger working class than

China had during her march to freedom; (d) Chinese red army threatened again and again with annihilation-until it reached Manchuria.¹⁷

2. But it concluded that the path of Indian revolution is neither Russian path nor Chinese path. It is Marxist-Leninist path applied to Indian conditions. The Tactical Line thus rejected the path of protracted people's war – the new democratic revolutionary path which illuminated in the light of bloody sacrifices of Telangana peasant struggle was eclipsed.

*“Such an outlook ignores the fact that we have a big working class and that it has a role to play, which can be decisive in our struggle for freedom. The grand alliance of the working class and the peasantry acting in unison, the combination of workers’ and peasants’ struggles under the leadership of the Communist Party and utilising all lessons of history, for the conduct of the struggles, is to be the path for us.”*¹⁸

3. It recognised that rich peasantry is a force to be won over into the united front.

4. It clarified that Indian revolution will be only as armed revolution. It said that all forms of struggles and legal opportunities should be utilised.

*“While resorting to all forms of struggle, including the most elementary forms, and while utilising all legal possibilities for mobilising the masses and taking them forward in the struggle for freedom and democracy, the Communist Party has always held that in the present colonial set-up in India and in view of the absence of genuine democratic liberties, legal and parliamentary possibilities are severely restricted and that therefore the replacement of the present state upholding the imperialist-feudal order by a people’s democratic state is possible only through an armed revolution of the people.”*¹⁹

5. Participate in elections. *“We must use the parliamentary elections and elections in every sphere where the broad strata of the people can be mobilised and their interests defended.”*²⁰

6. Partisan war in the country side should be combined with uprisings of workers in cities.

“Partisan war must be one of the major weapons in our armory as in the case of all colonial countries. But this weapon alone cannot ensure

victory. It has to be combined with the other major weapons that of strikes of the working class, general strike and uprisings in cities led by armed detachments of the working class. Therefore, in order to achieve victory of the popular democratic revolution, it is absolutely essential to combine two basic factors of the revolution—the partisan war of the peasants and workers risings in the cities.”

“...partisan war alone, no matter how widely extended cannot insure victory over the enemy in the concrete situation prevailing in India. When the maturing crisis gives rise to partisan struggles on wide scale when the partisan forces in several areas are battling against the enemy, the workers in the cities, in vital industries play a decisive role.”²¹

“Premature uprisings and adventurist actions of every type must be undoubtedly eschewed. At the same time it would be wrong to lay down that armed action in the form of partisan warfare should be resorted to in every specific area only when the movement in all parts of the country rises to the level of uprisings.”²²

7. It said that there is need to build movement for peace. But it clarified that Nehru’s foreign policy is not a true peace policy but collusion with America, which is the main enemy to peace, and its junior partner Britain.

We should remember that these two documents were compromise documents. Political thesis was in the main similar to the Andhra Thesis, but tactical line rejected Chinese path. It reduced the importance of peasantry in the revolution. This was a decisive step forward in the efforts of right opportunism entrenched in the party to liquidate the revolutionary line in the party programme. CC meeting of May, 1951 accepted these documents. One of the rightist trio who was attacking the Telangana line, Ajay Ghosh, became the secretary.

The Betrayal and on the Road to Revisionism

May-June meeting of 1951 came to the decision to withdraw Telangana armed struggle. CC, of course, did not directly make a resolution to withdraw. It was making double talk that it was the people of Telangana who had to take the decision about the future of the struggle. But it opined that since Nehru’s military entered in September, 1948 struggle

should have continued for defending the fruits of struggle and it was wrong to have fought for liberation against the rule of Nehru. That is, people should have fought for the occupied lands, democratic rights etc. It means it rejected the path of Indian revolution established by Telangana peasant struggle. It thought that in 1948 itself it should have bargained with Nehru for compromise. Therefore it now started bargaining. It played a deceptive drama that Telangana people will decide the future of Telangana even while trying for a bargain. Before this drama (of consulting Telangana people) was actually enacted CC gave an open statement that it was ready to solve the Telangana issue through discussions.

“It is believed in some circles that the struggle in Telangana is being fought in order to overthrow the Nehru government. These circles ignore the fact that the struggle of the peasants for land against the oppression of the feudal landlords and the Nizam began in 1946 long before the Nehru government came into existence.

And it continued even after its entry into the Nizam state, solely to protect the peasant against the landlords who were now being reinstated by the Nehru government in alliance with the Nizam, to overthrow whose rule it had ostensibly entered the state.”²³

It was ready for negotiations with demands like (1) the land tilled by peasantry and agricultural workers should belong to them, (2) military and paramilitary forces should be withdrawn and (3) Political prisoners should be released. A committee too was appointed for this purpose comprising of A.K.Gopalan, Jyoti Basu and Muzaffar Ahmed .

No doubt the party, the squads and the peasant movement which were not at all prepared to face the military action encountered serious losses. Guerilla forces numbering nearly 2000 dropped down to 500. But the important thing is they withstood Nehru’s military for three years, who entered the field boasting that it was only a matter of a week to finish off the communists. Realising that it can not be solved by military action, Nehru unofficially started sending feelers to CPI by the end of 1950.

At the time of May-June 1951 Central Committee meeting itself, CC members from Andhra met separately to discuss the future of Telangana struggle. The draft prepared by C. Rajeshwar Rao for the meeting unequivocally condemned all the arguments that Telangana struggle lost people’s

support, that instead of guerilla struggle only individual violent actions are going on and that it is not at all possible to continue the struggle. Saying that required conditions for continuing the struggle are existing, that struggle should be continued developing the consciousness of the people and the organisational structure of the mass organisations, Rajeswara Rao said the following:

“Despite the indescribable tortures people providing food and transportation facilities and promptly delivering the information about the movements of the enemy. They even are forming into small squads. They are defending the lands they distributed and the victories they won in various methods. Not only they are conducting partial struggles on their day to day problems but also participating in the raids against the enemy’s armed forces. However it was not in such an extent necessary to continue armed partisan guerrilla struggle powerfully. The main reason for this was these weaknesses. If we overcome these weaknesses it will become possible to bring the masses into extensive struggles.”²⁴

“We can continue the armed guerilla struggle in Telangana by overcoming our weaknesses considering the preparedness the general masses are showing to continue armed partisan guerilla struggle, the enemy camp that is isolated from masses and riddled with internal contradictions and in chaos, the spontaneous outburst of the broad masses into extensive struggles on their day to day demands in some parts of India as a result of intensifying economic crisis and the Congress is disintegrating at all India level.”²⁵

Despite the over estimation of the weaknesses of the ruling classes the estimate clearly shows that the struggle was in the process of rejuvenating and it can be sustained. But Rajeswara Rao who then succumbed to the rightist pressures and started his journey to end up himself as another Joshi came to this conclusion.

“But we have to lead our movement on new rails in accordance with the new program and tactical line of our party.”²⁶

“Instead of over throwing the Nehru government and establishing the people’s power, defending the lands and mass movement and resisting the repressive policy of military, home guards and landlords should be the objective of our movement. The armed struggle should be continued to

achieve these minimum demands. Similarly, deciding the future of the state by constituent assembly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise should be demanded.”²⁷

Without even respecting the CC’s resolution to continue the struggle while negotiating for peaceful solution to defend the achievements of the struggle the PB released the resolution to the press. It even condemned the “individual violence” of guerrillas. Nehru, who realised that CPI is contemplating on withdrawing the struggle, took an obstinate stand and declined to hold any talks with CPI and demanded the unconditional withdrawal of the struggle. Even the negotiations committee was not allowed to consult the leaders in Jails. CC and Visalandhra committees unilaterally and unconditionally announced the withdrawal of the struggle on 21st October 1951 in a most ignominious manner. But Nehru government which was working to a plan since 1945 to smash CPI did not withdraw military. Moreover it increased military attacks. Guerrilla squads had to continue the armed struggle for self defence for another six months with Nehru’s army after the withdrawal of struggle.

The CPI leadership was not only sabotaged the Indian democratic revolution and the Telangana peasant armed struggle but even after the withdrawal of struggle it was pre-occupied with factional squabbles neglecting the protection of squads, cadres and people. The whole leadership was eagerly waiting for 1952 elections. Ajay Ghosh the newly elected CC secretary even threatened the Andhra leadership that he will go on public denouncing the various incidents of resistance from guerrillas who were forced to defend their lives against continuing attacks of military after the withdrawal of struggle. Before asserting the views of Telangana people and squads CC announced its opinion of withdrawal of struggle. The Andhra secretariat clearly mentioned that majority in the squads opposed unconditional withdrawal of struggle. But the sole aim of the leadership then was to get rid of Telangana armed struggle as early as possible and getting ready for the coming general elections. Government greatly exploited this weakness in enforcing an unconditional withdrawal of the struggle.

The Dogfights of the Leadership

While Telangana people and guerrilla squads were still fighting Nehru’s armies, the factional fights of the leadership reached to peak. The first

betrayers of Telangana Ravi Narayana Reddy, Yella Reddy and Rajbahadur Goud with the tacit support of Ajay Ghosh intensified their disruptive activities. By alleging that the movement ruined since 1949 due to the Andhra leadership, they demanded to send back the Andhra comrades from Telangana. They openly supported the landlords who started reoccupying lands from the peasantry and publicly opposed the u.g. leadership and resorted to heinous false propaganda against them. When the official policy of the party demanding the formation of linguistic states, Ajoy Ghosh like Ranadive bent on to disrupt the unity of the Andhra leadership and tried to form Hyderabad State provincial committee directly under the leadership of CC. In the name of election committee he formed an alternative provincial committee with Ravi Narayan Reddy, Dehpande clique

The Andhra leadership itself became vulnerable after its betrayal to the cause of Telangana and differences came up between Rajeswara Rao who on his way to become a hardcore leader of the rightist clique locked horns with Sundarayya who found an ally in Basava punaaih.

CPM is supporting the view of the then CC and state secretariat. It is endorsing the view that from the time Nehru's army entered, discussions should have been held while fighting for the defense of the victories of struggle and an agreement should have been arrived at. CPI is supporting Ravi Narayana Reddy's argument. His argument is that struggle had to be withdrawn as soon as Nehru's military entered. The unanimous opinion of both the parties is that Telangana peasant armed struggle was only against autocratic rule of Nizam but it was not a liberation movement. The differences are only on how the struggle should have been withdrawn.

The Andhra leadership itself, which had brought forward the path of protracted peoples war emerged out of the glorious Telangana peasantry as 'Andhra Thesis', rejected that line. Hand in glove with right opportunists at the centre it stabbed Telangana armed struggle in the back. It sabotaged Indian Democratic revolution. CPI leadership took up the parliamentary path and started the journey to become a loyal and respectful parliamentary opposition to comprador bourgeoisie. The history of CPI ever since sabotaging the Telangana struggle is the history of degeneration of the party from the role of revolutionary leader of oppressed people of India to bourgeois left party.

All India conference of CPI was held in October 1951. This conference

endorsed **Draft Programme and Tactical Line (Statement of Policy)**. Ajay Ghosh was re-elected as secretary. Party was getting ready for parliamentary elections.

In the first general elections of 1952 Congress party obtained absolute majority in parliament. However the majority seats were won with minority votes. Congress could not muster majority votes even in the first elections after Transfer of power.

CPI emerged as the main opposition party in the parliament. The rightist leadership of CPI and its foreign ideologue R.P. Dutt had been arguing that the mass base eroded in Telangana because of continuing struggle after 1948. CPI achieved great success in Telangana and Andhra areas where the party won 85 assembly seats and 19 parliament seats. It was an irrefutable fact that the party received people's support only in areas where it took up militant struggles. But for CPI leadership, however, the parliamentary elections seemed a shortcut road to power. The path of armed struggle in **Draft Programme and Tactical Line** was remained on paper.

Brief Summery

Communist party started its work in the Telangana districts of Nizam state adjoining Andhra area since the end of 1930s. Communists first took up their work first joining Andhra Maha Sabha a liberal bourgeois organization. The peasantry languishing under the cruel feudal oppression and exploitation put before the party the anti-feudal peasant issues. The Sabha was gradually transformed into a broad forum for anti-feudal struggles due to the active participation of communists. Broad peasant masses organized under the leadership of communists as the party took up anti-feudal struggles. The party established its leadership over Sabha and transformed it into a broad front against feudalism. The rightists who were dejected with sabha's transformation into a forum for the struggle against feudalism left it.

The feudal landlords unleashed police forces of Nizam to suppress the peasant masses who then emerging as a mighty organized force against feudalism. The armed forces of Nizam and landlords resorted to severe

repression and atrocities on the rural masses. Peasantry who started their struggle on the partial issues such as abolition of vetti, eviction from lands, etc., thus were forced to take up arms to defend themselves. The rightist party leadership however first not allowed them to take up fire arms. The people under the leadership of the party without fire arms heroically organized resistance and retaliation against Nizam forces and landlord goons. The resistance of peasant masses spread out like a prairie fire and started transforming itself into a liberation struggle against Nizam.

Particularly after the transfer of power the peasant struggles became widespread and intense in Telangana. The peasantry now started occupying the lands of landlords on the basis of the slogan - land to the tiller. These land struggles shook the foundations of the Nizam feudal regime. The police, military forces and rajakar lumpen bands together conducted attacks on the villages to suppress the peasant movement and to destroy the party. The party prepared masses to put up armed resistance and retaliation. The peasant guerilla squads were formed. By the time of military action (of Nehru) in about 3000 villages Nizam feudal rule was overthrown and panch committes the seeds of people's power were established. In those liberated villages the peoples' power started sprouting. It is from this agrarian revolutionary upsurge emerged the line of protracted peoples war for Indian revolution and expressed itself as the Andhra thesis. Andhra secretariat formulated the new democratic revolutionary line to the Indian revolution from the experiences of the Telangana struggle. The Andhra thesis for the first time in India declared that in India the revolution traverse the path of Chinese revolution with peasantry as the main force and on the basis of agrarian revolution with the central slogan of 'land to tiller.'

