CHAPTER III

COMINTERN AND ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA, 1920-1924
Every political development in Russia had always influenced Indian freedom struggle in the past, but the post-October revolutionary events proved to be of far reaching results in the revolutionary history of India. The formation of Communist International (1919) was a biggest among all such events which had direct impact on India and her revolutionary people. It is a historical fact that after the formation of Comintern the seeds of communism began to emerge quickly throughout the country. At the same time, the October Revolution had greatly influenced almost all the top leaders of Indian Freedom Struggle during that period. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Rabindra Nath Tagore, every one recognised and greeted the victory of October Revolution. As Nehru wrote: 'Like every other great upheaval it (Russian Revolution) had its causes deep down in history and in the misery of generations of human beings.'

Famous historian Bipan Chandra writes: "A major impetus to the national movement was given by the impact of Russian Revolution. On November 7, 1917, the Bolshevik party laid by Lenin, overthrew the czarist regime in Russia and declared the formation of the first socialist state, the Soviet Union in the history of the World. The new Soviet regime electrified the colonial world by unilaterally renouncing its imperialist rights in China and other parts of Asia by granting the right of self-determination to the former Czarist colonies in Asia, and by giving an equal status to the Asian nationalities within its

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borders which had been oppressed as inferior and conquered people by the previous regime."² He further writes that thus the Russian revolution gave people self-confidence and indicated to the leaders of the national movement that they should rely on the strength of common people.³

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

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

However, the first most powerful opinion by Lenin was expressed in his famous article "Inflammable Material in World Politics," which he wrote after the arrest of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1908. Tilak's trial had aroused massive protest in Bombay and other places of India. A large number of workers in Bombay had gone on strike against his arrest. Lenin called Tilak and his

² Bipan Chandra, Modern India (New Delhi, 1976), p. 262.
³ Ibid.
followers democrats and political leaders of the people and wrote: "In India the street is beginning to stand up for its writers and political leaders. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak—he was sentenced to a long term of exile, the question in the British House of Commons the other day revealing that the Indian jurors had declared for acquittal and that the verdict had been passed by the vote of the British jurors—this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money bag evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay." He further wrote: "In India, lately, the native slaves of the 'civilized' British capitalists have been a source of worry to their masters. There is no end to the acts of violence and plunder which goes under the name of the British System of Government in India."  

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

Later on, the first two Indians who met Lenin after October Revolution were two brothers Abdul Jabbar Khairy and Abdul Sattar Khairy. Both were living in Germany and after hearing the news of October Revolution they decided to see Lenin. They met Lenin on November 23, 1918 in Kremlin. No record of their talks


6 Ibid.
with Lenin is available but they are understood to have conveyed the greetings of Indian people on the victory of the October Revolution and told him that "his slogan calling for the self-determination of nations had penetrated India crossing all barriers set by the British and made the Indian people confident of their victory over the British imperialists."\(^7\)

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

"Allow us to thank you for affording us the joy of speaking to you personally and of congratulating you on behalf of the Indian people. allow us to convey greetings to the Russian Revolution which has brought us new hope and showed us a new road in our struggle."\(^8\) Jabbar and Sattar presented a sandalwood stick with an ivory tip to Lenin as a token of their admiration for the Russian Revolution. This has been preserved in the Lenin Museum in Moscow."\(^9\)

However, the editor of the documents of Communist Party of India has written: "Strictly speaking the documents connected with Jabbar and Sattar Khairy, who were Pan Islamic from the very beginning and later on their return to India became


\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid.
supporters of Hitler fascism, do not belong to CPI."  

Later on Jabbar Khairy attended the International meeting held at Petrograd on December 5, 1918. Speaking on that occasion Jabbar said: "I am speaking in the name of 330 millions of Indian people who are being oppressed by British imperialism. I express my deep gratitude to you for making it possible for me to visit your country, to see with my own eyes the success achieved by the Russian proletarian movement, and for the opportunity offered to me to speak to you about my country..." 

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


11 Ibid., p. 101.

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

13 Ibid., p. 110.
Indian revolutionaries was asked to leave Afghanistan as a result of which he looked towards Bolsheviks for their help and support to Indian freedom struggle.

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

\(^{14}\) Raja Mahendra Pratap, *Reflections of an Exile*, (Lahore, 1946), pp. 44-47, Quoted in Ibid., p. 112.
with morocco leather. I decided to sit on that small chair and sat down, while my friends Maulana Barakatullah and others, took their seats on richly upholstered chairs.

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

Providing an interesting information Raja Mahendra Pratap writes:" It was after this interview that the Foreign Office decided that I must accompany His Excellency Mr. Sourits, the first Russian Ambassador to the court of Afghanistan. My job was to introduce Mr. Sourits to King Amanullah Khan. Of course, the official position of the ambassador needed not any introduction of some private character. But it was thought that I was a personal friend of the King, I could better plead personally on behalf of Red Bear."16 During this period Maulana Barakatullah proved to be an

15 Ibid., p. 112-13.

16 Ibid., p. 113.
important link not only between India and Soviet Russia but always between Afghanistan and Soviet Russia. As Barakatullah in an interview with Petrograd Pravda in 1919 said: "I am not a communist nor a socialist, but my political programme at present is the expulsion of the English from Asia. I am an irreconcilable enemy of European capitalism in Asia whose main representative is the English. In this I concur with the communists and in this respect we are genuine allies." 17

Regarding his link between Soviet Russia and Afghanistan, he said: "In March 1919 after Habibullah was assassinated and Amanullah, who hated the English, ascended the throne, I, as one of the most trusted persons of the new Amir, was sent to Moscow as 'ambassador extraordinary' for establishing permanent relations with Soviet Russia. With this the new Amir cancelled the alliance treaty with the British, according to which Afghanistan was obliged not to enter into diplomatic relations with any other country than England." 18

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

17 Ibid., p. 118.

18 Ibid., p. 119.
According to Lazith and Drachkovich, when Lenin undertook a task that he regarded as important, he threw himself into it totally. There were no half measure. He was interested himself directly and almost all the theses that Second Congress was to adopt either personally writing their original text (as on the national and colonial issues, the agrarian question, the basic tasks of the Second Congress, conditions for admission to the International) or over seeing their writings (as Parliamentarianism and Syndicalism).¹⁹

National and colonial question was most important among all the above issues which was thoroughly debated in the Congress and became famous due to fierce controversy between Lenin and M. N. Roy of India. It was a very crucial period in the anti-colonial struggle in India as the British colonialism had to face the famous Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement between 1919 and 1922. In the absence of diplomatic relation between Soviet Russia and the British, it was extremely difficult for Bolsheviks to have direct contact with Indian revolutionaries. This is why every Indian revolutionary who visited Russia, had to travel through Europe or through Afghanistan. In this way an outstanding Indian revolutionary M. N. Roy (real name Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) went to attend the Second Congress of the Comintern in Moscow as a Mexican delegate, and created a tangle by putting up a parallel thesis on colonial question before the Congress against the formulations of Lenin. If we look briefly at their formulations, it will appear that Lenin had argued in favour

of an united front between communists and national bourgeois leaders to fight out the colonizers, however, M. N. Roy advocated that the communists should launch a dual struggle against colonizers as well as national bourgeoisie in order to fulfil the task of a pure socialist revolution.

