CONCLUSION
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I

The ideal approach to an evaluation of the India-China-Soviet triangle would seem to be historical. Two arms of the triangle had ancient ties, while the third joined the two in modern days. India and China had mutual respect for their hoary past, which found re-inforcement from occasional visits to each other's land. Russia with no comparable historical heritage, and spread over two continents with distinct cultural differential, could build no bridge with India and China till the twentieth century. The current century, marked by an incessant war against exploitation and inequality, witnessed the birth of the first socialist state in Russia following the earth shaking ideas of Marx-Engels-Lenin. The new state, known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with an avowed commitment to wipe off the miseries of the entire mankind, soon found itself embroiled in the affairs of its great neighbour China. The war against feudalism and foreign exploitation that had shaken China since the mid-19th century had in the latter days learnt substantially from the ideas and experiences of the new born socialist state. However, the Soviet Union was torn between China's two fighting groups - Communists and Kuomintangs - both claiming the mantle of leadership for the masses and crying against the continuing exploitation of China at the hands of the internal and external agencies.
Ideologically, the Soviet leaders had an unquestioned obligation to support the Chinese communists. On the other hand, the Kuomintangs had a greater strength organizationally and they had also a mass base. It is right to recall here that Stalin was quite doubtful about the potentiality of the Chinese communists in their bid to wage the dual war that they were fighting against the Japanese and against the Nationalists (especially after 1941). There may be significance in a statement which Stalin apparently made in 1943 to the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Kerdelji: "After the war we invited the Chinese comrades to come to Moscow and we discussed the situation in China. We told them bluntly that we considered the development of the uprising in China had no prospect and that the Chinese comrades should seek a modus vivendi with Chiang Kaishek that they should join the Chiang Kaishek Government and dissolve their army."\(^1\) The Soviet Union, therefore, tried to see a unity between the two, which, however, remained unachieved. In the final trial of strength in the year 1946-49 when the cold war had set in, the Soviet Union sided with the Chinese communists while the Western bloc supported the Kuomintang.

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\(^1\) Vladimir Dedijer, Cf. \textit{Tito}, p.322.
The Communist victory in China was, no doubt, a spectacular success for the socialist cause, and was also a gain for the Soviet Union which added to its own security in an enemy encircled world setting. This, however, was not so much a personal success of Stalin as it was a triumph of Mao whose strategy, not the one prescribed by Comintern, proved to be effective in the end. In fact, the seeds of future friction between China and the Soviet Union lay in the emergence of a new China under the guidance of a new God, that is Mao.

Being successful, Chinese communists became sanguine about the suitability of the Maoist path for the communist revolution, specially in the adjoining areas of South and South East Asia. India being the largest and the most volatile turned into a target for the supporters of the Maoist line, and violent uprisings in Telengana and other parts of India followed. Maoists, however, received a shock when these uprisings met with failure thereby belying the claims of universal success of the Chinese way. Commenting on the failure of Maoist model in India, Stalin glibly remarked: "Each country has its own peculiarities and these were marked in case of India." Following it, the

Soviet Union sent new policy guidelines to the Communist Party of India (CPI), asking them to follow more pragmatic line, whereas China becoming aware of their limitations, begun to soften her attitude towards Indian government.

Neither China nor the Soviet Union had any positive opinion about the Indian leadership that came to power in 1947. Both found India's independence to be fake, lacking in true sovereignty, and both characterized the Indian ruling elite as the "running dog of imperialism", who were lingering in a state of subservience to the Britishers by joining the British Commonwealth. Subsequently, India's truly independent role during the Korean crisis and ceaseless efforts to fight a solution to it, advocacy of the Chinese rightful place in the world body, and consistent cry against colonialism or semicolonialism, imperialism and apartheid, led the communist nations to change the attitude towards Indian leaders in general, and Jawaharlal Nehru, in particular. The reassessment of India by the communist nations coincided with their own review of the world situation showing the dangerous portents of world disaster through a thermo-nuclear war. The communists' doctrine 'pledge to promote a world proletarian revolution by violent means' was devised in favour of a policy of peaceful coexistence between communists and others. The threat posed by Western powers,
through the formation of NATO, to encircle the Soviet Union, and their determination to wipe off communism from the Chinese mainland, urged communist nations to win friends from among the neutral powers in the periphery, such as India and Egypt.