However the central leadership failed to understand the real significance of the struggle and neglected it. Thus the Andhra leadership itself had to lead the struggle rather spontaneously. By the time the union military entered the state the party was not at all prepared to face the military. The central leadership did not bother to provide any plan or estimation of the future course of the struggle in the event of the union

intervention. Many of the party had no clue that they had to fight the Nehru's military. In fact the illusions on Nehru were still strong in the party.

Nehru demanded unconditional surrender from communists and to return the lands occupied by peasantry in the glorious struggle. But the party and the people were not prepared to lose the victories they won through heroic struggle and great sacrifices. Nehru military unleashed a reign of terror in Telangana for three years to annihilate the party and guerilla squads and people's power and to reestablish the feudal order.

Due to the unpreparedness of the party, squads and people the movement suffered serious losses. A small section of landlords and a section of rich peasantry who took part in the struggle against Nizam now naturally left the struggle. However the poor and middle peasantry stood firmly behind the party and waged a heroic liberation struggle against the Nehru government.

It was decided to extend the struggle to disperse the enemy and to build up resistance by forming small squads which can easily blend into the broad masses. It was also decided to take up struggles on the people's issues and to defend the people's power. Within short time people realized the deceptive nature of Nehru and firmly stood behind the party. Consequently by the end of 1950 party was able to stabilize the movement. Squads successfully defending themselves started conducting raids on military. But there were no solidarity struggles to Telangana in the rest of the country due to the callous attitude of the central leadership. The Andhra party alone led the masses against the Nehru military.

The widespread dissent against the left adventurism and sectarianism of Ranadive and the FLP&FPD editorial that advocated Chinese path of revolution to the colonial countries contributed to the formation of June CC of which Andhra leadership formed the core of the leadership. Rajeswara Rao became the General Secretary of the party. The June CC adopted the Andhra Thesis or Telangana line as the general revolutionary line for India. however the formation of June cannot be considered as the victory of Telangana line or Chinese path of revolution

as it was gained majority in a particular circumstances only but not due to the conviction on the party of the main leadership of the party to implement the line. The right opportunism that was deep rooted in the party for a long time all set on undermining the June CC and its revolutionary line. In fact the June CC under seize from all sides from the beginning was never allowed to function.

Rightist opportunist wing in the party launched a broadside against June CC and Telangana Line. CPGB and R.P.Dutt too joined the rightist wing to throttle the June CC. They made a deceptive attack on June CC accusing that it was continuing Ranadive's left adventurist line and sectarian methods. They denigrated the Telangana line - the New Democratic Revolutionary line of Indian revolution, accusing that it was the misinterpretation of the Chinese path of revolution and FLP&FPD editorial. The rightist forces and their prop CPGB hailed the editorial and unequivocally accepted the applicability of Chinese path of revolution in words to make a veiled attack on the new democratic revolutionary path of India - the Telangana line. They paralysed the party when Telangana fighting a life and death struggle.

A section in the Telangana leadership argued that the armed struggle would have been withdrawn when the military action started. The chief votary of the argument Ravi Narayana Reddy joined the right opportunist clique at the center and conducted a slanderous campaign against the Telangana struggle and the leadership of the struggle. The June CC succumbed to the rightist onslaught and took the road of betraying the Telangana struggle and the revolutionary path emerged out of it.

The rightist leader Ajoy Ghosh formally took over the leadership in May 1951.

Though the Draft Program of the newly constituted CC was similar to that of the understanding of June CC, its Tactical Line however refuted the path of protracted people's war and represented right opportunism and paved the way for the class collaborationism. The new understanding provided theoretical justification to betray Telangana.

The leadership of the party betrayed the Telangana struggle saying that the Telangana people are fighting for their partial demands but not for the liberation. It unconditionally withdrew the struggle in an ignominious manner when the struggle was withstanding the Nehru fascist onslaught and extending to new areas. Without even consulting the local leadership, squads and people it declared the withdrawal of the struggle hastily to prepare for the general elections. The right opportunist leadership degenerated into revisionism backstabbed the five years of heroic struggle and immense sacrifices of the Telangana people, squads and party. The people's power that sprouted out of the sacrifices of about five thousand martyrs was surrendered to Nehru. The revisionist leadership now turned to the parliamentary path and all set to degenerate the party into a full fledged revisionist party.

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The Revisionist Line

Perhaps no other Communist Party in the world had ever faced as much confusion about estimating the nature of ruling classes as the CPI has. The leader of Indian comprador bourgeoisie and landlord ruling classes, Nehru, even while on the one hand suppressing the peoples struggles with iron heel, had been taking many “progressive” steps in the external as well as internal policies. It always remained a point of discussion within the CPI leadership about estimating the nature of the Congress government and the stand to be taken towards it. CPI was estimating that the planned economic development, and industrial development under public sector undertaken by Nehru as the progressive steps in the economic field. In fact Nehru talked about planned economy in 1937 itself. Comprador big bourgeoisie felt that it was absolutely necessary for it to have heavy industry, which need heavy investments and has a long gestation period, established under public sector through the planned economy being brought about by Nehru. But CPI thought that the five year plans that started from 1952 as an effort in the direction of independent economic development.

Nehru on the other hand was extending his “socialist nature” to foreign policy. He wanted to create illusions by making friendship with socialist countries that the country is moving in the direction of socialism under his leadership. More than that, he wanted to make the communist party ineffective by this. Nehru tried to create illusions that his foreign policy is an anti-imperialist one. He even poked his nose in the Korean affair. He continued friendship with socialist countries. At the same time however he widely opened doors for American imperialism to enter the country.

Madhurai Congress

Third congress of CPI was held in Madhurai from December 27, 1953 to January 4, 1954. This was the first congress of CPI after the death of Stalin. This Congress again adopted the programme and tactical line formu-

lated in 1951. Secretary of CPGB, Harry Pollitt, attended this Congress.

There was a lot of discussion about the foreign policy of Nehru. Infact R.P. Dutt had been suggesting by that time itself that Nehru's foreign policy is progressive and should be supported completely. The argument that Nehru's foreign policy aids the world peace came strongly. But this congress did not announce its complete support to Nehru's foreign policy despite the efforts of the pro-Soviet rightist clique.

“Certain acts and declarations of the Nehru government in the recent period... have been helpful to peace..... all acts of the government which help the cause of peace should be firmly supported. Yet the situation does no warrant..... overall support..... in the international sphere..... because the India government does not follow consistently a policy of peace and democracy. Therefore the necessity.... to intensify pressure.... to make it pursue a consistent policy of peace.... ”¹

In the post war period as the American super power was surrounding the socialist camp and coming forward aggressively and due to the resultant war danger it was quite correct to say that peace movement should be built up. The pro-Soviet right wing in line with the revisionist Soviet foreign policy in the name of peace movement wanted to line up behind Nehru. The CPI leadership drove the party in the direction of completely leaving class struggle and getting limited to parliamentary struggle and peace movement. In the later days this united front for peace movement became a useful means to CPI leadership to revert to its old class collaborationist policy.

Another question that was extensively discussed in the Congress was whether the main enemy to Indian independence is Britain or America? It was a question related with the foreign policy of Nehru government. This discussion can in fact be said to be an attack on the line of 1951. Harry Pollitt of CPGB suggested that encouraging reaction all over the world the US has become the main enemy and therefore should be considered the main enemy. It implies make peace with Nehru Government to strengthen anti-American front to suit the interests of revisionist Soviet Union's strategic and economic interests.

Andhra leadership tried to defend the 1951 programme in this respect.

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The pro-Soviet rightist leadership was however very eager to take up united front tactics with Nehru government by making America the main enemy.

The Andhra Thesis recognised Britain as the main enemy even while recognising the necessity of fighting against the American imperialism. It even recognised the chance of increasing grip of American imperialism in the future and thus it becoming the main enemy.

“Internationally speaking, America is the spearhead of world reaction as the main enemy of peace and freedom for all the people. We, situated as we are in a country under a particular state, have some concrete tasks to perform. The chief enemy of our national freedom today is British imperialism.”²

“We have one national enemy and a separate international enemy. The struggle against one particular national enemy for our national freedom is not in contradiction with the fight against another international enemy though the nature of the fight varies.”

“If... America elbows out the British from India and becomes dominant.... and if America then remains our chief national enemy, it will be our task to concentrate our main fight against American imperialism.”³

Ajay Ghosh who was playing the “centrists” role suggested middle path. *“One deviation says that the U.S. is only a threat to peace and not to our freedom. The other deviation says that U.S. is the only enemy, we have to fight for both peace and national liberation.”⁴*

By saying this he suggested that the two have to be fought together. In practice, however, he pushed forward the party towards **Broad United Front For Peace**. And thus he ensured that the struggle for freedom remained on paper. (Ajay Ghosh, till his death, performed this “centrist role” very efficiently.)

Madhurai Congress resolved to agitate for the formation of states on linguistic basis. It can be said that this was the main peoples struggle lead by the CPI in this period.

Madhurai Congress adopted the programme and tactical line formulated in 1951 but the leadership started sinking the whole party into the mire of right opportunism. Nehru’s deceptive policies however came in handy to

it to shred off the revolutionary essence of the programme and tactical line formulated in 1951. It started rallying the entire party behind Nehru and its right opportunism degenerating into revisionism.

Between Madhrai and Palghat Congresses

Chou-En-Lai visited India on June 25, 1954. Nehru and Chou-En-Lai together signed *Panchasheela*. Nehru toured China in November. He flooded China with praises. Tito came for a visit to India in the last week of November. On the same day Tito spoke in the Parliament (November 28), Nehru announced for the first time that the aim of Indian government is to build socialism. Tito attended the *Awadi* session of Congress. In this session, Congress resolved that achievement of socialism is its objective. This is continuation of Nehru's old policy of owning all the slogans of communists. During this phase when CPI was turning to the path of peaceful transition, Nehru made peaceful parliamentary socialism his programme.

In the same period Khrushchev clique established its power in Russia. Nehru, the comprador bourgeois statesman with very keen observation could grasp that the revisionist Soviet Union could become a very good friend of his. Revisionist Russia too considered the friendship with Indian comprador bourgeoisie very necessary to it.

In the 8th October 1954 issue of FLPPFD, R.P. Dutt published an article indicating that there is no difference between struggle for peace and struggle for freedom.

*“.... the battle for national independence of the peoples in the countries of the British Empire is a combined battle against the immediate domination and oppression of the British imperialists and against the penetration of the American imperialists.”*⁵

*“the fight for peace against the war drive of the imperialist camp led by American imperialism is closely linked with the fight for national independence.... There can be no separation of the fight for national independence from the fight for peace.”*⁶

The panicked CC hold an emergency meeting and condemned Dutt's article saying that it was contrary to the understanding of Madhrai Congress.

“The Congress showed that close relationship that exists between the struggle for peace and the struggles for freedom – struggles, though they are not identical, help and strengthen each other. It emphasised the necessity of conducting both struggles simultaneously and with equal vigour, for both of them are equally important.”⁷

Despite this resolution the leadership started reconciling to the the Dutt’s stand which was in fact reflecting the revisionist Soviet Union’s prescription to CPI.

After the Congress saying that there was a clear cut change in Nehru’s foreign policy, Ajay Ghosh invented a contradiction between internal and external policies of Nehru government. Nehru after his visit to China praising its achievements started a scathing attack on CPI. He proclaimed Marxism “outmoded,” accused that CPI carrying out “dictates of Russia and China,” “stirring up troubles” and indulging in violence, etc. and that it failed to appreciate his foreign policy and so on. Ajay Ghosh in his **Communist answer to Pandit Nehru** for the first time clearly envisaged the contradiction he found between Nehru’s internal and external policy.

“Can any serious student of Indian affairs deny that the foreign policy of Pandit Nehru’s Government has undergone a shift in the last five years?....”⁸

“We support this change and have no hesitation in recognising it.”⁹

“....stand of support to the peaceful aspects of Pandit Nehru’s foreign policy and relentless fight against the reactionary policies internally is nothing but a really consistent line of strengthening the forces of peace, freedom and democracy both at home and abroad.”¹⁰

“The internal policy of the Nehru Government does not suit the interests of the masses while the foreign policy does.”¹¹

This argument that while the internal policy of Nehru is anti-people, the external policy is a progressive one became the principal basis for class collaborationist friendship in the later period.

Ideological basis was secured to give complete support to Nehru government. (CPI solved this contradiction of progressive foreign policy and anti-people internal policy in its Fourth Congress in which it identified even

the internal policy as progressive.) In line with it, the CPI leadership is reconciled to the position that India won the real freedom. It thus becomes clear that since the time of withdrawal of Telangana armed struggle, the path that the CPI was following was towards absolute opportunism and class collaborationism of P.C. Joshi period.

Mid-term elections in Andhra

Congress government fell in Andhra in November, 1954. There were mid-term elections in 1955. In 1952 CPI got a thumping majority in the areas where it took up militant struggles especially peasant struggles. The results revealed that the strength of CPI really lies in the militant struggles it took up and in the peasantry. But in the leadership of the CPI, however, they raised illusions about parliamentary path. The whole practice of the party started to revolve around elections.

CPI completely ignored the changes that were coming in the class struggle and the strength of class forces. Completely engrossed in the parliamentary path, CPI thought it would definitely capture power in these elections. Congress staked everything to win these elections. A few days before the elections (January 26, 1955), *Pravda* published an article saying that both the external and internal policies of Nehru are progressive. Congress party printed hundreds of thousands of the copies of the article and distributed in Andhra. The strength of CPI fell from 48 in the 140 member assembly to 15 in 196. CPI was routed in the elections. In the name of analysing elections factional fights grew among the leadership at the central as well state level.