Lenin clearly pointed out "... The Communist International must support the bourgeois democratic national movement in colonial and backward countries only on the condition that the elements of future proletarian parties existing in all backward countries, which are not merely communist in name, shall be grouped together and trained to appreciate their special task, viz., the task of fighting the bourgeois democratic movement with in their own nations; the Communist International must enter into temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement even in its most rudimentary form."²

Recalling the debate about colonial question and his differences with Lenin, M. N. Roy says in his "Memoirs" that Lenin's orthodox defence of the infallibility of Marxism was that the revisionists relied on the rise of a "proletarian aristocracy" in the imperialist countries. He maintained that this new counter-revolutionary social factor, unforeseen in original Marxism, was the result of colonial expansion. The exploitation of the colonial masses yielded a super-profit; capital exported to countries where labour could be purchased at a very low price earned a much higher profit than at home. A part of the super-

profit could be conceded to a thin upper stratum of the metropolitan working class to secure their support for colonialism. From this analysis of imperialism Lenin drew the conclusion that successful revolt of the colonial people was a condition for the overthrow of capitalism in Europe. The strategy of world revolution should therefore include active support of the national liberation movement in the colonial countries. This view was set forth in Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Question. While presenting the Theses to the Second World Congress, he declared that the Socialist Second International was not a really international organisation, because it excluded the oppressed masses of Asia and Africa. By including in its programme the promotion of the national-revolutionary movements in the non-European countries, the Third (Communist) International would be a true world organisation.

He further says: "Theoretically, the theses appeared to be sound. I was taken in by the appearance. Propaganda on that basis might weaken the position of the Social Democratic leaders and the trade Union "aristocracy" in the imperialist countries. The inflammatory declaration of the Communist International would certainly make it popular in Asia and Africa. But I had misgivings about the practice of the theoretically plausible programme. How was the colonial national liberation movement to be supported? It was the question of ways and means. The resolutions of the Second International were not necessarily insincere. But it had no means to enforce them. In that respect, the Communist

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International was in an entirely different position. Its foil and leader, the Russian Bolshevik Party, was the ruler of a large country with vast resources. Its revolutions, therefore, had a powerful sanction. They could be carried out, Lenin said, that the historic significance of the Russian Revolution was that it made the resources of at least one country available for the promotion of the world revolution. Once he went to the extent of declaring that having captured power before others the Russian proletariat had won the privilege of sacrificing itself for the liberation of the oppressed masses of the world. In the capitalist countries, there were Communist Parties which could be helped with the confidence that they were dedicated to the cause of social revolution. But in the colonial countries similar instruments for revolution were absent. How could then the Communist International develop the national liberation movement there as part of the World Proletarian Revolution?

"Lenin's answer to my question appeared to me to be based on ignorance of the relation of social forces on the colonial countries. In our first discussion, he frankly admitted his ignorance of facts, but took his stand on theoretical ground. He argued that imperialism had held the colonial countries back in feudal social conditions, which hindered the development of capitalism and thwarted the ambition of the native bourgeoisie. Historically, the national liberation movement had the significance of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Every stage of social evolution being historically determined, the colonial countries must have their bourgeois democratic revolution before they could enter the stage of the proletarian revolution. The
Communists, therefore, must help the colonial liberation movement under the leadership of the nationalist bourgeoisie, regarding the latter as an objectively revolutionary force."\(^{22}\)

He elaborated further: "I pointed out that the bourgeoisie even in the most advanced colonial countries, like India, as a class, was not economically and culturally differentiated from the feudal social order: therefore, the nationalist movement was ideologically reactionary in the sense that the triumph would not necessarily mean a bourgeois democratic revolution. The role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was revolutionary. I maintained that, a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically. Remembering my own past, I saw that Plekhanov's famous judgement of the Russian populist and Socialist Revolutionary Movements was applicable to Indian nationalism, particularly of the extremist and Gandhist schools. The Russian Populists and Socialist Revolutionaries believed in terrorism and in the special genius of the Slav race. They also denounced capitalism as Western vice, which had no place in Russia. They appealed to the younger generation to return to village with the object of reviving the "Mirs" of the olden days. Plekhanov characterised them as politically revolutionary, but socially reactionary. Lenin had learned Marxism from Plekhanov, and had first attracted attention by writing a book in which he showed that capitalist economy was developing in Russia and maintained that capitalism

\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 378-9.
as a social revolutionary force was inevitable."

By quoting Plekhanov's authority, M. N. Roy reveals: "I shook his theoretical position. After several discussions, he suggested that I should draft an alternative thesis. I was reluctant to oppose Lenin publicly. Our discussions were carried on in private. The delegates whispered, mostly in awe, that the Indian upstart had dared question the wisdom of Lenin and cross verbal swords with the master of polemics. But Lenin's attitude was very kind and tolerant. In the beginning he appeared to be amused by the naivete of novice. But before long, he was impressed by my arguments, and could not dispute the authenticity of the facts I cited. It was perhaps the most valuable experience of my life until then. I had the rare privilege of being treated as an equal by a great man who proved his greatness by doing so. He could refuse to waste his precious time in discussing with a young man of no importance. I would have no chance to make myself heard in the International Congress." About his own thesis, M. N. Roy Mentions: "Lenin finally amazed me by proposing that, after a general discussion in the commission set up to examine the question, he would move that his Theses as well as mine should be recommended for adoption by the Congress. Thereupon, I agreed to formulate my critical notes and positive ideas in a document, which, I insisted, should be presented not as the alternative, but as the supplementary Theses. Lenin agreed with remark that we were exploring a new ground and should suspend final judgement pending practical

23 Ibid., pp. 379-80.

24 Ibid., p. 380.
experience. I also agreed, but with a mental reservation. It was not a new ground for me. I was quite sure of my position, and Lenin's open-minded attitude gave me the conviction that was right."  

Later on, M. N. Roy drafted his supplementary Theses on National and Colonial Question, and personally delivered it to Lenin. After reading the draft, Lenin decided to submit Roy's draft along with his own for consideration before the Second Congress of the Comintern. There were interesting discussions in the National and Colonial Commission about which M. N. Roy says that it was obvious that, all the members except Snevliet (a Dutch delegate) felt that Lenin submitted my Theses simply for politeness, and that they would brush the document aside without any discussion. He further discloses: "Lenin created a sensation by declaring that prolonged discussion with me had made him doubtful about his own Theses; therefore, he proposed that both the draft should be considered together as the greatest possible approximation to a theoretically sound and factually valid approach to the problem. Evidently taking the cue from Lenin, the other Russian member of the Commission, Georgi Safarov, proposed that all should be elected its vice-chairman. On my counter proposal, supported by Lenin, Snevliet was elected to the position of honour, and Safarov, the secretary."  

