CHAPTER VI

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

The international communist organisation, the Comintern, was founded in Moscow on March 4, 1919, by the initiative of Lenin. As to Lenin's role in its creation Zinoviev seems to have expressed the truth most succinctly: "In as much as in a thing like the Communist International one may speak about the role of
an individual, one may consider it Lenin's creation."\(^1\)

The creation of Comintern was the result of a long drawn out process which had been initiated by Lenin much before the October Revolution. It was he, who primarily conceived the idea, armed it with a driving spirit, launched it as a slogan and translated it into concrete revolutionary action. The year 1914, the year which saw the beginning of the world war I was ominous for Lenin's ideological and strategic departure from the European Social Democracy. It was in this year Lenin had publicly suggested that the party led by him abandon the name "Social Democratic" in favour of communist as well as given the slogan "Long live the Third International."\(^2\) Although both of these objectives of Lenin could be fulfilled only after the revolution in Russia, the creation of the Third International signifying a rupture and revolutionary tilt in the European working class movement may be said to have begun in 1914 only. In other words, although the Comintern's creation could be possible only in 1919 its idea and the conviction of its necessity continued to motivate Lenin from 1914 onwards: Lenin's revolutionary action at this time was guided by "an extremely simple and clear perspective, based upon an unshakable conviction" that the split within the Russian Social Democratic movement in the early years of this century between the revolutionaries (Bolsheviks) and the reformers (Mensheviks) was required to be within the international workers' movement with the sole aim of reasserting

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\(^1\) Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Lenin and the Comintern* (Stanford, 1972), p. 50 (Quoted).

\(^2\) Ibid.
the supremacy of revolutionary Marxism. He has also the firm conviction that the Russian events of 1917 constituting the fall of Tsarist regime, the democratic revolution, the collapse of the ensuing liberal regime and the ultimate victory of communism would all be reenacted in the immediate future throughout Europe as well. Hence, the revolutionary events of Europe during the war period provided the Russian revolutionaries a historical opportunity as well as a set of formidable challenges, the most prominent among them were to defeat opportunist and reformist socialism, to found a new revolutionary international and to bring about the triumph of the revolution. According to Lenin these were the three imperative goals which always, particularly between 1918 and 1920, thought as on the verge of achievement.3

Lenin's all important decisions throughout his career was motivated by either his historical perspective or tactical considerations. He used both these factors interchangeably depending upon their suitability in given circumstances. Hence, although in the sense of logic, and historical perspective the foundation of Communist International should have been preceded by the creation of communist parties in Europe as had been suggested by Roza Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches, Lenin showed his preference for tactical considerations mainly. Accordingly, he took recourse to actual possibilities open to him, i.e., if he "was unable singlehandedly to bring about immediate formation of communist parties in the leading countries of Europe, he certainly was able, in Moscow, to impose the founding of the Communist International. Thus, though lacking communist parties

3 For the details, see Ibid., pp. 50-51.
in Europe, one would at least have a Communist International ready when the revolution unfurled its banners."⁴

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

One of the first decrees passed by the new Soviet Government after the revolution asked for a "just and democratic peace." This was explained as "an immediate peace without annexations (i.e. without seizure of foreign territory, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nationalities) and without indemnities."⁵ Apart from making an appeal to the West the Soviet Government called on the least as well, declaring the Soviet treaties of the Tsar as abrogated. More particularly, the treaties of the Tsarist government on the division of Persia and Turkey were ended as also were the unequal ties with Afghanistan, Mongolia and China.⁶

⁴ Ibid.


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

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

"Most probably you mean by this that the masses of the peoples must everywhere first take their destiny into their own hands, in order to unite afterwards in a free League of Nations. But strangely enough we do not find among your demands the liberation of Ireland, Egypt or India, not even the liberation of the

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\(^7\) Degras, n. 5, pp. 3 and 9.

\(^8\) Ibid., pp. 21-22.
Philippines and we would find it a matter of deep regret if these people were to be denied the opportunity of taking part together with us through their freely elected representatives in constructing the League of Nations.\(^9\) Chicherin warned that "the League of Nations may not turn out to be a League of capitalists against nations."\(^10\)

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

However, this rivalry continued even after the October Revolution but with difference. Of course, the Soviet Russia had no colonial ambition, but their revolutionary pursuit created more problems and alarm for the British empire. In this regard, the well-defined anti-colonial policy by the Second Congress of the

\(^9\) Barabusse, n. 6, p. 52.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 55.
Comintern earned a lot of friends in India as well as in the entire East for Soviet Russia. At the same time, it also turned to be a problem for Soviet Russia in the west, as all the colonial powers got together to nip the first socialist state in the bud, however, it was anti-colonialism alone which provided Soviet Russia the greatest ever strength to fight the west. Thus, the Comintern became most powerful instrument of Soviet strategy in implementing their policies in the East. The Comintern proved to be more successful in India as due to its efforts, the communist movement emerged and then flourished during twenties and thirties. It also influenced the national liberation movement in India particularly during the period of this study, i.e., 1919-1943.