Crisis in the party

Contending that Nehru's foreign policy is progressive, in 1954, P.C. Joshi brought forward the argument that the national bourgeoisie (meaning the big bourgeoisie represented by the Congress) has split into progressive and reactionary sections and while the reactionary section is collaborating with feudalism and imperialism, the progressive section of it is opposing them. It couldn't get the majority then in the CC. On the occasion of Andhra elections the polit-bureau of the party split into two over this issue. Crisis set in the party. It will be a mistake if it is thought that those who were not recognising the existence of progressive section in the Congress and alli-

ance with it (CPM leaders in the later days) were interested in revolution. The discussion was in fact only about the strategy to be adopted in the elections. The factional feuds of central leadership of the party reached the level of crisis well before the Congress itself.

The CC's report to the Palghat Congress said this: *"Differences in the polit bureau have become quite acute. It has almost split into two. In the June meeting, the differences, instead of lessening, assumed more prominent form."*

*"In all, eight meetings of the Central Committee have been held since Madhurai. Except in the first.... The CC meetings have produced practically no results. CC has functioned not as the leader of the party but as a debating society where abstract theoretical issues are discussed."*¹²

Despite the wrangling party was driven towards lining behind Nehru. *"PB nevertheless made its contributions to.... bringing about more positive approach to the Nehru Government's foreign policy."*¹³

Palghat Congress

CPI held its Fourth Congress in Palghat in April 1956. Twentieth Congress of CPSU had been held before this congress. The Krushcevite revisionist theories of "Peaceful Transition", "Peaceful Co-existence", and "Peaceful Economic Competition" made the ideological ground ready for the CPI leadership to throw its "out dated" programme and tactical line into the dust bin.

*Palghat Congress recognised India as an independent country and the transfer of power as real independence.

*"The emergence of India as a sovereign and independent republic upholding the cause of peace and freedom is a factor of profound significance in the present day world."*¹⁴

* The big bourgeoisie as a whole (national bourgeoisie in CPI's terminology) considered as an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal force.

*"The basic conflict in Indian society is the conflict between imperialism and feudalism on the one hand and the entire Indian people, including the national bourgeoisie, on the other...."*¹⁴

* It recognised Indian Government as “*a bourgeois-landlord government in which the bourgeoisie is the leading force. Its policies are motivated by the **desire to develop India along independent capitalist lines**.... the government strives to weaken the position of British capital in our economy. It strives to curb feudal forms of exploitation, transforming feudal landlords into capitalist landlords and create a stratum of rich peasantry These aims and the measures resulting there from inevitably **bring the government into conflict with imperialism, with feudalism and sometimes with the narrow interests of sections of the bourgeoisie**....”¹⁶ (emphasis added)*

* It mentioned that the foreign policy followed by Nehru is genuine peace policy and should be supported and based on that a broad united front should be built.

“*The policy of peace is a genuine national policy, an anti-imperialist policy which continues and carries forward the tradition of our freedom movement. Hence it is that the struggle for such a policy provides the basis for broad unity embracing every class and every section of our people that desires to strengthen India’s world prestige and consolidate her freedom.*”¹⁷

* Despite recognising Congress’s adoption of socialism as its goal “*as an attempt by bourgeoisie to camouflage the real character of its policies,*”¹⁸ it described it as a revolutionary act.

“*The very declaration of socialism as a goal acts as a radicalising force. It strengthens the leftward swing among Congressmen, Congress masses and people in general, gives impetus to the demand for radical reforms.*”¹⁸

* The resolutions of 20th congress of CPSU were endorsed. It found that the peaceful transition is possible in India too.

“*The 20th congress of the CPSU is a landmark in the history of the international communist movement. On the basis of mighty victories it showed the way to still greater victories. Eschewing all dogmatism and doctrinarism, it tackled the current problems in a bold way, creatively developing Marxism-Leninism.*”¹⁹

“*The thesis of peaceful transition to socialism is a big weapon in our hands. It enables us to heal the split in the socialist movement.*”²⁰

“...this is a possibility not merely for France and England but which is there even in a country like India or Indonesia. In these countries, in certain circumstances, the transition to the first stage of people’s democracy may also be effected in a peaceful way – without civil war.”²¹

“A sustained struggle for extension of democracy will have to be carried on. On our success in this struggle will depend the possibility of peaceful transition.”²²

In this Congress and after it Rajeshwar Rao, P.C. Joshi, Bhavani Sen and others (later day CPI leadership) were in minority. Sundarayya, Ranadive and others (later day CPM leadership) were in majority with the help of Ajay Ghosh (“centrist”). The alternative political resolution moved by Rajeshwar Rao and others was defeated. Their resolution said this: *“The tactics of building an anti-Congress democratic front are outdated and they should be abandoned. Because following such tactics leads to the division among the people to become permanent and then limits the party’s role of unifying people.”²³* Their opinion was to participate in the government along with the Congress. To say it in brief, all the difference between the leftist and rightist sections was whether to form a united front with the Congress or not.

In fact in the Palghat Congress, all the leftist, rightist and centrist groups arrived at a consensus on basic political issues. There was almost unanimity of opinion on all the important issues such as 1) Independence of India, 2) Nature of bourgeoisie, 3) Foreign policy of Nehru, 4) Planned economic development and development of industry in public sector, 5) Decisions of 20th Congress of CPSU, etc. The only major difference of opinion was whether to have united front – electoral alliance and participation in Government with the Congress and what type of it, if there is to be one? That means there was in fact a very strong (revisionist) political unity was established in the leadership. But the party moved swiftly towards a split after the Congress and by 1960, it was on the brink of it.

The developments like the division in the international communist movement, Indo-China border dispute aided in smearing political colour to the split when it formally took place in 1964. Organisational degeneration which was the other side of the political degeneration of CPI was the main reason for the split.

The liquidationist attacks of Ajay Ghosh, P.C.Joshi, Dange and others and PHQ made against Telangana armed struggle and Andhra Thesis themselves reflect the organisational degeneration that set in CPI. After the betrayal to Telangana armed struggle, in the process of CPI's political degeneration into revisionism the organisational degeneration too reached to its peak.

The report, **Organisational Methods and Practices of Party Centre**, submitted by Ajay Ghosh to the Palghat Congress reveals to some extent the organisational crisis the party was facing then.

* *“The differences that had appeared in the September and November meetings of the CC took clearer and sharper forms. What is worse, these differences made those who held particular views look upon those who differed from them as people who should be “fought” and “defeated.”*

* *“An intense political struggle between the supporters of the Resolution and its opponents (the latter themselves divided into two categories—those from the ‘left’ and from the ‘right’) became the main feature of inner-party life from top to bottom. Even the current activity of the Party came to a standstill in most of the provinces.”*

* *“.....the appearance of inner-party differences and the necessity for resolving these differences enhance, rather than reducing, the importance of the strict observance of correct organisational methods. Yet it was this basic truth that was missed by the Party leadership the moment differences started appearing.”*

* *“.....the whole range of Party policy on all aspects of its activity (even many of those on which there are no differences at all) was thrown open for discussion. Furthermore, the points of controversy, and even points of agreement were couched in such terms that the majority of Party members (particularly working class and peasant comrades) could not actually participate in these discussions, not because these comrades are “intellectually ill-equipped” to do so, but because discussions did not centre around vital problems of the mass movement but around certain abstract generalisations.”*

* *“Except the T.U. Sub-Committee, the other committees did not function.an attitude of liberalism prevailed in relation to each member of*

the P.B. and his work.At no time did the PB criticise any of its members for his failures and mistakes.”

* *“....there were occasions when, for several days together, there was no PB member at all at the Centre. Furthermore, even when more PBMs were there, they did not function as a collective team, but individually....it happens that the other PBMs concerned and they, therefore, give views and suggestions contrary to what has been given by him.”*

* *“this crisis has reached such a state that there is no Party Centre worth the name today. The Central Party organs (weekly and monthly), the publication and sale of pamphlets and other literature, the activities of the comrades working in the all-India mass organisations and even the organisation of the work of the comrades working in the Centre—all this remains unattended to. This is breeding a sense of frustration and cynicism.*

“Nor is it much better in the provinces where too collective leadership is not developing. Sense of frustration and inactivity are growing. Sense of discipline is loosening, decisions of Party Committees remaining unimplemented. Irresponsible talk is going on a big scale and prestige of the Party is going down.”²⁴

1957 Elections - Victory in Kerala:

CPI won in Kerala in the Assembly elections of 1957. CPI thought this victory proved the correctness of the resolutions of CPSU in its 20th Congress, which were accepted by CPI. This election victory was also very useful to CPSU. It opined that this was a practical victory to the peaceful transition it was advocating. Leftist section of CPI interpreted this as the success of their anti-Congress election strategy. Rightists however insisted that the progressive aspect of the Congress has to be recognised. It criticized the sectarian attitude of the leftists. This rightist estimation of Congress is directly descended from CPSU. It should however be noted that even the so called leftist section too accepted the 20th Congress resolutions of CPSU.

With victory in Kerala elections the leadership started dreaming about the easy road leading to power at center too. Ajay Ghosh himself admitted about the wide spread illusions: *“After the victory in Kerala the view that dethroning the Congress next in West Bengal and Andhra and then gradu-*

ally and without any hitch achieving the power is strengthening. Even though this is not expressed by any one in clear terms in practice we are viewing the theory as believing.”²⁵

Amritsar Congress

Fifth Congress of CPI was held in March-April 1958 in Amritsar. Leadership said that this extraordinary congress was called not for taking decisions on political policies but mainly to discuss organisational matters. Secretary's report mentioned the membership to be 2,30,000. While 67 per cent of the delegates came from classes other than working class and peasantry (middle class, landlords, and small business men) 72 per cent had college education and 78 per cent were over 45 years old.

By the time of Palghat Congress all the political issues of revolutionary significance were resolved. On very important issues like the nature of ruling classes, the class nature of Nehru government, decisions of 20th Congress of CPSU etc. almost all the leadership reached more or less revisionist understanding. But the differences in the leadership imbued with factionalism did not subside. On the one issue of whether to have united front with the Congress or not and whether to aim the principal attack (in elections) at Congress or on the rightist reactionary section of it, the squabbles of leadership continued.

Since the July meeting of the CC, the rightist section revoked its argument that since the influence of the rightist reactionary forces is growing CPI should target its attack on them. Modesta Rubinstein wrote an article "A Non-capitalist Path for Under Developed Countries" (New Times, 5 July and 2 August, 1956). Praising Aavadi resolution he confirmed that though it may take a long time, India will nevertheless reach socialism through the policies of Nehru's government. With the help of this article rightist section again brought forward its argument of "National United Government"(along with Congress). Even in Amritsar congress this argument of National United Government of the rightist section could not obtain majority. While recognising the fact that though Congress got weakened in the previous elections, rightist forces strengthened but not CPI, both the sides continued their old arguments only. Both the sides were not prepared to recognise that the people, who were disgusted with the policies of Congress, were inclining towards rights with no other way left because of the

class collaborationist policies of CPI.

It was before this congress that the argument that the Kerala elections were a proof for the opportunities for peaceful transition. This argument faced some opposition as well, but serious discussion did not take place. The left too, who later as CPM accused CPI revisionist because of its adherence to peaceful transition, did not took up the issue. The report of the congress mentioned that disinterest has grown in the party on fundamental ideological discussions.

This Congress adopted a new constitution. CC number was increased to 101 (never previously the number rose beyond 38), and PB to 25 (which was earlier only 9). A secretariat was newly introduced. In this, apart from the General Secretary there could be 5 to 7 members. The size of the state and district committees was also increased this way.

This constitution changed the names of various organisational bodies, Cell was changed to Branch, CC as National Council, and the PB as Central Executive Committee (CEC).

It was stated that the aim of these changes is to build a mass party and to revitalize the organisation. But the political and organisational rot was so deep that these maneuvers had virtually no effect on the paralysed organisation.

This constitution by declaring that CPI would “*try for complete democracy and socialism through peaceful methods*” further consolidated the right ward drift.

Between Amritsar and Vijayawada Congresses

After Amritsar Congress, the factional feuds of the leadership intensified. During the same period, the differences between CPSU and CPC and the Indo-China border dispute also aggravated. These however did not turn into important matters of dispute. Even at the Sixth Congress too they were not became important issues of contention.

Dismissal of the Left Front government in Kerala

When CPI is seeing progressiveness in both external and internal policies of Nehru, he however not let the attack he continued since the end of

war slackened. His government plotted to dethrone the Left Front government from its inception. The Congress party started agitating against the education bill and land reform bill. A “liberation struggle” was initiated. Communal feelings were aroused. Law and order problem was created. Nehru government dismissed the Left Front Kerala government on 31, July 1959. The beacon of peaceful transition thus trampled by non other than the Nehru government behind which the CPI leadership is lining. Naturally the leadership was aghast with this development.

“Believing on our part that our bourgeoisie brought up under Gandhian traditions do have some exceptional values is not rare. There is no need to surprise when it was for the first time dismissed the Kerala government we were shocked.”²⁶

This blatant undemocratic act would have led to a basic retrospection in the leadership regarding the parliamentary path and peaceful transition it was following and its assessment on Nehru government and Indian big bourgeoisie. It was not happened. The leadership factions which were deep in the mire of opportunism and dogmatism however fit the Kerala developments into their own moulds of subjective political formulations. The right wing held Indira Gandhi and the reactionary forces growing both inside and outside the Congress responsible for the dismissal and came to the conclusion that the need for strongly uniting with Nehru. Whereas the left wing used this dismissal to defend its position that rightist forces are gaining dominance over Nehru. Both factions however not realised that it was revealing the bankruptcy of parliamentary path and peaceful transition.

In 1960 Khrushchev visited India and praised both external and internal policies of Nehru as progressive. In the Kerala mid term elections CPI met with defeat in Kerala.

The factional feuds continued and aggravated. Ajay Ghosh admitted it this way: In CPI *“a united political understanding is absent today..... Ideologically and politically speaking, we are living from hand to mouth.... Evading basic questions... The result is drift, absence of direction and chaos.... During last 12 years our assessment of the situations has many a time proved faulty and events have developed differently from what we anticipated.”²⁷*

In March 1960 Secretariate tried to prepare Political Resolution. Two drafts were presented for discussion.