Concluding the foregoing discussions Roy mentions: "Pending the clarification of theoretical issues in the light of future experience, the discussion in the commission throughout

25 Ibid., pp. 380-1.

26 Ibid., p. 381.
one practical point of difference between Lenin and myself. I concretised his general idea of supporting the colonial national liberation movement with the proposal that Communist Parties should be organised with the purpose of revolutionising the social character of the movement under the pressure of organised workers and peasants. That, in my opinion was the only method of concretely helping the colonial peoples in their struggle for national liberation. I maintain that, afraid of revolution, the nationalist bourgeoisie would compromise with Imperialism in return for some economic and political concessions to their class. The working class should be prepared to take over at that crisis the leadership of the struggle for national liberation and transform it into a revolutionary mass movement. I again impressed Lenin by quoting Plekhanov, who had predicted in the closing years of the nineteenth century that the democratic movement in Russia should grow into a proletarian revolution or it would not succeed. About argument and counter argument he final says that Lenin reported the discussion in the Commission to a plenary session of the congress, and recommended the adoption of both the theses.\footnote{Ibid., p. 382.}

About the same affair, speaking in the Second Congress of the Comintern on July 26, 1920, Lenin said:

"Comrades, I will confine myself to a brief introduction, and later, Comrade Maring, who acted as Secretary of our Commission, will submit to you a detailed report on the changes which we have made in theses. After him, Comrade Roy, who formulated supplementary theses will speak. Our commission unanimously"
adopted the preliminary theses, with amendments and also the supplementary theses. Thus, we succeeded in achieving complete unanimity on all the important questions."

Lenin further says: "I would particularly to emphasize the question of the bourgeois democratic movement in backward countries. It was this question that gave rise to some disagreement. We argued about whether it would be correct, in principle and in theory, to declare that Communist International and the Communist Parties should support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of this discussion we unanimously decided to speak of the nationalist-revolutionary movement. There is not the slightest doubt that every nationalist movement can only be a bourgeois democratic movement, for the bulk of the population in backward countries are peasants, who represent bourgeois-capitalist relations." Earlier Lenin had termed M. N. Roy's thesis as "written mainly from the point of view of the situation in India and among other large nationalities which are oppressed by Great Britain, and this is what makes them very important for us." According to the proceeding of the Comintern: "Roy maintains that the revolution in Europe depends utterly on the course of revolution in the East. Unless revolution triumphs in the Eastern countries, the Communist movement in the West may fall apart. World capitalism draws its main resources and income from the colonies, primarily from Asia... it is therefore essential

28 V. I. Lenin, n. 20, p. 239.

29 Ibid., p. 240.

30 Ibid.
to fuel the revolutionary movement in the East, and adopt as a fundamental thesis that the fate of world communism depends on the victory of communism in the East."31

Refuting M. N. Roy's viewpoint, Lenin said: "The Hindu Communists must support the bourgeois democratic movement without merging with it. Comrade Roy goes too far when he says that the fate of the West depends entirely on the development and strength of the revolutionary movement in the Eastern countries. Though India has five million proletarians and thirty seven million landless peasants, the Hindu Communists still have not succeeded in forming a Communist Party in that country, a fact which by itself cuts much of the ground from under Comrade Roy's opinion."32 Perhaps it was Lenin's remark which expedited M. N. Roy to set up a Communist party of India at Tashkent on October 17, 1920. However, under the shadow of these controversies, M. N. Roy's thesis was amended and brought in line with Lenin's thesis and thus both theses were adopted. Though the original thesis of M. N. Roy was forgotten by the Comintern, its impact could not be wiped out from the mind of many leaders and activists of anti-colonial movements particularly in India.

John Patrick Haithcox, an American expert on Comintern policy, quoting different sources points out that Roy suspected the reliability of the leadership of the Indian National Congress. He had left India in August 1915, and this attitude was no doubt conditioned by his early acquaintance with the

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31 Lazitch and Drachkovitch, n. 19, p. 388 (Quoted from original Russian sources).
32 Ibid., p. 389.
moderates. The moderates, partisans of British culture and institutions who had faith in the ultimate goodwill of their British overlords, stressed non-violent, constitutional methods for securing measured progress towards self-government. The radicals, more firmly rooted in their own and more impatient and less trusting than the moderates, felt that extra constitutional methods were required to secure relief from a repressive Raj. At the annual Congress session at Surat in 1907, the two groups came to blows over their differences, but the moderates were able to assert their control over the party. The following year a new party constitution was adopted. It stated that the objectives of the Indian National Congress were to be achieved by the constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual moral, economic, and industrial resources of the country. Party delegates were required to express in writing their acceptance of this creed. In the way the radicals—whose most prominent national spokesman was the Maharashtrian Bal Gangadhar Tilak—were effectively debarred from active participation in the Congress party.\(^{33}\)

In his analysis of class forces in India, Roy greatly exaggerated both the numerical and ideological strength of the Indian proletariat. Estimating that India possessed five million workers, and an additional thirty seven million landless peasants, he reported to the Comintern that, although the Indian nationalist

movement rested for the most part on the middle classes, the down trodden Indian masses would shortly blaze their own revolutionary trial. In his supplementary thesis, he claimed that the real strength of the liberation movement is no longer confined to the narrow circle of bourgeois -democratic nationalists. In the most of the colonies there already exist organised revolutionary parties.34 Regarding this affair Haithcox had pointed out that Lenin did not share Roy's confidence in the strength of the Indian proletariat or peasantry.35 He further says that in a sense, the debate between Lenin and Roy on the national and colonial question can be interpreted as reflecting a difference of opinion on the relative weight to be given to the maximum and minimum programs in the formulation of Comintern policy. In 1920 Roy shared the impatience of youth. Like Marx before 1848, he underestimated the task of mobilising class unrest and forging an effective organisational weapon. Roy wanted to force the pace set by Lenin in order to liberate the masses at once from all oppressive relationship of both foreign and domestic hue.36

According to Overstreet and Windmiller, Roy's disagreement with Lenin is apparent even in the amended version of his thesis adopted by the Congress. In it he argued that in the dependent countries there were "two distinct movements" which


35 Ibid., p. 15.

36 Ibid., p. 17.
were growing farther apart each day. One was the "bourgeois democratic nationalist movement, with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order", and the other was "the mass action of the poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from all sorts of exploitation." The former endeavours to control the later he said, and the Communist International should try to prevent this. The first and most necessary task, he argued, was to form Communist Parties that would organise the peasants and workers and lead them to revolution and to the establishment of Soviet Republics. The anti-imperialist struggle, he said should not mean endorsing "the nationalist aspirations of the native bourgeoisie."37