So far as, Soviet Policy towards anti-colonial movement in India is concerned, it was carefully planned and implemented through the mechanism of the Communist International. The historical facts show that Lenin, till he was active in politics before his death, took special interest in the entire colonial East, particularly India. On the other hand, many India revolutionaries looked forward to Soviet Russia for material supports in their struggle against British Colonialism in India. One may recall Khairy brothers (Jabbar and Sattar), the first Indians who met Lenin on November 23, 1918 Just a year after the October Revolution. Their meeting was followed by a series of encounters of different Indian revolutionaries with Lenin. Some of the most significant visitors to Lenin, later on became the founder of communist movement in India, e.g., Virendra Chalopadhyay, Sawkat Usmani, Prof Barakatullah, M. N. Roy, Abani Mukharji, etc.

However, the systematic Comintern's policies towards India
began to emerge during the historic Second Congress of the Communist International which was held in 1920. It was this Congress that laid the foundation of a revolutionary anti-colonial struggle not only in India but also throughout the East. In this regard, it is a different matter that a serious controversy about anti-colonial thesis arose between Lenin and a person called M. N. Roy from India itself. We have already discussed in detail this controversy in chapter three. It is also a remarkable fact that M. N. Roy had gone to Moscow as Mexican delegate to attend the Second Congress of the Comintern. At that juncture, in the absence of a proper communist party in India no body other than M. N. Roy could represent India, though there were many emigrant Indian revolutionaries living in Soviet Russia. Many of them had gone there as Muhajirs to fight for caliphate in Turkey. During that period, though communist party did not exist in India, yet many communists groups had already emerged on Indian Soil. The official absence of a communist party prompted M. N. Roy and some other revolutionaries to found a Communist Party of India in Tashkent on October 17, 1920 a few weeks after the Second Congress of the Communist International was over. It is beyond doubt that the whole affair was managed by Bolsheviks themselves. This is why, the foundation place, carefully chosen not in the city of Moscow but in Tashkent which was quite near from Indian territory. It happened so because the Bolsheviks wanted an easy access to Indian territory so that the anti-colonial movement could be helped in proper way. The opening of Indian Military Training School in Tashkent by the Bolsheviks in the name of M. N. Roy is an undisputed truth. For Soviets, helping
anti-colonial movement in India meant the weakening of British imperialism which was the main enemy of the October Revolution during that period. Thus, Soviet policy of anti-colonialism became more beneficial to itself than to the colonies.

In the meantime, untimely death of Lenin in early 1924, created a vacuum in the Communist International. To some extent, it caused distortions in Comintern's policies in relation to anti-colonial movement. The advent of Stalin as a solitary sovereign leader in the Bolshevik Party, turned the Communist International in the form of a section of the Communist Party of Soviet Union. This is why, the sectarianism began to emerge in Communist International as well as among its followers throughout the world.

The post Lenin period, 1924 to 1928 not so distinct from the earlier period. However, after the Sixth Congress which was held in 1928, a systematic rise of sectarianism began to take shape in Comintern's policies. The entire anti-colonial movement lost its allies as the different communist parties put forward a slogan of direct socialist revolution, as a result of which they had to cut off from national bourgeois anti-colonial movement in the colonies.

In this context, Communist Party of India became the biggest victim of such mistakes. As, we have seen typical developments in the first half of 1930s when Communist parties fell against each other and became mutual enemies. In this process, Comintern also contributed a lot, however, it soon realised that the sectarian policies of the communist parties in the colonies, would ultimately harm the global anti-imperialist and above all the anti-fascist fight.
It was the main reason, why the Communist International devoted very seriously to rectify the sectarian mistakes, which had been prevailing in the International communist movement for about a decade. In this regard the formulations of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, held in 1935, played a decisive role in fighting out the left deviations and sharpening the anti-fascist struggle throughout the world. As, we have discussed in detail about the role of the Seventh Congress in the 5th chapter, better still, it needs to be pointed out here that the Seventh Congress of the Comintern laid the foundation of United front politics all over the world. This Congress also proved itself as a forecaster of the future events, as it had rightly pointed out about the breaking of another world war and the ultimate fascist onslaught against Soviet Union and the worldwide communist movement. So far as, the removal of sectarianism from the Communist Party of India is concerned, the Communist International played a very crucial role as we have already discussed in the 5th chapter about the famous R. Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley thesis which became a landmark in the history of anti-colonial movement in India. Following this thesis, the Communist Party of India adopted a united front policy in relation to Indian National Congress during the second half of the 1930s.

However, Hitler's attack on Soviet Union changed the entire course of anti-colonial movement in India. The Indian communists came out with the slogan of "people's war" and selfless fight against fascism. The differences over these issues again forced the Indian communists to cut off from the main stream of the
anti-colonial struggle particularly during "Quit India" movement in 1942. Even at that crucial juncture, the communist party continued to implement the Comintern’s lines, however, in a dramatic turn the dissolution of the Communist International on June 10, 1943, once again proved to be a watershed in the history of world communist movement.

The post Comintern dissolution period was marked by utter bewilderment for the Indian communist movement. With such a topsy-turvy, our study ends in 1943, but the legacy of the Communist International and its policies towards anti-colonial movement in India will always remain to be interpreted and reinterpreted by the future historians.