- I. Draft of the Left proposed by Ranadive and Basava Punnaiah: 1) The Second Five-year plan was in crisis; 2) Vested interests were transferring the burden of economic crisis to the people; 3) Congress and Nehru had begun to compromise more and more with the rightists and American capital; 4) The external policy is tilting towards the imperialism. They suggested building a strong party as an alternative to Congress.
- II. The draft proposed by Dange and Ajay Ghosh: 1) Plans are not in crisis and both Indian economy and world economy are developing. 2) Foreign economic aid should be understood keeping in view of the national economic development. 3) Even the Soviet economic aid too coming. (“Why are you bothering about the entry of dollars, see rubles are also coming,” said Dange.)

Secretariat failed to present a single draft in the CEC meeting in April. Ranadive gave a call for left unity to oppose the growing rightist danger. Dange gave a call for united front uniting all the forces (including Congress). Ajay Ghosh presented another document as a compromise document to both these drafts. Ajay Ghosh formulated this based on economic analysis of Dange and political analysis of Ranadive. It was passed with certain amendments by the leftist section. (Later this was decried by the rightist as the conspiracy of leftist section)

This document which was passed by CEC was not introduced by Ajay Ghosh in the National Council meeting of May (Dange pressurised not to). There was a stalemate as both the sides were determined to clinch the issue. The meeting decided to set these two drafts aside and formulate another draft. Two commissions were appointed to formulate documents for sixth congress.

Moscow Declaration: In November 1960, there was a meeting of communist parties of 80 countries. Moscow declaration came out. National council endorsed this declaration. In this declaration, a concept of **National Democratic State** was introduced with the pressure from CPSU as a form during the process of transformation of backward countries into

socialism. It was proposed to extend economic and political help especially to the countries in the peace zone bourgeoisie of which were adopting non-alignment policy and are playing a progressive role. CPC had been opposing this concept of **National Democratic State** from the beginning. Because it was a compromise declaration CPC had to endorse it, but clarified that bourgeoisie in a country like India was not progressive and therefore help need not be expended to it.

In the opinion of Mohit Sen, this concept of **National Democratic State**, was the creation of CPI itself which it was evolving from Palghat Congress.

The rightist section in CPI brought forward its old arguments with the help of the concept of National Democratic State. The left section gave a call to build **National Democratic Front** in which proletariat will have a main role for Peoples **Democracy**.

On the whole, the rightist section in National Council could muster majority for both of its drafts – programme and political resolution. It was decided, however that documents of both the sides should be taken to the lowest level in the party for discussions.

Vijayawada Congress

Sixth congress was held at Vijayawada between 9 and 16 April, 1961. In this congress, CPSU CC secretary Michail Suslov played an active role. He interfered in the congress on behalf of rightist faction. Even then there was no unanimity of opinion on the documents. Severe differences arose even on the formation of National Council. Both the sides did many maneuvers to grab the leadership. Every body felt that split was inevitable. But, no body was ready for the split then. Finally split was temporarily stalled by not passing any documents and postponing political issues. Congress could make a resolution only regarding tactics to be adopted in the coming elections.

National Council elected CEC and secretariat. But Sundarayya, Jyothi Basu and Harikishan Singh Surjeet did not join them. The temporary truce achieved through compromise at Vijayawada congress did not last long. Tensions built up in the Indo-China border in the last month of 1961. Clashes

started taking place. This dispute turned into a month long war in October-November 1962. After beating back the attack of India on China, Chinese army withdrew to the place up to where they were claiming it as their territory. From the end of 1961 this border dispute also became an issue in the internal struggle of CPI.

Indo-China Border Dispute

The border dispute between India and China led to war in October-November 1962. As the maps were prepared by imperialists and as the land in dispute was a land without people this border dispute should have been settled by both the countries through discussions with a give and take approach. Nehru first raised the issue in 1954.

At the beginning of 1950s Nehru gave importance to friendship with socialist countries. The two interests of eroding the influence of communists in the country and earning a strong place in the bargain with imperialists formed the basis of Nehru's external policy. Nehru signed on *Panchsheel* agreement along with Chou-En-Lai in 1954. He gave special importance to friendship with China.

However, by the end of the 50s, Nehru's attitude towards China completely changed. The change of Soviet Union into a revisionist country was the main reason for this. Soviet revisionist leadership gave a lot of importance to friendly relationship with Indian ruling classes both economically as well as strategically. Especially as CPC started taking a strong attitude against modern revisionism Soviet Union tried to use this border dispute against China and tried to foster strong relations with Indian ruling classes. Though its first aim was not fulfilled much extent, the second one was. The foundations for the friendship of Indian ruling classes with Soviet Social imperialism was laid during this period only.

CPI failed to condemn the conspiracies hatched by Indian ruling classes in collusion with imperialism on China which remained as the leader of revolutionary forces in the socialist camp that faced the sabotage of Khrushchev's revisionism. It tried to adopt ambiguous approach. It tried to balance both proletarian internationalism and its loyalty towards Nehru. Ultimately it took an utter jingoistic stand and shamelessly supported Nehru's

aggression. It joined the chorus of Nehru saying China indulged in aggression.

Nehru government openly supported the reactionary Lama revolt in Tibet. It allowed Lamas to continue their activities making Kalimpong in the borders the centre of their activities. China naturally objected to this. China condemned India's interference in its internal affairs in violation of *Panchsheela* agreement. Lama revolt was curbed in April 1959. Indian government gave political asylum to Dalai Lama. With this the relations between two countries further deteriorated.

CPI opined that it was wrong on the part of India to have interfered in China's internal affairs. It said, it was unfortunate that Nehru did not realise this policy as violating *Panchsheela* agreement. But it expressed happiness over the fact that Nehru was resisting imperialism's efforts to change India's foreign policy. (This was how the CPI's analysis was during a time when Nehru was participating in imperialist conspiracies against socialist China!) CPI opined that reactionaries are trying to create differences between the two countries and that Nehru's external policy had to be defended.

CEC resolution of September 1960 stated this: "*The first breach of India-China friendship was created in the attitude and acts of the Indian government towards the counter-revolutionary uprising in Tibet and aid given to Dalai Lama to conduct the anti-China campaign in India.*"²⁸

CPI mentioned that India does not have any ambition over Tibet but unintentionally became a play in the imperialist conspiracy. But it objected to the use of words like 'expansionist' towards India by China.

Soviet Russia also initially adopted same attitude. Moscow Radio announced thrice during March-April 1959 that Kalimpong was being used as a centre for Lama rebellion. CPI's CEC meeting of March 1959 also mentioned similarly. By then CPI had endorsed CPSU's 20th congress decisions. Ajay Ghosh and other rightist leaders maintained close relations with Moscow. Ajay Ghosh knew the depths of political and ideological differences between CPSU and CPC. By that time CPSU was getting ready to make CPI a scape goat for the sake of friendship with Indian ruling classes. The rightist section in CPI was eager to forge united front with Nehru. Therefore Ajay Ghosh and others naturally adopted the policy of blindly following

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Moscow. From May 1960 onwards, Soviet Union started to take a 'neutral' stand on Indo-China border dispute and clubbed together both fraternal socialist China and India which was preparing for aggression with prodding from imperialists. It stopped mentioning about Kalimpong. CPI revoked its resolution that Kalimpong was being used as a centre of revolt and resolved quite opposite way in its CEC meeting of May.

Meanwhile, Kerala government was dismissed in July 1959. Soon after that Soviet Union granted India a loan of 350 million rubles (3,000 million rupees). CPI was caught in a piquant situation.

After Kerala government's dismissal CPI feared that government could begin a severe onslaught on it. It feared that if Indo-China dispute worsened then the attack on CPI would be intensified. It appealed to China to have restraint. Even though Nehru was making statements against China, it appealed to see difference between Nehru and other reactionaries in India and that there should be discussions between Chou-En-Lai and Nehru. CPI wrote the following in its August letter to CPC:

*"The campaign against China which is steadily gathering strength is a campaign against India's foreign policy, against Indo-China friendship, and also against the Communist Party of India. Continuation and accentuation of the present differences would gravely endanger India's foreign policy, help the right wing to take India towards America and would also help the drive against the Communist Party of India."*²⁹

Longju incident occurred on 8 September. This incident occurred due to provocation of Indian army. CPI was terrified about its prospects if Indo-China war broke-out. It urged for Moscow's help. Tass news agency expressed regrets at Longju incident. It indirectly indicated that it is remaining neutral in the conflict between the two countries. The clubbing together thus of both China and India gave a lot of strength to Nehru.

Ajay Ghosh supported the statement of Tass to be absolutely correct. He announced once again that neither India nor China had any intention of aggression.

On 30th September, Khrushchev criticized that China is testing the stability of Capitalism by use of force. He said that China's attitude was an obstinate one with regard to Taiwan and Sino-Indian border issues. He

declared that India has no intention of aggression.

“...one cannot possibly seriously think that a State such as India, which is militarily and economically immeasurably weaker than China, would really launch a military attack on China and commit aggression against it”; that China’s handling of the question was “an expression of narrow nationalist attitude”;

“I know what war is. Since Indians were killed, this meant China attacked India. ... We are communists. For us it is not important where the frontier runs.”³⁰

Different Opinions in CPI: Till Longju incident there were no considerable differences in CPI regarding border dispute. But after Longju incident the rightist section criticized that August resolution did not clearly mention who the aggressor was. Dange, Ahmed and A.K. Gopalan thought of adopting “nationalist” stand. They opined that patriotic readiness should be expressed to counter any aggression and that China should be openly criticised even if softly. V. Ram Murthy, A.K. Gopalan and Namboodripad openly announced that any aggression should be fought against. Both the rightist and leftist factions adopted national chauvinist attitude in essence.

Meanwhile on 21st October, there was fighting between both the armies at Kang-ka pass (East Ladakh). There were casualties on both the sides. Secretariat described this incident as ‘unjustified’. It expressed its “dissent and anger”. It completely believed statements of Nehru government. It didn’t even try to listen to what the other side was saying.

Khrushchev openly expressed his sympathies with Indian government by saying that China was acting without give and take approach. On the basis of Khrushchev’s statements CPI leadership became ready to announce outright support to Nehru. Khrushchev lambasted CPC in Bucharest and Moscow meetings of 81 parties about the ideological struggle it was waging against him. He tried to show China as a war-monger.

Ajay Ghosh gave a statement in November 1961 severely criticizing China. There was not much debate at the Vijayawada Congress on the border dispute.

Differences grew in the secretariat about border dispute. Ahmed, Yogendra Sharma and Govindan Nair argued that Chinese violated the Mc

Mahon line and resorted to aggression and insisted on making a resolution to this effect. Bhupesh Gupta, Jyoti Basu, Sundarayya and Harikishan Singh Surjeet felt that China will not resort to aggression. They demanded that action should be taken against Ahmed for openly giving an interview that China was wrong. This was opposed by Dange, Yogendra Sharma, M.N. Govindan Nair and Ahmed. E.M.S. took a neutral stand. Dange gave a public statement that minority are supporters of China.

The National council which met in Hyderabad in August 1962 announced its support to the efforts of the government for resolving the issue peacefully through negotiations even while taking adequate steps for the defense of borders. In reality Nehru did not try to solve the issue through negotiations. He was preparing for aggression against China with the prodding of imperialists on the one hand and the support of Soviet revisionists on the other. In October 1962, before India resorted to aggression Soviet Union asserted that Nehru's army was preparing for aggression. It even announced that it wouldn't remain neutral but support socialist China if there is aggression.

Every body interpreted the compromise resolution in one's own way and gave statements. Dange stated that minority in secretariat is supporting China. He interpreted the resolution of secretariat as urging to throw Chinese army outside the Mc Mahon line.

Indian army resorted to aggression on China on October 20. War started. National council met in November and there was complete unity in the National council in giving a call for national defense.

Leftist section insisted only on issues like stopping malicious campaign against China, that unconditional talks should be held and that external military aid should be rejected. Council passed the resolution of rightist faction: **Unite to Defend Our Motherland Against China's Open Aggression.**

CPI pledged to unite all the patriotic forces in this national emergency situation by saying that CPI could never imagine that China will "*make astounding claims against a country which is engaged in peaceful consolidation of its newly won independence, which belongs to the peace camp, which follows a foreign policy of non-alignment.*"³¹

It further said that "*the Communist Party of India is not opposed to*

*buying arms from any country on a commercial basis. But it is opposed to the import of foreign personnel to man the defenses of the country.”*³¹

Three members of leftist section resigned alleging that the discussions of meetings of secretariat are being leaked in a systematic manner. General Secretary and Bhupesh Gupta also resigned, but withdrew on the urging of majority members.

Chinese army taught a lesson to Nehru’s military which resorted to aggression and withdrew themselves. On this occasion Khrushchev indirectly indicated that China resorted to aggression:

*“...it was good that China had unilaterally ordered a ceasefire and withdrawn its troops, but would it not have been better if the Chinese had not advanced from their original positions?”*³²

During the war, Dange clique rallied the whole party behind Nehru. It intensified its efforts to bring the whole party structure into its grip. Thus in 1962, Indo-China border dispute also turned into an issue of difference between the leadership factions of CPI.

Great Debate - CPI

The CPI leadership which was completely immersed in factional fights did not concentrate on the discussion that was going on in international communist movement on the most basic issues. The rightist section completely collaborated with CPSU and acted as its agent. Even the leftists (CPM leadership) who were later termed “supporters of Chinese path”, “adventurists” and “Peking agents” too did not care about this discussion initially. One or two like Sundarayya expressed doubts about Khrushchev but did not give a deep thought to the revisionist formulations of Khrushchev and did not take a clear stand. They did not initiate discussion on the decisions of 20th congress. Leftists did not raise much discussion on “Peaceful Transition” either. Among all the differences which paralysed the party, Khrushchev revisionism was never an issue.