They further write:" To sum up, Lenin and Roy disagreed on both strategy and tactics. Lenin believed that bourgeois nationalist movements were characteristically revolutionary and that Communists should support them. Roy believed that they were not revolutionary and, therefore, were unworthy to support. Lenin wanted communists to work with bourgeois nationalist organisations because they were anti-imperialist and because he believed there were no proletarian organisations of any consequence at the time. Roy insisted that there were important proletarian parties in the colonies and that Communists should work with them in preference to bourgeois organisations. The difference were fundamental and were to loom large when projected into the future."38

38 Ibid., p. 30.
Providing an interesting analyses, Overstreet and Windmiller argue that in view of his limited experience as a Marxist theoretician, it is reasonable to enquire why, on the occasion of his first participation in an international Communist gathering, Roy felt so strongly impelled to oppose the theoretical formulations of the greatest Marxist strategist of the Soviet Union. There is undoubtedly no simple answer to this question. A major factor, no doubt, was his natural feeling as an Asian that Asians were better able than Europeans to understand Asian conditions, and perhaps there was some resentment that Lenin should presume to formulate strategy for such a vast area where he had no first-hand experience. There is no doubt that the Russians regarded the Asian revolution primarily as ancillary to the struggle in Europe and Roy and other Asians frequently protested against this emphasis on Europe, which to them resembled the very imperialism that the Comintern was pledged to fight.39

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

39 Ibid.
to join with Soviet Russia in a common struggle.40

The Executive Committee of the Communist International elected by the Second Congress, set up a sub-committee of five members which was known as the "Small Bureau". It was a supreme policy making organ of the Communist International. Planning the strategy of revolution in Asia was given a prominent place on the agenda of the "Small Bureau", about which M. N. Roy says that I had declined to accept a seat on the Executive Committee elected by the Second Congress. But while still in Moscow, I was co-opted as a member of the all powerful" Small Bureau". It passed two resolution: (1) To hold first Congress of the Oppressed Peoples of the East at Baku; and (2) To set up a Central Asiatic Bureau of the Communist International at Tashkent.41 Roy further says that the Congress was Zinoviev's idea. Evidently, it could serve only the purpose of agitation, which alone was not enough to bring about a revolution. On that ground I opposed the idea. It could not possibly be a Congress, competent to plan action on basis of a deliberation by accredited representatives from the countries concerned. As a matter of fact, on such a short notice, revolutionary organisations even in the adjacent countries could not be expected to send delegates to the Congress. It would be a glorified mass meeting attended by the overwhelmingly Muslim oil-field workers and the local urban population. Why call it a congress? But the idea was exotic and appealed to the curiosity


41 M. N. Roy, n. 21, p. 391.
of the Western delegates to the Second World Congress still in Moscow. Radek, who had replaced Balabanova as the Secretary of the Communist International, was very enthusiastic. The poetic temperament of John Reed was worked up by a lively imagination.42

Giving further details, M. N. Roy says that it was a symbolic gesture to hold at Baku a gigantic mass demonstration against Imperialism. During the civil war, British-Indian troops had seized the rich oil-fields. Before they were driven out only a few months ago, twenty two leading Communist prisoners had been publicly executed on the beach of the Caspian sea. The Congress was to meet where a monument had already been raised to commemorate the martyrdom of the victims of Imperialist violence. As a symbolic gesture, the projected show would have some significance. But I was eager for more serious work—actual organisation of the expected revolution in Asia, which would reinforce the position of the proletariat in the imperialist countries of the West. Therefore I attached greater importance to the resolution to set up the Central Asiatic Bureau of the Communist International, charged with the responsibility, in the first place, of carrying through the revolution in Turkestan and Bokhara, and then of spreading it to the adjacent countries, particularly India. Obsessed with my own preoccupation, I stubbornly opposed the plan of the Baku Congress, characterising it as a wanton waste of time, energy and material resources in frivolous agitation, and went to the extent of calling it

42 Ibid., also see, Jane D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, n. 37, p. 34.
"Zinoviev's Circus."\textsuperscript{43}

Regarding above affairs, David N. Druhe has remarked that the Second Congress of the Comintern had produced two notable results. In the first place, a special bureau of Communist International was set up, the Central Asiatic Bureau\textsuperscript{44} which was designed to further dissemination of Communism, particularly in India.\textsuperscript{44} This Bureau was composed of M. N. Roy, General Sokolnikov (Commander in-Chief of the Red Army in Central Asia and Chairman of the Turkestan Commission of the Central Soviet Government) and Georgi Safarov.

The other important decision resulting from the Second Congress of the Comintern, effecting India, was the agreement to hold a conference composed of nations of the Near, Middle and Far East. The conference was to meet at the city of Baku in Azerbaijan which had been recently won by Bolsheviks from the whilom anti-communist independent state of Azerbaijan. The conference was to assembled at the important Petroleum port on the West shore of the Caspian on September 1, 1920.\textsuperscript{45} The Congress of the Peoples of the East represented no fewer than 37 countries. The Indian delegation was a small one, as contrasted to the delegation from the other Eastern Countries. There were only 14 members representing India as compared to

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp. 391-2.

\textsuperscript{44} David N. Druhe, Soviet Russia and Indian Communism (New York, 1959), p. 27.

235 Turks, 192 Persians and 157 Armenians present at Congress. The Indian delegates consisted mainly of deserters from the Ango-Indian forces which were still occupying the Iranian province of Khorasan. There were mainly Pathans of Muslims faith (today such people are Pakistanis) who were not imbued with Bolshevism but only with the desire to support the Caliphate.46

In this context M. N. Roy says: "Notwithstanding the temptation of being the star of the show, I refused to join the picturesque cavalcade to the gates of mysterious orient. Lenin smiled indulgently on my cussedness; Zenoviev was away at the audacity of an upstart crossing his will; Radek ridiculed my precocious seriousness. It might not yield any lasting result, but by forgo the fun of a picaresque show which was sure to give the then British foreign minister, Lord Curzon some sleepless nights."47 He further says, "Karakhan (deputy foreign minister of Soviet Russia) an oriental himself, sympathised with my view but Chicherin (foreign minister of Soviet Russia) tried on me his gentle persuasiveness, unsuccessfully, in the small hour of several nights. Borodin was exasperated by my tardiness to learn that discipline was the highest Bolshevik virtue. I was impatient. The preparation of my mission to Central Asia would take time. Things did not move fast enough in those days in Moscow. I was not prepared to waste some more time for the fun of seeing Zinoviev's Circus at Baku. There were many others, more distinguished than myself, eager to join the cavalcade. I should

46 Ibid., p. 28 (Quoted).

47 M. N. Roy, n. 21, p. 392.
not be missed, Let Abarr· Mukherji 6 to as the Indian delegate. He was delighted, and on the way made some scenes to demonstrate his importance. "48