Though both China and the Soviet Union betrayed a sense of realism in their external behaviour and drew closer to the nonaligned world in mid-50s, China's major aim of bringing Taiwan under communist control remained unachieved; she failed to give full support to the Soviet policy of peace and detente. Even the communist ambition to convert the entire global population to communism, China could not completely give up. Khrushchev's attempt to denigrate Stalin, his sojourn to American soil to seek world peace, his 'capitulation' at the Cuban crisis undoubtedly irked the Chinese communists. All contributed to the gradual erosion of the ideological ties between the two communist giants, astonishing everyone and culminating in a transition from the bipolar to the multipolar world system.

The process of parting of the ways between the two pioneers of the communism had its full impact upon the rest of the world. The Soviet Union, fully appreciative of India's anti-colonial aims, wanted to turn India on one
hand into a bastion against Western imperialistic design, and on the other as a counterweight to communist China's expansive ambition. Soviet aid and trade to India increased, meanwhile, with a corresponding decrease in fraternity towards China. The act of strengthening a 'bourgeois' neighbour, and that too at the cost of a communist country, was viewed by China to be a heresy on the part of the Soviet Union, believed to be the fountain-head of both economic and ideological strength to communists all over the world. Soviet support to India thus added to the alienation between China and the Soviet Union. Soviet neutrality on the India-China border question, which was mainly motivated by the Soviet aim to see the restoration of amity between India, a friendly and progressive people, and China, a member of the communist fraternity, became suspect in Chinese eyes.

II

The Sino-Indian war that followed focused upon the Soviet factor in the relation between India and China. One may rightfully inquire if Sino-Soviet ties would remain intact, could the India-China border clash be averted. It may also be relevant to ask to what extent the Sino-Soviet dispute was responsible for the decline in Sino-Indian relations. To reply to the first, if
Soviet Russia would remain as friendly to China and Chinese expectations from the Soviet Union would not be belied, the benefactor could exert a restraining influence upon the beneficiary. As for the second, a difficult one to untangle, Sino-Soviet rift, though not at the root of Sino-Indian hostility, fanned the fire simmering since long. The territory that China had claimed to be its own seemed to be not the real cake for which the Chinese army ran, suddenly and swiftly, well inside the Indian territory and also quickly withdrew from a major part of it. It might be an indirect attempt to expose, on one hand, the number one socialist state refusing to support another socialist nation at war with a 'bourgeois' set-up, and on the other, to bare the hollowness of Soviet shield for the nonaligned nations. So far as India is concerned, China, by running over a large tract of Indian territory at no time and by inflicting a convincing defeat on her, wanted to expose the weaknesses of one of the leading nations of the nonaligned world as well as to compel India to give up her policy of nonalignment by seeking support from America or the Soviet Union.

The threat of super powers' involvement in the Sino-Indian war might have influenced Chinese decision to call a unilateral ceasefire. Didn't China apprehend such an eventuality? She was perhaps not sure about it since the Cuban missile crisis was thought to be engaging the entire
attention of the big two. Assuming that the occupation of Indian territory was not the primary intention of China, all her purposes were well served by causing India's humiliation and helplessness, and by instilling in Indian minds doubts about the wisdom of the principle of non-alignment. To quote Nehru, China wanted "to demonstrate, by her attack on India, that nonalignment has no reality and that the Soviet policy toward the nonaligned countries is wrong; the only right course is to work for a polarization of forces in the world."³

Arguing in the same vein, one may explain China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that followed the Sino-Indian armed combat and the Sino-Soviet wordy duel, as not only an attempt to crush the 'revisionists' at home but also a way to tell the outside world, through ultra-radical measures, that it was not the Soviet Union but China that was truly Marxist-Leninist. Internal dislocation and external isolation that came in the wake of the Cultural Revolution was, however, not in the long-term interest of China, which, then, realized the urgency to call order at home and to restore external ties.