CPSU tried to blackmail CPC by refusing nuclear technology to China, abrogating military agreements, calling back technical experts from China and such other acts. But CPI viewed all these actions as bilateral issues between the two countries. CPC which was patiently carrying out interna-

tional debate opened ideological debate on Khrushchev revisionism publicly for the first time in April 1960. It published an article **Long Live Leninism** in Red Flag. Realising that the blackmail tactics he has been following are futile Khrushchev resorted to open indiscriminate attacks. In June 1960 in the meeting of communist parties at Bucharest on the occasion of Rumanian party congress Khrushchev attacked saying China is “*inciting third world war*” and that it is adopting a “*gross chauvinist attitude*” over the Sino-Indian border dispute. Bhupesh Gupta and Basava Punniiah attended this meeting as Indian representatives. After their return to India, discussions for the first time started in CPI about CPSU-CPC differences. (Ajay Ghosh and Dange knew about the differences long before. It was said that they did not want to bring Moscow-Peking relation in their fight with their “adventurist” comrades and decided to fight on national policy itself.)

In the CEC discussions, Ajay Ghosh completely supported Khrushchev. Ranadive opined that CPI should not indulge itself in Moscow Peking disputes. Sundarayya said that Khrushchev should not be believed at all. Namboodripad saw logic in both the arguments!

CEC passed a draft resolution **On Certain Ideological Questions Affecting the Unity of the International Communist Movement** in September 1960. This was drafted by Ajay Ghosh. Minority draft by leftists was introduced by Basava Punniiah and Bhupesh Gupta. Sundarayya, Jyothi Basu and Harikishan Singh Surjeet supported it. This draft of the leftist section could not take a clear and unambiguous stand. Ajay Ghosh’s draft was passed as majority document. It obtained 14 votes and the alternate one got 5 votes. Three abstained from voting. V. Rammurthy, Namboodripad who were leftists till then and Joshi also supported the majority draft. This draft resolution announced its complete support to CPSU and it severely criticised CPC. Especially on Indo-China border dispute it completely stood behind Nehru. However, it did not make its criticism on CPC public. This resolution completely supported Soviet arguments on all issues like war, peaceful transition, national liberation movements etc.

This resolution was rejected by West Bengal state committee. Punjab took a neutral stand. The leftist section in Bihar tried to defeat this resolution but failed.

The stand that was to be taken by CPI in the world conference of

communist parties that was due in November 1960 was decided by CEC itself through majority. Later, National Council accepted the declaration of 81 parties.

There was not much debate about CPSU-CPC difference even at Vijayawada Congress. 22nd Congress of CPSU was held in November 1961. In this congress Khrushchev intensified his attack on Marxism Leninism. He heinously attacked Albanian Communist party. (That party was not invited to the congress, at all.) A lowly attack was launched on Stalin. There was severe resentment in the CPI cadre when Stalin was attacked in 1956 itself. Ajay Ghosh had to express disagreement on the renewed attack on Stalin, keeping in view the affection and respect the party cadres had on Stalin.

By the time party delegation returned from Moscow, there was wide spread dissent in the party on the stand of 22nd Congress of CPSU. Ajay Ghosh cleverly did not clash with leftist section over this issue. He could stave off the issue for the present by saying that though he is personally endorsing the CPSU stand, this has to be put up for discussion in the National Council.

The Split

By the end of 1961, tensions grew in the Indo-China borders. CPSU clearly started supporting CPI. Based on Indo-China border clashes Ajay Ghosh attacked China. Ajay Ghosh died in January 1962. Election of general secretary became a tough job due to factional fights. As a compromise, party constitution was amended and Dange was elected Chairman and EMS, the secretary.

CPSU initially announced that it is taking a neutral stand on the Indo-China war of October-November 1962. (China government informed Russia in October that Indian army was making preparations for aggression and Soviet officials agreed that what China was telling was a fact.) CPI announced China as the aggressor. CPSU also announced that China resorted to aggression. In the later period it also gave military aid to India. CPI took a national chauvinist stand during the war. The leftist section in CPI also completely supported “national defense”. During a time when anti-

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China sentiment was aroused, the rightist section in CPI under Dange's leadership resorted to decisive attack on the leftist faction. They openly announced who among the National Council members were "China supporters". All those who didn't join their faction were branded adventurers or China followers. Nehru government jailed all the "China supporters" in CPI in 1963, after the war ended. Even in the states, all the opponents of Dange clique were imprisoned. Communist parties of other countries urged that they should be released. Dange clique however made no such demand. They didn't even demand lifting of emergency. Dange declined to demand their release saying that "*heavens don't fall if these leaders remained in jails.*"

Using anti-Chinese national chauvinism, government tried to strike at all those who were opposing CPI to be made a tail of Nehru. Nehru who was observing the setting in of economic crisis in the country and the losing of faith by the people in Congress tried to completely root out proletarian party during the coming period of intensive economic and political crisis. Nehru government carried out the attacks on leftist leadership and militant sections in the CPI with the help of Dange clique. Nearly 1000 communists were jailed throughout the country. CPSU and Dange clique intensified their efforts to split CPI. All the leaders who formed CPM later are regarded as those who sided with China in the great debate. But it should be remembered that this leadership in fact never fought against the CPSU revisionism. They criticised CPSU only on certain issues like attack on Stalin. This stamp of "China followers" rubbed on them was useful for them in another way.

The sincere communist cadre who were vexed with the opportunist parliamentary policies of CPI and were looking for revolutionary line rallied around this leftist leadership. Many of the revolutionaries who in the later period formed CPI ML rallied around these leaders.

Dange clique tried in all heinous ways to grab the whole party organisation into its fold while all the leftist leadership was in jails. It dissolved and formed state committees at its will and raised agitations seeking disciplinary action on leftist leaders. It prepared the stage to expel the left section which was an obstacle all the while to convert the whole party into a tail of Nehru. The CPSU which prevented the split at Vijayawada con-

gress thought this to be the right moment for split.

Leftist section was not in a position to withstand all the fast changing developments since 1962. In reality, Leftist clique didn't have a clear unanimous political perspective. They have differences among themselves. The leftist leaders who came out of jails at the end of 1963 thought that the split at this moment will adversely affect them and therefore tried for unity. They reiterated time and again that they are for unity, provided their organisational positions were restored, without spell a word about "political differences". However, CPSU and Dange Clique had already prepared the stage for the split. Dange clique did not at all agree to unity. With the result CPI split into two in 1964. It is to be noted that CPSU, Dange Clique and Nehru government worked in co-ordination between 1962 and 64 to split CPI.

Brief Summary

The history of CPI after the withdrawal of Telangana armed struggle is the history of the degeneration of the party from the position of the leader of Indian proletariat and oppressed masses of India to a revisionist party.

Nehru without letting stop his incessant attacks on communists at home continued his socialist rhetoric. With his policies of mixed economy and planned economic development he succeeded in creating illusions about his government. Even Congress declared socialism as its goal. While actively serving the interest of imperialism he succeeded in getting an image of an anti-imperialist. He propagated that his friendship with socialist countries was vindicating his domestic policies were correct. In CPI's right ward slide and ultimate drift into revisionism Nehru's deceptive domestic and external policies too played a role.

In this period the party leadership tried to find progressive nature in the externals and internal policies of Nehru government. In the name of supporting the progressive policies of it the leadership strived to achieve class collaborationist alliance. The leadership that degenerated into revisionism quarrelled over the assessment of the progressiveness in the ex-

ternal and internal policies of Nehru. To the leadership that mired in the parliamentarism, whether to support and enter into alliance with Congress in elections or not became the sole principal issue in the endless squabbles of left and right cliques in the party.

In Palghat congress the leadership was able to get rid of the remnants of the revolutionary aspects such as transfer of power, class nature of Nehru, etc. The congress recognised independence as a real one and characterised the Indian government and its leader the big bourgeoisie as that of aspiring for independent capitalist development that will make it stand against imperialism. Thus it found progressive nature in the government's domestic policies too. Paradoxically when the leadership achieved unity of thought, rather a revisionist one of course, achieved on all basic issues concerning Indian revolution, the factional fight among leadership reached its altar in guise of political battle on the issue of alliance with Congress in elections and participating in government with it. Entire party organisation paralysed and organisational crisis engulfed the party.

It was in this period Nehru government most undemocratically dismissed Kerala government. It, rather than leading to the retrospection on the part of leadership that was engrossed in the parliamentarism neck deep, but led to drift to far more right fearing more sever attacks from Nehru. By the time of Vijayawada Congress party was on the brink of split.

After Khrushchev came to power the revisionist CPSU allied with the rightist clique in CPI. It greatly valued the friendship of the ruling classes of India to its self interests. It venomously attacked CPC which was then spearheading the struggle against the Khrushchevite revisionism. However the Great Debate did not make significant impact on the squabbling factions of the leadership of CPI. Even the so called China followers of the later day – CPIM leaders too neither bothered much about the Khrushchevite revisionism nor took up any serious debate.

In the same period Indo-China border dispute came to the fore. As a part of the imperialist strategy on encircling socialist China, Nehru took

an aggressive stand towards China. Despite India's aggression on China the rightist Clique in CPI attacked China saying it as the aggressor. Even among the so called left too most of them gave up proletarian internationalism and joined the band wagon of national chauvinism.

After the aggression on China, Nehru launched an anti-communist campaign in the context of increasing economic crisis and disillusionment of people. Even though the left clique was not in any way different from that of the right, it opposed alliance with and support to Congress in elections which the right eagerly wanted to do. So Nehru targeted this left and imprisoned most of its leaders. When the left leaders were imprisoned the rightist clique geared up its disruptive activities to seize entire party mechanism. With the active support of revisionist CPSU it headed towards throwing away the left out. The left clique frantically tried for 'unity.' It only asked for the restoration of its organisational positions without mentioning the political differences. The right then well in the saddle did not want to miss the opportunity it was waiting for a long time and not relented to. The party split into two in 1964 when CPIM was formed. Even though Great Debate and Indo-China border dispute and war too entered into the factional feud of the right and left cliques of the leadership in the last phase, they never played a decisive role.

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Neo-revisionism Unmasked

Charu Mazumdar, Susheetal Roy Choudhary, and Saroj Dutta and others supported Chinese line in the great debate. They took a clear stand that India was the aggressor in the Sino-Indian war. By 1963 they were acting as a left political grouping. When the party split they were also in CPI(M). Similarly most of the revolutionary forces in CPI throughout the country rallied with it. Though the top leadership of CPI(M) was revisionist leadership, the formation of CPI(M) helped communist revolutionaries of India to rally against national and international revisionism. The internal struggle within the CPI which then became basically a struggle between two opportunist cliques ended with the formation of CPI(M). It was turning into a revolutionary struggle between two lines over basic national and international issues.

Therefore right from the inception of CPI(M) the main problem that confronted the revisionist leadership was the revolutionary section which formed a very important section within the party which it was leading. Even though the revolutionaries were not an organised force they became headache everywhere to the CPI(M) revisionist leadership.

After the split while the party organisation and machinery went to CPI, CPI(M) retained most of the militant cadre and revolutionary leadership at the lower level. Hence in the initial days, CPI(M) leadership initially had to pretend to be revolutionary. It repeatedly proclaimed that the path of CPI was parliamentary path and its own as revolutionary path. While postponing discussion on Great Debate on the one hand, it tried to appear to be recognising the revolutionary role CPC was playing in the internationalist movement. At the same time, it led the party as a whole to parliamentary path. It completely immersed in the election struggle in competition with CPI. Revolutionary platitudes, evading basic political and ideological issues, limiting all its practice to elections and diffusing class struggle was the tactic adopted by the CPI(M) leadership in the initial days.

Tenali Convention

The leftist leaders who came out from CPI soon held a convention of CPI in Tenali in A.P. Draft programme prepared by Basava Punnaiah before the split itself was introduced in the convention. But no document was prepared on the Great Debate that was going on in the international communist movement. This so called leftist section, which had unity only in the factional fights of leadership, did not have an unanimous opinion about the Great Debate. It only remained a mixture of various different opinions. Moreover the top leadership did not have the guts to clarify its position openly. In fact they didn't have unity of opinion on programme also. Therefore, convention decided that draft programme was only a document for discussion. Especially keeping in view the increasing dissatisfaction in the party cadres after the 22nd congress of CPSU over Soviet and CPI revisionism and the growing pressure to adopt revolutionary line, CPI(M) leadership deferred the discussion on Great Debate. CPI(M) decided to keep silent on the Great Debate which had turned into a world wide struggle against modern revisionism. Though they postponed the political and ideological issues, as they were already famous as "China followers" revolutionary cadres and lower level leaders of CPI naturally rallied around CPI(M) in a big way. To retain moderate leaders like Namboodiripad and Jyoti Basu too behind them the leadership considered evading the political and ideological issues the best way. Tenali convention gave a call for Congress.

Calcutta Congress [CPI(M)]

Seventh Congress was held in Calcutta during October-November 1964. (CPI also tried to hold congress in a hurry. It even thought about changing the name of the party! CPI held its Seventh Congress during December 12-13, 1964 at Bombay).

Congress adopted the new programme (introduced in the Tenali convention.)

* Indian government is bourgeoisie, and landlord government under the leadership of big bourgeoisie. (It is neither national bourgeoisie as was being told by CPSU and CPI; nor comprador bourgeoisie as assessed by CPC and revolutionaries).

* The economic planning in India is working with the motive of profit

and being subservient to foreign exploiters. (CPI opines that planned economic development is consolidating the independence of the country.)

* India's external policy is exhibiting opposition to imperialism on the one hand and friendship on the other. (According to CPI it mainly comprises of peace, non-alignment, and opposition to colonialism).

* It did not mention China as the aggressor. Neither did it mention India as aggressor, but, opined that the border dispute that led to Sino-Indian war helped in the further shift of Indian government's non-alignment policy in favour of U.S. (CPI opined that even in a crisis period of facing China's aggression, India's non-alignment policy remained unperturbed.)