It was the period when a large number of Indian Muslims were trying to join holy war against British imperialism in Turkey along with Kemal Ataturk's followers. It was known as 'Khilaphat ' movement. Thousands of Muhajirs tried to migrate from India via Afghanistan. According to a Soviet scholar, M. A. persists, twenty eight Indian national revolutionaries arrived in Tashkent on July 2, 1920, from Kabul. That was not just a group of disconnected people, but a fraction of an organisation which had established itself as the Indian revolutionary association. It was given a solemn and cordial welcome by numerous representatives of the cities working people, public organisations, the Soviet authorities and the Red Army, Speeches were made by Valerian Kuibyshev, Deputy chairman of the commission on Turkestan affairs at the all-Russia central Executive Committee, and Mikhail Frunze, commander of the Turkistan front. The Chairman of the association, Abdur Rubb Barq, spoke in reply. He thanked everybody for the warm welcome which had surpassed all his expectations and those of his mates.49

He further writes that the Association was created by Abdur Rabb Barq and Prativadi Acharya in Kabul at the very end of

48 Ibid.

December 1919, or in January 1920, soon after the... and also Mahendra Pratap, had arrived in the Afghan capital from Moscow together with the first Soviet delegation led by Ya. Z. Surits. For five months, the Association had worked among the Indian emigres in Kabul, and during that period, its membership had expended to just about a hundred and fifty. That means it was one fifth of the total that arrived in Tashkent which was not so few at all, considering the difficulties of travel at the time. There had been four or five general membership meetings in Kabul to discuss and endorse action plans, and elect the leadership of the Association: Abdur Rabb Barq as Chairman, Prativadi Acharya as his Deputy, Amin Farukh Fazil Al Qadir as Secretaries. The constitution, which formulated the purposes and structural principles of the Association, had also been drawn up in Kabul.50

Persits has revealed that on February 17, 1920, the Association had adopted its famous message of greeting to V. I. Lenin in which it has thanked Soviet Russia for her struggle for the liberation of all the oppressed nations, notably India.51 Lenin replied by expressing his joy over the fact that the principles of self-determination and liberation of subject peoples, proclaimed by the workers' and peasants' republic, had fetched so larger a response from politically conscious Indians.52 Though the activity of Indian Revolutionary Association were not very significant, the Bolsheviks considered the Association as an

50 Persits, n. 49 pp. 55- 56.

51 Izvestia (Tashkent), April 17, 1920, p. 1, Quoted in Ibid., p. 56.

52 Ibid.
important possible means for carrying out future revolutionary jobs in India. This is why, it was given lot of attention by the Soviets. It enjoyed hospitality of the Soviet Government. The Constitution of the Association stated that its representative office," will be established in Tashkent so as to provide good information for European and, more particularly, Russian public opinion about the condition of India under British rule."53

Giving further details about Muhajirs in an other writing, Persits says; "The Afghan Government yielding to pressure from Britain, banned the immigrants from the free movement northward. Only two batches of base 80 each, and a small number of other Indians, not to count isolated individuals who acted on their own, were allowed to cross into Soviet territory in 1920. Those who wanted to do so prove to be far more numerous, however, and that is why a further, third batch was formed soon afterwards. But when it tried to move northward, it was confronted with armed resistance by the Afghan authorities. According to reports of April 27, 1921, coming from Chardzhou, the Afghans arrested 500 Indian immigrants in Mazar-i-Sharif who were on their way to Russia and kept them in Khanabad. Besides 150 Indian immigrants who also wanted to get into Russia were arrested in Hevat. The Soviet consul pressed for their release but failed to obtain it. Considering the situation as it had developed, one may assume that the Afghan authorities intervened even in the very process of making up groups going to Afghanistan. The Emir's officials did all they could for those groups to be formed predominantly of individuals eventually

53 Ibid.
striving to go to Turkey rather than to the lands of the Bolsheviks."

He also reveals that there were over 200 Indians in Soviet cities (as Moscow, Taskhent, Bokhara, Baku or Samarkand) late in 1920 and early in 1921. Many of them became Communists there and studied at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East and other educational and propaganda institution. Back home, they became active in the communist, working-class and national liberation movements. Others, although they had not joined the Communist Party, drastically changed their views. They now had a different appreciation of the role of the working masses in the liberation struggle and strongly advocated action to win the basic social and economic demands of the working people of the town and countryside. Quite a few Indian revolutionaries stayed on in the Land of Soviets for the rest of their lives and played their full part in the process of socialist construction.

The serious attitude of Bolsheviks towards Indian Muhajirs can be traced from and interesting account given by M. N. Roy in his memoirs. He says: "Soon after arriving at Bokhara, I received a report that a group of Indian revolutionaries had been captured by the Turkoman rebels, and were held as prisoners in a place on the upper reaches of the Oxus River. On enquiry, the authenticity of the report was verified, and it was further learned that the Indian prisoners were very badly treated by the captors, and were


55 Ibid., p. 122.
actually in danger of death or starvation if they were not relieved before long. The country was infested by Turkoman rebels. Therefore, the rescue of the Indian prisoners required a small military expedition. Fortunately, Frunze (a topmost Bolshevik leader) was then still in Bokhara. I discussed the matter with him, and it was decided that a detachment of the Red Army should be forthwith despatched with a gunboat up the river Oxus. The rescue party started immediately and did not have any difficulty in reaching the place where Indians were held by the Turkomans. They were indeed in a deplorable plight, being actually tied with thick ropes and were practically starving, because the miserably morsels thrown at them by their captors were uneatable. The expedition returned to Bokhara while I was still there. The liberated Indians were in rags and tatters and hardly able to move because of the long period of starvation. The first thing was to accommodate them in a comfortable house and give them sufficient clothes and food. After they had recovered from the miserable conditions in which they were found, I enquired how they came to that remote part of the country where they were taken prisoners and why. It was a long story they told."\textsuperscript{56}

The fact was that these Indian revolutionaries (Muhajirs) had lost their way while going to Turkey for the purpose of fighting for the Caliphate against the British imperialism and trapped in the hands of fanatic Turkomans. In this context M. N. Roy says that a distance of more than 150 miles had to be covered on foot over the high ranges of the Hindukush. At the end of the journey, they lost their way to a frequented frontier station. But

\textsuperscript{56} M. N. Roy, n. 21, pp. 454-5.
as they knew that the Russian was at a short distance to the north, they pushed ahead through the wilderness, until they reach the river Oxus, which was the boundary between Afghanistan and Bokhara. The Afghan Government had betrayed them. But Bokhara was an Islamic country and the Turkmans whom they encountered directly were also Mussulmans. Yet another disillusionment was in store for them. When they asked the Turkmans which was the road to Russia, they were conducted to a cleaning in the forest higher up the river and made prisoner. It was a terrible experience but fanaticism survived it. They did not seem to very thankful for the rescue.57

According to Western sources, in October 1920 a group of thirty six (including one Shaukat Usmani) reached Tashkent, where they were met by Roy and enrolled in a training course for revolutionaries. After ten months of training at Tashkent, three members of this group (Shaukat Usamani, Abdul Majid and Abdul Kabir Seharai) were selected for further instruction in Moscow. Somewhat later (March 1921) the Tashkent School was closed (as a result of conditions laid down by the British in concluding the Soviet-British agreement of March 16, 1921) and most of the remaining Indian revolutionaries enrolled there were also shifted to Moscow, where they were admitted to the Communist University of Toilers of the East.58