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³ Jawaharlal Nehru, "Changing India". Foreign Affairs, April 1963, pp.463-64.
The Sino-Soviet border clash in 1969 that coincided with the Chinese Communist Party's Ninth National Congress drawing the curtain on the Cultural Revolution, sent an unprecedented anxiety to Chinese leaders about China's national security. The legendary Mao's smile, on the occasion of May Day reception in Beijing in 1970, believed to be a turning point in Sino-Indian relations from the Chinese side, was an indication of the Chinese decision to open a dialogue with India. The obvious motivation behind the Chinese move was to mend fences with India when China's relation with the more powerful northern neighbour had worsened and brought China to a dangerous predicament. Though India was equally interested in taking a step forward for reconciliation with China, the turn of events in the Indian subcontinent - the Bangladesh question - pushed the wheel back. The eventual support by India and the Soviet Union for Bangladesh's claim to self-determination, while China's strong opposition to it on the plea of Pakistan's territorial integrity pulled China and India apart. The signing of an Indo-Soviet accord in the midst of Bangladesh crisis made China doubly suspicious about Soviet designs in South Asia. The Soviet factor again worked, and the good intentions of both India and China for normalization were washed away by the bloody warfare leading to the birth of Bangladesh.
If China failed to stop the tide of events in the sub-continent, she did not turn her face away from the actuality. Bangladesh was accorded recognition at an opportune hour, while India's pre-eminent position found a tacit acceptance in Beijing. The strategy China then followed was to wean India away from the Soviet Union, and the tactic applied was to hurl propaganda attacks upon Soviet leaders for 'dismantling Pakistan', creating 'unstable situation in South Asia', and 'instigating' India. Commenting on the Indo-Soviet economic cooperation and trade agreements, China accused the USSR for having 'exploited' India. The former, in their view, "buys cheap and sells dear and squeezes enormous profits in the process."4 China while reversing her earlier accusation admitted that India was never a 'stooge' of the Soviet Union.

The formal breakthrough in Sino-Indian relations came in 1976 when ambassadors were exchanged after a long unpleasant interval, and an era of limited bilateralism began. Next year, it received an impetus when the Janata Party, that came to power in India, made a promise to correct India's 'tilt' toward the Soviet Union and favoured

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a policy of 'genuine nonalignment'. And the high tide of Sino-Indian reconciliation was reached when Indian Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee set his feet on the Chinese soil in early 1979.

Sino-Soviet relations, on the other hand, showed no sign of improvement though there were overtures and expectations on either side - at every departure of presiding deities like Mao or Brezhnev from the national platform. The Soviet Union would, therefore, certainly object to any Indian effort to promote Sino-Indian ties at her expense. Vajpayee's state visit to Moscow much before he left for Beijing might have been to assure the Kremlin that every Indian move towards betterment of relations with China would weigh beforehand its impact on Indo-Soviet ties. With the sharp deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations following the Chinese punitive attack upon Vietnam, that coincided with Vajpayee's visit to China, India-China relations received a jolt. The Indian leader considered the Chinese action against her southern neighbour to be an affront to India, and returned home in a hurry.

The chain of events like the end of Janata interregnum, Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan, and the recapture of power by Mrs. Gandhi affected the process of India-China bilateralism by revitalizing the Soviet question. China became circumspect about India's external behaviour,
particularly her Soviet connection. India's attitude towards the Soviet-backed regimes in Kabul and Hanoi was disapproved by Beijing, and a China-Pak-US axis to stall the increasing Soviet influence in South Asia found its way. Sino-Indian differences vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, however, hardly proved to be a veritable stumbling bloc in the progress of India-China dialogue.

Normalization talks China presently carries on with India and the Soviet Union, and at regular interval, are of an autonomous sort. Issues are different, objectives varying, expectations uneven; an improvement in one may not have its spin-off on the other. Variables vying with one another for their full impact on the outcome of talks are many; there are, however, a few constraints like China's indispensable economic modernization, Soviet search for a viable alternative to war with the West, India's dire necessity to drive off hunger from its doors. All have the propensity to work for a binding peace; all, again, have alternative avenues for their achievement. Super Power involvement into the affairs of small and middle powers will not erode, but the omnipotence of individual aspiration will cut at the conventional ideological or cultural divide.