* Formation of **Peoples Democracy through People's Democratic Front** is the task. Peoples Democratic Front means – "*all the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal forces under the proletarian leadership.*" (CPI's slogan was **National Democratic Front for National Democratic State** to be achieved through peaceful methods).

Congress also passed the resolution on strategy and tactics. Congress postponed the debate that was going on world wide about basic ideological and political issues. Revisionist leadership was not ready to take up the discussion before having its firm grip on the newly formed party. It clearly knows that bringing basic ideological and political issues into debate is nothing but bringing split into agenda. That is why it did not implement the resolution of the Congress. (With the spring thunder of Naxalbari struggle the revolutionaries brought this discussion into agenda throughout the country and thus forced the CPI(M) leadership to enter in to the debate.).

Neo-revisionism Unmasked

Within six weeks of its birth, government resorted to countrywide attack on CPI(M). About 1,000 were jailed. Government alleged that China was going to resort to another aggression and that CPI(M) was conspiring for armed revolution in the country coinciding with it. The arrests of 1964 were also selective as were in 1963. Government did not arrest "moderate leftists" like EMS and Jyothi Basu. As Sundarayya was arrested, EMS took charge as interim secretary. (In 1965 too Indian government before begin-

ning its war with Pakistan jailed these leaders and militant cadres who later formed CPI(M).) Jailed leaders like Basavapunnaiah tried by all means to prove to the government that they were not “Peking Agents”. They submitted that it was not right for home minister Nanda to see them as different from CPI and that it was unjustified to allege that they are resorting to armed revolution, and that they too like CPI were committed to the peaceful transition.

In the 1965 Kerala elections CPI(M) emerged as the party with highest number of seats. After CPI(M) leaders were released in June 1966 after 17 months of incarceration, CC meeting was held at Tenali. CC expressed happiness over the defeat of CPI in elections and the eruption of mass struggles due to the crisis spreading all over the country. It readied itself to gather all its forces in the ensuing general elections.

CPI(M) won in Kerala and Bengal in the general elections in 1967. Non-congress government were formed in eight states. Mass struggles started erupting throughout the country. The economic and political crisis was leading to revolutionary situation. Understanding these conditions, revolutionaries under the leadership Charu Mazumdar tried to build revolutionary peasant movement since 1965 itself by defying the revisionist leadership of CPI(M). On the other, leadership of CPI(M) which was describing itself as a revolutionary party was completely immersed in parliamentary path. It thoroughly indulged itself in the task of forming non-congress government at the centre. On the other hand it started sabotaging mass movements to save Kerala and West Bengal governments. (CPI(M) leadership learned in 1957 itself that people’s struggles always create “law and order” problems and that “law and order” problem is a danger to their ministries.)

CC meeting of April 1967 formulated political resolution named **New Situation and Party’s Tasks**. This resolution clearly reveals how deeply the CPI(M) leadership is immersed in parliamentary path.

It said about participation in the Kerala and West Bengal United Front governments that, *“In clear class terms, our party’s participation in such governments is one specific form of struggle to win more and more people and more and more allies for the proletariat and its allies in the struggle for the cause of People’s Democracy.”*¹

In practice, with the sole aim of saving those governments, it took the path of leasing all struggles.

“Since the fortunes of the entire party, at the present stage of development, are closely linked with the successful running of these ministries and the role our party plays in them, the whole party throughout the country will have to be mobilized to back the agreed programmes of these two non-Congress ministries and to see that they are earnestly implemented.”²

Basava Punnaiah, the chief ideologue of CPI(M), while in jail, wrote to Home Minister Guljarilal Nanda that despite all the trumpeting about revolution, just like CPI and their party also committed to the parliamentary path only.

“It is precisely on the basis of this new assessment that we have introduced this new concept of peaceful transition to socialism in our party programme. The formulation of this concept as well as the general warning against the dangers of violence, usually unleashed by the ruling classes, is exactly similar to the one put forth in the programmes of the Dangeites. then where does the question of our opposition to the “new orientation” and some other supporting it arise? It is an outright slander.”³

Keeping in view this revisionist nature of the CPI(M) leadership, CPC did not make any comment whether in 1964 (April 14) when 32 National Council members came out of CPI or at the time of Tenali convention or Calcutta conference. Later it described the CPI(M) leadership as “Dange revisionism without Dange”. In April 1967 Peking radio commented that “there is no Communist Party of India. There are only certain individual communists.”

Between 1965-67 Charu Mazumdar and others tried to build peasant struggle in the Naxalbari area under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao thought. By March 1967, this peasant struggle took a turn. Peasantry decided to occupy the land of landlords. CPI(M) leadership faced the dilemma of whether to shrug off the revolutionary mask? or to sacrifice the state governments which were appearing as a smooth way to the seat of power at Delhi? Naturally it decided to curb the Naxalbari struggle. Naxalbari armed peasant struggle unmasked the neo-revisionism of CPI(M) leadership.

Even according to the estimates of revisionist leadership, 40% of the party cadres were under the influence of revolutionaries. Therefore it tried by all means to make revolutionary forces ineffectual. It adopted worst means to keep party organisation in its grip. On the other hand the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that was surging forward in China under the leadership of Mao was greatly enthusing and inspiring revolutionary parties and forces all over the world. The struggle against modern revisionism got the momentum. In the country polarisation of Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries was taking place based on three main aspects i.e., Naxalbari struggle and the revolutionary path it was representing, Great Debate and Cultural Revolution.

CPI(M) revisionist leadership started clarifying its political positions as the looming threat to counter which it had been postponing the ideological and political issues, had finally arrived in any case. It formulated the **Draft for Ideological Discussion**.

It announced that it is agreeing with CPC only on the aspects of war and peace, peaceful coexistence, peaceful economic contest, peaceful transition, evaluation of Stalin, people's party and government of all people. It clarified that it is differing with the evaluation of CPC with regard to world revolution, and revolutions in backward countries, especially that of India. It mentioned that though Soviet Union was adopting revisionist and class collaborationist policies, it is still socialist country and it is wrong to say that capitalism is restored. It even urged CPC to make friendship and take up joint activity with CPSU.

“However, our criticism of the compromising and collaborationist policies pursued by the revisionist leadership of the CPSU and the Soviet State does in no way imply the totally erroneous idea that the Soviet Union has become an ally of U.S. imperialism or it is working for sharing world hegemony with American imperialism and for the division of spheres of influence in the world, as this is tantamount to nothing short of placing the Soviet Union outside the socialist camp.”⁴

Thus while still retaining the leftist facade, it not only rejected the revolutionary path of backward countries and India but preached united activity and friendship with Soviet Union the citadel of modern revisionism which became an immediate enemy of the world communist movement.

Burdwan Plenum: In April 1968 CPI(M) plenum was held at Burdwan in West Bengal. This plenum was held at a time when the true revolutionaries throughout the country were rallying around Naxalbari path after the Naxalbari spring thunder. The CPI(M) revisionist leadership which had drowned Naxalbari peasant movement in rivers of blood prepared the stage to strike at the revolutionaries organisationally. Revolutionaries introduced alternative documents in this plenum. In this plenum with 207 delegates, while the draft of the revolutionaries obtained 22 votes, C.C. draft won with 185 votes. But Andhra and Kashmir party committees rejected this draft resolution. We can say that the brief sojourn of CPI(M) with revolutionaries ended with the Burdwan plenum.

CPI(M) suffered seriously due to splits in Andhra and Kashmir states. It suffered considerably in U.P. and Kerala also. Throughout the country all the Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries tried to cut off all relations with revisionism and efforts were enhanced to build a real revolutionary party with Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought as basis. CPI(ML) was born on April 22, 1969, dealing a death blow to both revisionism and neo-revisionism and taking the tradition of heroic struggles in the past under the leadership of CPI. Naxalbari not only resurrected the new democratic revolutionary path emerged out of glorious Telangana peasant struggle which was till then eclipsed due to the sabotage of party leadership but also became an important factor leading to the birth of the revolutionary party which can lead the people following that line. Naxalbari struggle started a qualitatively different new chapter in the history of Indian communist movement.

Brief Summary

CPIM parroted revolutionary phraseology when it was formed. The label – ‘China followers’ that was stamped on it by the rightist clique too came in handy to it. At the time of split the militant cadres and lower level leadership gathered around CPIM. From its birth itself CPIM engulfed with severe internal dissensions as it was not formed on a principled and solid political unity. The leadership was basically not different from that of the CPI. But there was a very big section in the party which was attracted towards its left phrase and rhetoric about CPI’s revisionism.

This revolutionary section determined to pursue a revolutionary path quite different from that of the parliamentary and class conciliatory path till then the party is following and also determined to fight the Khrushchevite revisionism and to uphold the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Hence the neo-revisionist leadership tried to pacify and buy time to gradually bring it into its parliamentary path. Thus it became a necessity to it to retain its revolutionary mask on the one hand and to evade political and theoretical issues and keep silence on basic issues to hoodwink the revolutionary cadres and masses. While confining revolution to its parrotry it vigorously pursued the parliamentary path contending with CPI.

Naxalbari struggle that erupted like a volcano unmasked the neo-revisionism of The CPIM leadership. Naxalbari put the leadership into a dilemma – weather to retain the revolutionary mask for some more time or to save its governments in Kerala and West Bengal which it was considering as the stepping stones to the power at centre. Soon it decided to shred its revolutionary mask and blood bath the Naxalbari that resurrected the path of protracted people’s war. Thus the unmasked revisionism started revealing its real political and theoretical positions.

Though the Naxalbari was suppressed brutally at the behest of the CPIM leadership, it became a rallying point for the revolutionary forces all over the country and led to the formation of CPI(ML) that broke from the long history of class collaborationism and opportunism of CPI leadership and advanced towards building and leading countrywide agrarian revolutionary upsurge.

The United Front tactics of CPC under Mao's guidance stand out as an example of creative development of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory while the United Front tactics adopted by CPI remain mainly as an instance of class collaborationist attitude and metaphysical method. With regard to United Front the weaknesses of CPI belong to four main aspects. They are:

1. Proletarian hegemony on United Front;
2. The nature, strength and weaknesses of various forces in the united front and their inter relationships;
3. Independence and initiative in United Front;
4. Dialectical relation between unity and struggle in united front.

1. Proletarian Hegemony

It appears that CPI never properly understood the issue of proletarian hegemony on anti-imperialist united front. This weakness expressed itself in lacking the aim of establishing proletarian hegemony on united front and not adopting suitable tactics for the purpose.

From its formation itself CPI leadership showed opportunist and capitulationist tendencies. Before Dutt-Broadly Thesis it however quite often spoke about proletarian hegemony. But it never followed the path suggested by Lenin and Comintern that in order to establish proletarian hegemony over national liberation movement, the proletarian party should first emerge as the leader of broad peasant masses. The place of various forces in the united front is basically determined by their strength or the lack of it. It was only the peasantry which was a massive force in backward countries which can earn hegemony for the proletariat on anti-imperialist united front. CPI never took up the effort to build nationwide peasant movement based on agrarian programme as indicated repeatedly by Lenin and

Comintern. Therefore, though during this period up to 1935 CPI had the aim of proletarian hegemony it remained only its subjective wish. There is no chance of getting such leadership by just criticizing bourgeoisie leadership. Hence it could not exert a decisive impact on anti-imperialist united front.

However, that in the same period CPI could establish a strong place among the working class and started working among the peasantry. Though small, realising the influence the proletarian party can exert on broad working class and peasantry, comprador bourgeois leadership (Gandhi) realised that CPI could be useful in achieving its (the farmer's) aims. Congress which remained silent during Kanpur conspiracy case came forward to the defense of communists in Meerut case. Gandhi himself went to the prison to pay a visit to communist leaders. That means bourgeoisie started considering CPI as a considerable force in the anti-imperialist united front under its own leadership.

Ever since the adoption of Dutt-Broadly Thesis of 1936 the right opportunist leadership enjoyed full control over the party and CPI deprived of the aim of establishing proletarian hegemony over the anti-imperialist united front. And hence the agrarian revolutionary programme which is the means to achieve the hegemony of proletariat too lost the importance. The leadership completely abandoned any effort to build anti-imperialist united front outside Congress. It considered congress itself as the sole organisation of anti-imperialist united front. It did not try to break the unbridled hold of comprador bourgeois and landlord representatives Gandhi, Nehru & co over Congress. Moreover it contributed to the further strengthening of their leadership in the name of unity. It even asserted that strengthening the leadership of comprador bourgeoisie i.e. Congress under the leadership of Gandhi, Nehru and co. on the anti-imperialist front is itself the way of proletarian hegemony. The tactics adopted by CPI in practice reduced the anti-imperialist united front a puppet in the hands of comprador bourgeoisie.

2. The nature, strength and weaknesses of various forces in the united front and their inter relation ships

CPI utterly failed in analysing various complex and dynamic aspects of UF such as the nature of various classes participating in united front, the

relation of those classes with common enemy, the interests of those classes, and the changes in the strength of the respective classes and forces and in formulating its policy of united front accordingly time to time.

The leadership of CPI failed to recognise the fact that in India the democratic revolution will become successful only under the leadership of the proletariat. It also failed in identifying that the Congress leadership leading the anti-imperialist front is a representative of comprador bourgeoisie and land lord classes. It failed in recognising that only by removing the leadership of these classes on the united front and by establishing proletarian leadership in its place can the goal be achieved. It means it failed in understanding the nature and the class interests of the forces that are in the leadership of the united front. This led to being unable to realise that the relation of proletarian party with the leadership Gandhi and Nehru is mainly of struggle and that unity is only limited and temporary and as its own strength grows the struggle intensifies and finally it will leave the front and join the enemy. It also led not to have realised that it should not limit anti-imperialist activities should not be limited to Congress under such leadership.