In June 1921, another deputation of Indian revolutionaries reached Moscow. This group (led by Virendra Chattopadhyaya and G.A. K. Lahani, including Bhupen, C.P. Tiwari, Agnes Smendhey, Khankoji and Nalini

57 Ibid., p. 456.

58 Eudin and North, n. 40, p. 84, (Quoted from original sources).
Gupta) represented Indian revolutionaries who had organised themselves in Berlin during World War I, their object being, of course, to exploit that conflict to the detriment of British rule in India. At about the same time fifteen or so Indian students from the University of the Toilers of the East returned to India, where they were arrested in 1922, tried at Peshawar and sentenced to imprisonment in proceedings of the Tashkent Conspiracy Case.\(^5^9\)

So far as Military or Training School for Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent is concerned, it was an unique landmark in Soviet policy towards anti-colonial movement in India. Regarding this school M. N. Roy says: "The group of Russian officers who had accompanied me from Moscow was still in Tashkent. To them was entrusted the organisation of the school. John, the American Wobbly, was appointed the Commandant of the School. He was to look after the discipline. Having looked over his wards, he sarcastically remarked: "We are going to train not an army of revolution, but an army of God."\(^6^0\) In fact, this remark was made by him specially due to Muslim Muhajirs from India who were mostly getting training at the School.

Regarding foundation of the Military School M. N. Roy has given some interesting accounts, according that: "The formal foundation of The Indian Military School at Tashkent was ceremonious affair, attended by high officials of the Turkestan Republic and the leaders of the Turkestan Communist Party. According to Previous agreement Russians Kept away in view of

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) M. N. Roy, n. 21, p. 467.
the fact that, just at that time diplomatic negotiations were going on between the Soviet Government and Britain for resumption of trade relations, which would end the long economic blockade of the Soviet Republic."

Roy further says: "Therefore anxious to put an end to the economic blockade, the Soviet Government was reluctant to do anything which might queer the pitch of the diplomatic negotiations for the resumption of trade with Britain. A pathological suspicion, however, could not be easily allayed. Before the year was out, the Soviet Government received a blistering note from the British Foreign Secretary which referred to the Indian Military School at Tashkent as evidence of Soviet aggressive designs against the British Empire. As a rupture of newly established economic relations with Britain would prejudice the painful process of Russian reconstruction, the Indian Military School at Tashkent had to be disbanded."62

According to the official documents of the CPI, there were three courses in the Indian Military School at Tashkent: One for training Airforce pilots and officers, another for infantry officers and a third for ordinary infantry soldiers. Better educated cadres were selected for the first two courses while the uneducated were taken to the third course. General political education was given to all but more educated were given an impressive political education course.63

61 Ibid., p. 468.

62 Ibid.

63 Adhikari, n. 10, p. 53.
Regarding the closure of Indian Military School, N. I. Fovrovsky, a deputy member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Turkestan Front and a veteran Communist Party member since July 1917, who was appointed to look after the Muhajirs, refuting M. N. Roy's version says: "At one of the council meetings, Roy, speaking for the entire group, asked for food, military equipment and assistance in organising military training; of course, we knew what this entailed. When Roy left the meeting after putting his case, there were such remarks as adventurism, fantastic, etc.... It was decided to give Indian comrades all possible support without however being involved in their plan. That too as far as I know was the attitude of Moscow. Indian were allotted a shooting range of the Chirchik highway near Tashkent and began their military training.... but it was not long before the whole plan had to be abandoned.... The Afghan Government categorically refused permission to cross Afghanistan on the way to India. Roy's repeated and insistent appeals to Afghan Consulate in Tashkent were of no avail. In the spring of 1921 military training stopped. Some of the Indians decided to return to India illegally, other stayed on in Tashkent, several joined Red Army and 22 returned to Moscow to study at the Communist University of Toilers of the East."  

However, during that period the Indian Military School at Tashkent and the Communist University at Moscow played great role in creating ideological frame-work for the Indian revolutionaries. In fact, period inspired some dedicated Indian revolutionaries to convert themselves into communists and thus

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64 New Times (Moscow, 1967), no. 14, Quoted in Ibid., pp. 241-2.
four different communist groups emerged in India for the first time in country’s history. These groups were in Bombay led by S.A. Dange, in Calcutta led by Muzaffar Ahmed, in Madras led by Singaravelu Chettiar and in Lahore led by Gulam Hussain. Regarding these groups Muzaffar Ahmed writes: "For all of us, the epicentre was the Communist International; its headquarters lay thousands of miles away, in Moscow. However, the Communist International established independent connections with each of these four places. In some cases the Communist International introduced us to one another, as for instances, it did Dange to me. 65 This is the time when Dange's famous book "Gandhi Vs Lenin" drew the attention of Communist International towards Indian affairs. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the Fourth Congress of the Communist International was going to be held in November, 1922. Therefore, Comintern decided to contact Dange in order to invite him to attend the Congress. This is why, a British communist Charles Ashleigh was sent to Bombay on September 19, 1922, where he was detained by British police and later on imported back to England, however, he could be able to contact Dange and delivered the message of the Communist International. Later on many such representatives of the Comintern came to India on special missions.

Muzaffar Ahmad further says: "Among us, the pioneers, some started on the job in 1921, for instance, Shaukat Usmani, a member of the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. Some started early in 1922. In 1924, Lt -Col. C. Kaye, Director  

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Intelligence Bureau under the Home Department of India, who as complainant or behalf of the Government of India filed the case against the accused in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. Stated in his petition that the accused Sripat (Spelt Sripat instead of Sripad in the petition) Amrit Dange, Mowlia Bakhsh alias Shaukat Usmani and Muzaffar Ahmed involved with the Communist International in a conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of India. It is, therefore, quite clear that the offence with which the court charged the accused persons in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case and for which they were convicted had began as long back as 1921; their real offence was to establish connections with the Communist International.

It is obvious that the Communist International was trying its best to help the Indian revolutionaries to start Communist and anti-colonial movement on Bolshevik lines. For this purpose it extended all kinds of help to Indian revolutionaries. As mentioned earlier about different Communist groups, according to archival sources the activities of these communist groups in India were financed by the Comintern, which in November, 1922 had appropriated £ 70,000 in support of trade union work in India and £35,000 for party work, as well as £ 15,000 for Dange's Weekly, the Socialist. In this regard according to British Foreign Office Record' Zinoviev was reported to have informed the Baku council

66 Ibid., pp. 78-79.

67 Government of India, home Department, 1927, Page 12, Quoted in Haithcox, n. 33, p. 32; also see, Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 37, p. 53.
in January 1923 that in view of the enormous expenditure in connection with our western word, we are obliged to cut down expenses in the East. An original allocation of two million rubles was reduced by half."