Lenin had recognised the compromising nature of the big bourgeoisie in backward colonial countries, though not named it as comprador. The alliance of working class with it is only temporary and with the aim of improving its strength to struggle against bourgeois democracy, he gave a call for united front. Therefore lack of class outlook on the part of the leadership should be seen as the main reason for this failure of CPI. This failure in its turn contributed to the class collaborationist policies.

3. Independence and initiative in United Front

CPI very frequently forgot that basic aspect that proletarian party should protect its independence and initiative in united front. At first it manifested as reluctance to form an independent proletarian party. Later it limited all its anti-imperialist activities to Congress. Moreover it thought that any struggle should be taken up only under the leadership of Gandhi and it took the stand to build pressure on Congress leadership for this purpose.

The revolutionary programme of turning war into civil war that it took up during the imperialist stage of the war was also tied up to the wheels of

the chariot of Congress and lost its initiative and independent activity. It reached its peak during the period of people's war. It took up a stand that working class and other exploited masses should not take up struggle even on their day to day problems. In fact such practice can not be called as united front.

4. Unity and Struggle in United Front

We can see that CPI was applying the united front tactics in a meta-physical way in a manner that only either unity or struggle is possible. When "Draft platform of Action" was in practice, CPI saw only the struggle with bourgeoisie and refused to see unity. It was isolated from national movement. The formation RTUC can be said to be a mistake of this category. It should have been for compromise by adopting give and take attitude with a long term perspective when Trade Union Unity became a prime necessity. But compared to the loss to the revolutionary movement during the later period when only unity was observed and struggle was ignored, the loss during this period of left sectarian deviation was very less.

After Dutt-Bradley thesis CPI took up suicidal tactics. It only saw unity with bourgeoisie. In practice it ended up as a tail to bourgeoisie. But at the same time Gandhi and Nehru saw both unity and struggle with CPI. They realised that struggle is basic between them and unity is temporary. Not only that, but they have realised that as the necessity of people's pressure was over and their class interests were nearing fulfillment the necessity of unity with CPI was over. The attack of comprador bourgeoisie on CPI started after the war continued relentlessly till it completely turned revisionist.

This trend not only earned CPI the epithet of "betrayers" during the anti-fascist peoples war phase, but pushed it to the place of a spectator during post-war revolutionary upsurge and the transfer of power.

As far as the tactics to be adopted during Second World War were concerned except Russia and China, almost all communists of the rest of the world were confused at one or other time. Unlike First World War, as the nature of this war did not remain same from the beginning to the end, communists had to change their tactics in different phases of the war accordingly. Existence of a strong socialist base, contradictions among the imperialists taking the shape of fascist and non-fascist groups of countries were the peculiar conditions of the second world war. The tactics to be adopted by communists in the war were complex in nature, and they had to be changed timely with great dexterity.

Even though Comintern succeeded in formulating correct tactics time to time to the different phases of the War it failed in formulating a comprehensive tactical strategy by taking into consideration of various possibilities for the different turns the War might take. And thus the Communist Parties of many countries were quite out paced and even confused by the events in formulating their own tactics according to the changes in the War. No doubt it is the responsibility of the Communist Parties of the respective countries to formulate different and concrete tactics according to their own concrete conditions, but in the complex and concrete international conditions during the Second World War it was the responsibility of the Comintern to provide the concrete guidelines to them. Comintern failed in providing such concrete guidelines in implementing the War tactics of the international proletariat in various countries. However we cannot attribute the failures of Comintern as decisive regarding the wrong tactics adopted by CPI and some European parties during the War. The correct tactics adopted by CPC according to the changing circumstances and the world shaking victory of Chinese Revolution stand out as an irrefutable proof of it.

It can be observed that CPI also like several other parties lacked foresight and fell behind the rapidly changing developments. But CPI tried to

implement the Comintern tactics subordinating them to its class collaborationist political line which it was already following. Due to war time Comintern tactics while the prestige of communist parties enhanced worldwide CPI however lost all its prestige. The reason for this is nothing but the class collaborationist attitude of CPI towards united front tactics.

CPI failed to formulate its own line independently subjected to general guidance given by Seventh Congress of Comintern before the war itself about anti-imperialist united front. Comintern and Dimitrov had clearly said about the struggle to be waged with Congress party and bourgeoisie while working together with them. CPI, however, made Dutt-Bradley thesis the basis for its programme. Through this, it tried to build an anti-imperialist united front depending on comprador bourgeoisie which had direct interests in the imperialist war. It changed the **Anti-Imperialist Peoples United Front** proposed by Comintern into **United National Front** as suggested by Dutt-Bradley and saddled the comprador bourgeoisie in the leadership. Since then throughout the subsequent period (except during 1948-51) it adopted only these class collaborationist tactics.

During the imperialist war period it took up the slogan of turning war into civil war as per the suggestions of Comintern. It subordinated these right tactics its own class collaborationist tactics. In practice it tied up its own hands. Except general anti-war propaganda it did not take up any militant programme.

It considered that pressure should be built up on Congress and get call issued by it for civil disobedience and depending on that movement to resort to insurrection. It lost all the opportunities obtained to establish proletarian hegemony on anti-imperialist united front using the crisis situation of the war.

Soviet Union tried to utilise the division in the imperialist camp even before the war started. Between the two imperialist blocks as the fascist block is a more dangerous enemy to the proletarian interests. Therefore it tried to forge united front with imperialist countries like Anglo-American block in which bourgeois democracy was still in practice. But identifying these countries as democratic countries doesn't mean that the bourgeoisie in these countries by nature fundamentally different from that of the fascist countries. Bourgeois democracy means the rights earned by proletariat and

oppressed masses by waging innumerable struggles. These rights are useful for the development of proletarian movement. They have to be therefore protected. Fascism tramples all the rights achieved by the working class through many struggles. It tries to completely root out proletarian movement. Looking from this angle, democratic countries mean the countries where the working class and other oppressed masses enjoying their hard fought and won democratic rights. It should be kept in mind that Comintern gave call for anti-fascist united front from this angle. But during the course of building anti-fascist united front, several leaders of Comintern and communist parties of various countries did propaganda as if fascist countries are basically different from other imperialist countries. The bourgeoisie of Anglo-American block countries was propagated as democratic, peace loving and opponents of war. But it is not true. In Anglo-American countries also, the state was fascisised. But a situation did not occur to them to implement fascism as a full fledged political system. Moreover, it is absolutely wrong to consider them as peace loving countries and war opposing countries. They only felt that it was more advantageous to them to plunge into war after provoking Hitler on Soviet Union, than they themselves starting the war. That's all. It is because of this that these "democratic" imperialist countries did not come into anti-fascist united front despite of all efforts by Soviet Union. Moreover, they tried to rally the whole imperialist camp against Soviet Union.

By the time Hitler attacked Soviet Union, as the Anglo-American block had received death blows from fascist block, it agreed for united front under eventuality. It was not because the bourgeoisie is "democratic." That means Anglo-American block entered into united front with Soviet Union under a special condition and that too temporarily. Therefore it is inevitable that there will be struggle between opposing interests in this anti-fascist united front. Communists of various countries should have participated in the united front keeping this struggle in view. The communists of the colonial and semi colonial countries of Anglo-American block should have become part of the united front without completely giving up the struggle against their national enemy and on the basis of a concrete programme that could help defeat fascism and defend the Socialist base. It should have fought with proper co-ordination of national and international tasks.

Had CPI firmly pursued the revolutionary line enunciated in the Draft Platform it could have been in a position to utilise the war situation to furthering the democratic revolution. Had CPI given due importance to agrarian revolution and emerged as the leader of broad peasant masses, had it adopted correct tactics with the aim to establish proletarian hegemony over anti-imperialist united front and had it correctly applied the tactics of turning war into civil war during the imperialist phase of the war, it would have been in a position to make an effort to liberate India using the revolutionary upsurge of 1942. But in the process of following the class collaborationist and opportunist line of Dutt-Bradly. Party during the war period and afterwards, was almost pushed to position of playing the role of a passive spectator.

During the People War phase CPI could not recognise the change in the nature of the war for a few months and it perused the anti-imperialist war tactics. Even after recognising the peoples war nature of the war it did not try to fulfil the complex task of waging struggle by co-ordinating both national and international tasks, but it mechanically applied its class collaborationist tactics to this phase too.

Without frittering away the intensely growing desire and consciousness among the people for struggle against British imperialism, without dropping its demand for complete freedom, it should have tried for anti-fascist united front with British imperialism on the basis of a concrete programme which could have helped defeat of fascism and the defence of Soviet Union. Instead it took a stand of unconditional support to the British imperialism. In the name of defence of Soviet Russia even the day to day struggles of workers and peasants too were given up. It even overlooked the fact that without arresting the tendency of throwing the burden of war on working masses, without providing some relief to them from the cruel exploitation and oppression, it is not possible to inspire people for enhancing production. The **production campaign** and **no strike policy** carried out by CPI were useful for only furthering the interests of imperialists and comprador bourgeois and landlord classes. In the process of opposing any struggle against British imperialism and giving importance only to unity it stood away from the glorious anti-imperialist mass upsurge and became isolated from it and lost its prestige. Moreover to defend these class col-

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laborationist tactics, it formulated that the anti-fascist struggle itself is the national liberation struggle of India. It blindly believed that because imperialism is surrounded by people, British imperialism will give away independence to the country on its own after the war. It even not prepared to lead the post-war revolutionary upsurge. The CC resolution of September 1945 mentioned that Labour party government and United Nations will gift independence to India.

“The international situation, the victory of the forces of world democracy, opens the prospect of immediate peaceful realisation of Indian freedom through alliance with British labour and with the support of the United Nations.” (Docs, PPH,VII, pp.139-40)

CPI and Nationality Question

CPI never understood the nationality question in India and its importance in democratic revolution of India. It did not recognise for quite long period that India is a multinational country. Even R.P. Dutt who was providing ideological guidance to CPI also considered that India might emerge as a single nation. **Draft Platform** for the first time spoke about the right to self-determination of nationalities. But it was mentioned in the context of the voluntary federation of nations, going to be formed in the post-revolutionary period. It did not mention anything concretely about the nature of the question of nationalities in India, or about the stand to be adopted by the proletarian party on the question of self-determination to nationalities which was then acutely manifesting itself in diverse forms.

League brought forward the demand of Pakistan in March 1940. Thus **the CPI leadership had to consider the nationality question in India to formulate its own stand on Pakistan.** However it examined the issue in the mechanical and metaphysical methods which it was practicing to perfection and probed the resolution of the national question in India within the purview of the class collaborationist political line that it was strongly adhering to.

The CC plenum of CPI held on 19th September 1942 passed the resolution **On Pakistan and National Unity.** It made clear the stand of CPI on the nationality question in India. This document was accepted by the First Congress of the party in 1943. It admitted the party's failure in realising India as a multinational country. It demanded right of nations to self determination including the right to secession. During the War and after this demand remained as one of the principal political slogans of CPI. Until 1960s the right of self determination to nationalities remained as a part of the programme of CPI. But, after the Mountbatten Award it never brought forward this demand.

The method in which CPI applied the right of self determination to nationalities to the concrete conditions of India stand out as an example of how the general Marxist-Leninist principles can be turned into class collaborationist opportunist policies while applying them to concrete conditions.

It is indisputable that India emerged as a political entity only through the force of British colonialism. Keeping the interests involved in holding fast the whole of India as a unified market in view, we can see that **India as a single country** was a necessity to both the British imperialism and the Indian big bourgeoisie that was growing up within its shadow. British imperialism followed a policy of obstructing the development of nationalities in India through its Machiavellian policy of divide and rule. It took care to see that the people of a nationality are divided in different provinces. It considered the national consciousness and unity that could develop in various nationalities as perilous to its colonial regime. It should be remembered that even Indian big bourgeois tried to follow the same policy after taking up the reins of power and opposed tooth and nail the formation of linguistic states it was advocating during the period of national movement.

Independent development of nationalities in India and the right of self determination were not only conflicting to the interests of British imperialism but also of Indian big bourgeoisie. CPI completely failed to recognise this fact. Had it analysed the nationality question in India with proletarian outlook, it would have realized the contradiction between the national aspirations of different nationalities of India and the interests of Indian big bourgeoisie. No doubt it was primarily the peasant movement built on agrarian revolutionary programme that would have made the building of anti imperialist united front outside Congress practically possible. However making various nationality movements, based on right to self determination an integral part of this united front would have aided in the establishment of proletarian hegemony over the anti-imperialist united front. It would also have helped to isolate the comprador bourgeoisie which was then heading the anti-imperialist united front.

But CPI raised the issue of self determination as part of the “National Front” it wanted to build. It continued to believe that national unity will be possible with unity between Congress and League during and after War and

that only because of this national unity, independence during imperialist phase of war and victory over fascism and liberation during people's war phase could be obtained. The immediate problem before it was disunity between Congress and League. If Congress accepts the demand of Pakistan, then League leadership can trust Congress and thus the national unity will be achieved – this is the understanding of CPI. But is the demand for Pakistan not secessionism? How then to support it? To solve this riddle CPI used the universal Marxist-Leninist principle of “right of nations to self-determination including secession”. It completely ignored that this principle should be applied only subjected to proletarian interests. From the class collaborationist perspective that it had been following, it brought forward the right of nationalities to self-determination as a compromise formula to resolve the dogfight going on between two factions of comprador bourgeoisie over “property division.”

The Pakistan demand put forward by Muslim League in 1940 in fact related to both the nationality and Hindu-Muslim questions in India. The Hindu revivalism born out of failure of bourgeoisie in taking up the task of overthrowing feudal socio-economic order, gradually lead to emergence of Hindu communalism. INC itself shown a strong Hindu revivalist tendency and in several places the Congress and *Hindu Mahasabha* remained as one and the same at the lower level. It even officially permitted its leaders to have relations with the *Sabha* till 1935. The comprador big bourgeoisie fostered *Arya Samaj*, *Hindu Mahasabha* and RSS. The Hindu-Muslim divide in the country was not solely the creation of the divide and rule policy of the British. Hindu communal organisations started anti-Muslim riots at the end of the 19th century itself. These communal forces which boasted of their “Hindu Nationalism” not even showed that much of opposition towards imperialism as that of Congress. Instead they targeted the Muslim minority. Naturally the Muslim minority was apprehensive about the pro-Hindu communalist INC that wore the secularist mask and agitated over the “independence” it promised to achieve and their well being under its rule. The Muslim communal organisations that grew as a corollary of Hindu communalism too resorted to communal riots. But the Hindu communalism remained as the main cause of Hindu-Muslim tensions and communal riots. However INC succeeded in disguising its pro-Hindu communalist nature under the garb of secularism and stamping the Muslim League as commu-

nalist. CPI more or less adopted the stand of INC regarding the Hindu-Muslim problem and considered the League leadership as communal and reactionary.

In fact neither League nor Muslim people demanded Pakistan at first. INC while fostering the Hindu communalist forces tried to assume the role of sole representative of all the peoples of India including Muslims on the other. The Hindu revivalist ideology of INC and the undemocratic methods it adopted towards Muslim minority and League together strengthened League and lead to its demand of Pakistan and more over pushed the vast masses of Muslim minority to accept the Pakistan demand. In 1927 Jinnah aspired for unity with Congress and he even prepared to give up the demand of separate constituencies for Muslims. The unitary constitution prepared by Motilal Nehru and the pro-Hindu communalist stance adopted by Congress then broke the unity at that time. After 1937 elections, the coalition ministry proposal of Muslim League was turned down by Congress. It is not unjustifiable to demand some assurances and reservations to Muslim minority under the rule of Congress that was always ready to yield to the pressures of the Hindu communalist organisations. No doubt the leadership of Muslim League represented the feudal and comprador bourgeois classes. But it was the Congress that adopted such undemocratic methods which forced League brought forward and struck to the demand of Pakistan. It is true in 1940 when league first took up the demand of Pakistan it was not the demand of the majority of Muslim peoples. In Beluchistan, North-West province and Bengal where the Muslim peoples categorised as the Muslim nationalities by Jinnah were majority, the demand of Pakistan did not get much acceptance. But the intransigent attitude adopted by Congress and the unprecedented and inhuman communal carnages created by the Hindu communalist forces during war and transfer of power forced the Muslim peoples to accept Pakistan even though it did not represent their national aspirations as a corollary to the Hindu communalist terror and the resultant insecurity.

It is totally incorrect to hold Muslim League responsible for the division of country. It was only due to the communalism fostered by comprador big bourgeoisie and it's yearning to have unbridled monopoly over the undivided market of India built by British as the prison house of nationalities,

Muslim people had to accept the demand of Pakistan. In fact Muslim League was ready to remain in India under a federal set up with some assurances. But the undemocratic attitude and Hindu communalist stance of Congress presented League with Pakistan as the only option it has.

CPI leadership failed in understanding the nationality question behind the demand of Pakistan and the roots of Hindu-Muslim problem. It contended with the naïve explanation that the tensions between Hindu and Muslim peoples can be resolved by mobilizing them in to class struggle. More over it recognised INC as a secular and nationalist organisation and League as a communalist one. While denouncing the leadership of League as reactionary it hailed Congress leadership as nationalist. This attitude of CPI even contributed greatly to popularise congress as a secular organisation. This attitude made CPI ignore the struggle that should be waged against Hindu communalism as whole and the necessity of unmasking the relationship the Congress leadership had with Hindu communalism.

CPI supported Pakistan demand with the help of its conception of **Muslim Nationalities**. It did not take into consideration the fact that only a miniscule of those nationalities which it categorised as Muslim nationalities are demanding the formation of Pakistan at that time. It had, of course, been recognising Congress as the sole representative of the entire “Indian nation”. It naively hoped that if Congress leadership recognises the right of nations to self-determination then League would agree Pakistan to be in India voluntarily and thereby national unity would be achieved. It was agitated that Congress fearing division of country was neither realising this fact nor accepting the unity principle of Congress and League – Pakistan. CPI did not consider the various nationalist trends that had different interests than those of Congress and League which were forcibly thrust on them as their “national representatives”, and give importance to their national aspirations. It did not consider any thing other than the “national unity” achieved through the unity of Congress-League has any importance. It did not even try to deeply study the trends demanding secession that were emerging in provinces such as Punjab, Bengal, Sindh, North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir and the nationality movements in Andhra, Kerala and other places and formulate a comprehensive policy on nationalities. Time to time it was taking vacillating and mutually opposing stands on

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each concrete issue. It continued to maintain that by giving right to self-determination of nationalities, the whole of India will remain as a single federal union, and the concretely emerging national issues would be solved by recognising the rights of national minorities.

In the same period Rajagopalachari and some others too accepted the Pakistan demand. CPI argued without any relation to the ground reality that Rajagopalachari is accepting the division of the country, whereas CPI by advocating voluntary federation of nationalities averting the division of country. Before war CPI used to consider Congress as 'secular' and 'democratic' organisation, but the League leadership as 'communal' and 'reactionary.' With this new policy, however, League turned into a 'patriotic' Party. Its communalism disappeared. CPI recognised that, just as the Congress is representing the rest of India, League is representing all the Muslims. We can say that the right to self-determination as taken up by CPI is nothing but the extension of its class collaborationist friendship to League. (It should be remembered that in the name of people's War and anti-fascist United Front tactics it had similarly extended its friendship towards British imperialism). The endorsement of Pakistan demand by CPI in the name of right of nations to self-determination naturally angered Congress.

Immediately after war when Congress was aggressively pursuing the antagonistic attitude towards CPI, R. P. Dutt to revive its friendship with Congress advised it that it is necessary to change its stand towards League. Since then League again turned 'communal' and 'reactionary'. After agreement was reached for the division of the country, CPI concluded its discussion of nationality question. Right to self-determination remained a formal desire.

R. P. Dutt toured Kashmir in 1946 and hailed Abdullah saying that this is the path to be emulated by the struggles in the princely states of India. He advised CPI to study the Kashmir struggle. But it never occurred to CPI that the Telangana peasant movement which was turning into an armed struggle at that time itself could become a guide to the struggle in princely states or nationality movements. Not only Telangana movement but it was not prepared to study the nationality movements under its own leadership.

CPI tried to adjust its understanding on nationality question as per its changing policy towards Nehru government since 1953. In 1964 CPI self-

criticised that its demand of the 'right of nations to self-determination' had led to the division of the country and raised 'national integrity' of India to its head. CPM formulated in 1972 in its 9th Congress that 'right of nations to self-determination including the right to secession' does not apply to Indian concrete conditions.

NOTES

The Historical Setting

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2. Surendranath Benerji,
3. Swami Vivekananda, *On India and Her Problems*, p.39.
- 4.. Swami Vivekananda, *My Life and Mission*, p.3.
5. Gandhi,
6. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp 224-25.
7. Ibid, p.226.

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2. Bernstein,
3. Marx, MESC, p.218
4. Marx, *MECW* 12 p.98.
5. Marx, Letter to Engels Jan-1858, ?
6. Marx to Engels, 8-10-1858, MESC, p.?.
7. Marx, cited in *The Comintern and East*, p. 34.
8. Lenin, *LCW* 21, pp 407-414.
9. cited by Fester, *SHCI* pp 63 -64.
10. Lenin, *LCW* 22 pp.151-52.
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12. Mao, *MSW2*, pp.341-42.
13. Ibid, p.327
14. Ibid, p.327
15. Mao, *MSR*, p.384
16. Mao, *MSW 2*, pp.343-44.

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4. Lenin, cited in *Marxism and Asia*, by H.C. d'Encausse and Stuart R. Schram, pp. 169 -170.
5. Docs., PPH,I, pp.185-187.
6. **Two and a half international: International Working Union of Socialist Parties** formed in 1921 was acquired this name due to its proclamation that differing with the Second and Third Internationals it treads the "middle path." After a brief period of its existence it merged with the Second International and formed into the **Labour and Socialist International**. In fact it was never been "*any thing but an adjunct of the Second International, it was organised ... as a catch basin to trap radical workers who were then deserting that body. When it was given up in January 1923, this was also a device to lure the workers, who were clamouring for labour unity, back under the control of the reactionary Second International.*" (Foster, *History of the Three Internationals II*, p.64)
7. Lenin,
8. Docs., PPH,I,, pp. 546-556.
9. Docs, PPH, p.576.
10. Docs II, PPH, p.350.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, p.576.
13. Ibid, p. 526.
14. ?
15. Docs.PPH, 2, p.656.

Chapter III

1. **Simon Commission:** The British Government appointed the Simon Commission on 8th November 1927 to conduct an investigation on constitutional reforms and to submit a report on it. At that time the demand for complete independence gained momentum both inside and outside INC. After the War the comprador bourgeoisie and Gandhi and other leaders of the INC had been aspiring for self-rule with dominion status. In such a situation the British government actually unwilling to offer anything appointed this Simon Commission as a palliative measure. To Indians it became a cause of great shame as no Indian represented on the commission and all the factions in the national movement decided to boycott it.
2. Docs.,PPH, 3C, pp.90-91.
3. Ibid, p.762.
4. Cited by Overstreet and Windmiller in *Communism in India from The Communist International between Fifth and Sixth Congresses*, p.110.)
5. Docs.,PPH,III C, p.627.

6. Cited by Cited by Sen and Ghosh, Communist Movement in India, p.265 from Communist International 1919-1943, Documents, II (Ed Jane Degras
7. Docs., PPH, III C, p.628.
8. Docs., PPH, III C, P.628.
9. Cited by Sen and Ghosh, pp.268-69.
10. Cited in *Guidelines of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Communist Party publication 1974, pp.37-38)

Chapter IV

1. **“Constructive activities”**: National schools, khadi and cottage industries development, propaganda against alcoholism, upliftment of harijans, village reconstruction, etc. After withdrawing the Civil Disobedience Movement Gandhi distancing himself from the nationalist politics for a while, with his followers took up these “constructive activities.” By the beginning of 1930s the movements of Dalits and other backward and oppressed castes started taking a militant course. Gandhi tried to bring these movements within the frame work of Hinduism that is based on the varnashrama dharma the main ideological basis on which the caste oppression stands and to prevent them from tackling the crucial economic aspect (the land question) of the caste oppression. With his harijanodharana activity which was an important one in the “constructive activities” he wanted to pacify the most oppressed strata of Indian society.
2. Indian Communist Party Documents (Intro.V.B. Karnik), published by The Democratic Research Group, 1957, p.3.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, p. 4.
6. Ibid, p. 4.
7. Ibid. p.8
8. Cited by Sen and Ghosh, p.133.
9. Ibid, p.6
10. Pariahs:
11. Ibid, p.14.
12. Ibid, p.20.
13. Ibid, p.20.
14. Ibid, pp. 190-91..
15. Communist Movement in india, Sen &Ghosh, pp.552-53.
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17. Ibid,p. 554.
18. Ibid,p.555.
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20. Ibid, p. 556-57.
21. Ibid, p. 564.
22. Ibid.
23. pp. 575-76.
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25. Ibid, p. 577.
26. Ibid, p.580.
27. Ibid, pp. 579-80.
28. Ibid, pp.580-81.

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1. Jane Degras (Ed), CI Docs III, p.367.
2. Subodh Roy (Ed), Communism in India : Unpublished Documents, p.77
3. Cited in Guidelines of The History of the Communist Party of India, p.45.
4. Ibid, pp. 44-45.
5. Subodh Roy, pp. 66-67.
6. Sen and Ghosh, p. 604.
7. Ibid, p. 605.
8. Ibid, p. 605.
9. Ibid, p. 606.
10. Ibid, pp. 607-08
11. Ibid, P. 610.
12. Ibid, P. 611.
13. Ibid, Pp. 611-12.
14. Cited by Suniti, in India and the Raj II, p.171.
15. Ibid.
16. Our Policy and Tasks in the period of War, Ed. Bandhu and Jacob, War and National Liberation: CPI Documents, p.8.
17. Ibid, p.11.
18. Ibid, p.11.
19. Ibid, p.13-14.

20. Ibid, p.18.
21. Ibid, p.17.
22. Ibid, p.19.
23. Ibid, p.48.
24. Ibid.
25. pp.48-49.
26. Ibid, p. 53.
27. Cited by Suniti Kumar Ghosh, *The Indian Big Bourgeoisie*, p. 222.
28. Ibid, p.223.
29. Ibid, p.226.
30. Ed. Bandhu and Jacob, *War and National Liberation: CPI Documents 1935-1945*, pp.76-77.
31. Ibid, p.75.
32. MSW III, pp.106-107.
33. *National Question in India: CPI Documents 1942-47*, Ed.Jacob, pp.84-85.
34. Ibid, p.97.
35. Ibid, p.85.
36. Ibid, p.87.

37. Ibid, p.97.
38. Ibid, p.99.
39. Ibid, p.88.
40. Ibid, p.92.
41. Ibid, p. 95.
42. Ibid, p. 96.
43. Ibid, p. 98.
44. Ibid, pp. 85-86.
45. Ibid, pp. 103-04.
46. *War and National Liberation: CPI Documents 1939-45*, pp.129-130.
47. Ibid, p.138.
48. P.C.Joshi, *Congress and Communists*, cited by Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*, p.220.
49. P.C.Joshi, *Communist Reply to CWC Charges*, from *War and National Liberation: CPI Documents 1935-45*, Ed. by Bandhu and Jacob, pp.379-380.
50. Ibid, 380.

51. Cited by Sumit Sarkar in Modern India, p.425.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. P.C. Joshi, Mountbatten Award, cited in Indian communism: Split within Split, by Mohan Ram, pp. 8-9.
55. Mountbatten Award and After, National Question in India:CPI Documents 1942-47,Ed.Bandhu and Jacob, p.211.
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5. Ibid, p.41
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