It was the period when a lot of rumours were floating in the West regarding a possible Bolshevik invasion of India. According to David N. Druhe, in the summer of 1921, the time seemed to be ripe for a possible Soviet invasion of India through Afghanistan, since the connivance of the latter Country in this scheme appeared likely. In answer to the question, why then did this Soviet plan not come to pass: quoting different sources Druhe says that in the first place, the Bolsheviks, in spite of their efforts were not so successful in bringing about the formation of a nucleus of revolutionaries in Central Asia as they had desired. Many of the Indian merchants in central Asia were only interested in returning to India since threatened their livelihood, and as a matter of fact, many of them succeeded in effectuating this desire. Moreover, many of the Muhajirs likewise proved to be useless from the Communist point of view, and consequently made poor scholars at the revolutionary school at Tashkent. After all, they could well perceive that atheistic Communism was Incompatible with the Muslim faith for which they had been sacrificing so much in pursuance of their desire to

68 Foreign Office Secret Intelligence Report, Misc/ 27, March 27, 1923, F. O. 371 / 9332 / N 3426 (New Delhi, National Archives of India).

69 Druhe, n. 44, p. 39.
save the spiritual head of Islam, the Caliph.  

He further says that more over, there was dissension among the Indian Communists. Acharya and Abdur Rab had arrived in Tashkent in the spring of 1921 and they appear to have resented Roy's authority in Central Asia. They and a minority of Muhajirs who had been converted to Communism in the Tashkent propaganda school advocated the immediate formation of the Communist party of India. On the other hand, Roy himself thought the move a premature one and opposed it. However, the view of Acharya prevailed, undoubtedly because it had the support of the Russian authorities in Central Asia.

However, it was quite clear that M. N. Roy had planned to invade British forces in India with the help of Bolshevik from the territory of Afghanistan. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the Bolshevik leadership had almost decided to appoint M. N. Roy as Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan. However, Lenin was of the opinion that for making a gesture of goodwill and friendship for India, M. N. Roy should not be tied down to an official position. M. N. Roy's original plan was to arm frontier tribes, so that they could wage a war against British. In this context he had submitted the plan for Lenin's consideration and approval. Quoting M. N. Roy, Druhe says that at a "diplomatic dinner" given by M. N. Roy late in 1920 to which the Afghan envoy to the Soviet Central Asian Capital at Tashkent, had been invited, the latter

70 Ibid.

71 The Times (london), February 16, 1921, p. 9, Quoted in Ibid.

72 M. N. Roy, n. 21, p. 414.

73 See for the details of the plan, Ibid., pp. 417-21.
indicated that all Russian arms to be sent to Afghanistan for use in the eventual "liberation" of India could be transported only by the Afghan government, although he half-promised the West that they would be delivered to anti-British Indians on the Indian North-West-frontier. At the same time, the envoy indicated that the Afghans would agree to permit Roy and a member of Indian revolutionaries to enter Afghanistan, but they must be disarmed on their entry into that land it armed at all, only later on the frontier on India. It was fairly apparent that Soviet could not utilise Afghanistan for an invasion of India as it was clear that Afghanistan had no desire for any Soviet force to enter its territory and employ it as a base of operations for an invasion of India, and much less did the Afghans desire to participate in the operation itself.74

However, Soviet scholars have strongly refuted any possibility of the then Bolshevik invasion of British India, as M. A. Persits writes: "The governments of imperialist powers in those years accused the Soviet Government of "insatiable aggressiveness" and of attempts to grab almost the whole world. Lenin ridiculed and exposed the Land of Soviet. At the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) he said that some people were claiming that sensical, But the bourgeoisie have their own interests and their own press, which is shouting this to the whole world in hundreds of millions of copies; Wilson, Too, is supporting this in his own interests. The Bolsheviks, they declare, have a large army, and they want, by means of Conquest,

to implant their Bolshevism in Germany.\textsuperscript{75} He further writes: "There are some western politicians and scholars who quite often make such claims nowadays, too. The most zealous exponent of this sort of ideas is David N. Druhe whose book is full of outright falsehood for the Soviet Union and Communism. Besides, it clearly betrays the author's contemptuous attitude to Indian revolutionaries, their aspiration and temporary delusions. Apart from that, The work abounds in factual errors and information borrowed from unreliable sources."\textsuperscript{76}

Thus we see that the year 1920 was full of far-reaching events for communist International as well as anti-colonial movement in India. A year later the third congress of Communist International was held from June 22 to July 12, 1921 in Moscow. Though no communist group had yet been formed in India, more Indians than earlier took part in this congress. However, as mentioned earlier the Communist Party of India had already been functioning from Tashkent. According to CPI sources, in June-July 1921 some 20 Muhajirs were studying Marxism-Leninism in the University of the People of the East (Communist University in Moscow), many of whom had already joined the CPI formed in Tashkent. There were, besides, 14 Indian revolutionaries, headed by Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya and Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta, present at that time in Moscow to negotiate with the Bolshevik leaders about assistance to India's struggle for independence.

\textsuperscript{75} V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R. C. P. (B), March 18-23, 1919", \textit{Collected Works}, vol. 29, p. 173, Quoted in Persits, n. 54, pp. 139-140.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 140.
Among these were M. Barakatullah, Pandurang Khankhoje, Abdul Rab Peshawari, Mandayam Pratiwadi Bhayamkar Tirumal Acharua, Birendra Nath Das Gupta, "Daud Ali" Datt, G. A. K Luhani. M. N. Roy, of course, was there. In this context David N. Druhe writes: "... these Indians felt they should undertake a mission to Moscow by which they hoped they would receive full Soviet backing for their designs against the British Raj. They received encouragement for this from M. Kopp, Soviet envoy to Germany and so in May 1921, there was a delegation from Berlin in Moscow. The delegation included no fewer than fourteen persons incompassing the leadership of the old "Berlin Committee"... But the "driving force" of the delegation was an American radical Miss Agnes Smedley, who like Avelyn Roy had fallen in with member of Indian revolutionary centre in Sanfrancisco. Miss Smedley had been inclined to anarchism in United States and had gone to Berlin after the First World War to join the Indian revolutionaries these for whom she evinced a great amount of sympathy." 78

He further writes: "The Indians from Berlin immediately demanded interviews with chairman of the People's Commissars Lenin, Foreign Commissar Chicherin, and Comintern Secretary Radek to demand of these Soviet leaders that Russia give them a position similar to that which they had enjoyed under the Kaiser, but without being committed to Communism as an ideology. The Soviet leaders were polite but non-committal to the Indian revolutionaries. This disinterestedness on the part of the rulers

78 Druhe, n. 44, pp. 46-47, (Quoted).
of Bolshevism filled the Indians with wrath and many of them left Soviet Russia forthwith. However, the leaders of the old 'Berlin committed', Chattopadhyaya, Dutta, Luhani and Nalini Gupta stayed on in Moscow. In addition to trying to induce the Soviet to give them more support in their own plans for the eviction of the British in India, the Berlin Indians endeavoured to have the Soviets remove M.N. Roy as the leader of the Indian revolutionaries in Russia. They despised Roy because he had espoused Communism as an ideology, and even more, they were jealous of the Bengali because he had succeeded in obtaining the favor of Lenin and held a high place in the Communist hierarchy."

One decision which followed the wake of the Third World Congress, was that the abolition of the Tuskestan Bureau of the Communist International and the opening in its stead of an Eastern Section of the Comintern in its head quarters at Moscow which would take charge Communist revolutionary movement in the East and guide its course. Since the attempt to establish contact with revolutionary movements in India and other Eastern countries from the base in Central Asia had proved fruitless, it was also decided that in the future the Communist parties in the "imperialist countries" should be charged to carry on subversive work in the colonies controlled by their Countries. The second decision taken after the Third Congress of the Communist Intentional was the disbandment of the Communist propaganda

79 Ibid., p. 47, (Quoted)

school and the military Training school in Tashkent and their removal to Moscow. This would, the Soviet leaders believed, modify the hostile fear of Great Britain towards the new Russia. But in the place of the schools at Tashkent, it was proposed that a Moscow Training centre for propaganda should be set up, the University of the Toiler of the East, which would carry out the work of the earlier propaganda school in Turkestan but would be less liable to produce apprehension in, and stern notes from, London than the school in Tashkent.81

According to Druhe, having carried out his mission in regard to closing down of the Red schools, Roy returned to Moscow in the autumn of 1921, which city he temporarily made his headquarters, and there assisted in the foundation of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East.82 In this context it is pointed out that M. N. Roy was invited to Moscow while living in Tashkent, to participate in the Third Comintern Congress, where he was to give a report on the activities of the Tashkent Bureau. In Moscow, on submitting an outline of his report to Lenin, he was more than surprised to learn that of this Congress, in contrast to the previous one, the Colonial question was to be treated as a "poor relation". He was allowed to speak only five minutes, which he used not to make his report but protest against the opportunistic manner in which the Eastern question has been

81 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
82 Ibid., p. 50.
During this period 36th Session of Indian National Congress was held in Ahmadabad in 1921. In the name of Communist Party of India a manifesto under signed by M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherjea was addressed to this session. The Manifesto put forward a full-fledged programme of anti-imperialist democratic revolution with particular stress on the demands of the workers and peasants so as to draw them fully into the freedom struggle. It is on the basis of this Manifesto that Maulana Hasrat Mohani moved a resolution for complete independence at the Ahmedabad session -a resolution which was defeated only due to vehement opposition of Mahatma Gandhi.

As it was the period of "Non-Cooperation Movement", the India witnessed unprecedented movement of the people against British colonialism. Thousands of students had left schools and colleges to plunge into freedom struggle. On February 1, 1922, Mahatma Gandhi announced that would start mass civil disobedience including non payment of taxes unless within seven days the political prisoners were released and the press freed from Government control.

Just after the above declaration of Gandhi, on February 5, 1922 a Congress procession of 3000 peasants of Chauri

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84 For the text of the Manifesto, see, Adhikari, n. 10, pp. 341-54.

85 Bipan Chandra, n. 2, p. 274.
Chaura a village in Gorakhpur district of U. P., was fired upon by the police. The angry crowd attacked and burnt the police station causing the death of 22 policemen. Gandhiji took a very serious view of the incident. It convinced him that the nationalist workers had not yet properly understood nor barnt the practice of non-violence without which he was convinced, civil disobedience could not be success... He therefore, decided to suspend the nationalist campaign.86 To give Gandhi's opinion an official line of the Congress Party, its Working Committee met at Bardoli in Gujarat on February 12, 1922 and decided to withdraw the non-cooperation movement. Regarding this affairs Subhas Chandra Bose writes in his biography, "The Indian Struggle": "To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was nothing short of a national calamity. The principal lieutenants of Mahatma, Desh Bandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were all in prison, shared the popular resentment. I was with Desh Bandhu at the time and I could see that he was beside himself with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly bungling.87

In the meantime khilafat movement also ended with Kamal Pasha declaring the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. Thus we see the period under study in this chapter-1920-24 was marked by great upheavals in the anti-colonial struggle in India. Many revolutionaries were illusioned following the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement by Gandhiji. This situation provided opportunity to a lot of prominent revolutionaries to embrace Marxism under the influence of Communist International.

86 Ibid., pp. 275-6

87 Quoted in Ibid., p. 275.
Following Second Congress of the Comintern, its Third, Fourth and Fifth Congresses held in 1921, 1922 and respectively during the mentioned period, paid much attention on anti-colonial movement in India as well as whole of the Asia. In a resolution the Third Congress of the Comintern (1921) said: "The revolutionary national movement in India and in other colonies, is today an essential component part of the world revolution to the same extent as the uprising of the proletariat in the capitalist countries of the old and new world."88 The Fourth Congress of the Comintern 1922 came out with the slogan of anti-imperialist front in Asian countries which was directly connected with the slogan of united working class front in the Western countries. The Congress underlined that there is a long struggle ahead of the proletariat of the East... and said: "The refusal of the Communists in the colonies to take part in the struggle against imperialist tyranny, on the ground of the ostensible 'defence' of their independent class interests is opportunism of the worst kind, which can only discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. Equally injurious is the attempt to remain aloof from the struggle for the most urgent everyday interests of the working class in the name of 'national unity', of 'Civil peace' with the bourgeois democrats."89 The Congress further said: "The Communist Parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, which are still in a more or less embryonic stage, must take part in every


89 Documents of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, in Adhikari, n. 10, p. 534.
movement which gives them access to the masses."90 The above analysis of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern proved to be a forecast for the Indian Communists whose refusal to adopt that resulted in disastrous situation in early 1940s during "Quit India" movement.

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

In a message to Gaya Congress, the Communist International said: "To the All India National Congress, Gaya, India. Representative of Indian people: The Fourth Congress of the Communist International sends to you its heartiest greetings. We are chiefly interested in the struggle of the Indians to free themselves from British domination.... The infamous methods by which British imperialism sucks the life blood of the Indian people are well known. They can not be condemned too strongly; nor will simple condemnation be of any practical value. British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force, therefore it can and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution. We are (not?) in favour of resorting to violence if it can be helped: but for self-defence, the people of India must adopt violent means without which the foreign domination based upon violence can not be ended. The people of India are engaged in this great revolutionary struggle. The Communist International is whole heartedly with them."91

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid., pp. 573-4 (Quoted).
The document of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern suggested that in leading the struggle for national liberation the Indian National Congress should keep the following points always in view:  

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

(2) that no compromise with the British rulers will improve the position of the majority of the nation;  

(3) that the British domination can not be overthrown without a violent revolution, and  

(4) that the workers and peasants are alone capable of carrying the revolution to victory.

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

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

After Gaya Congress there was a kind of 'stand still' situation in India during 1923 and 24. According to Soviet sources the National Congress as an organization was under-going a

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92 Ibid., p 576.
profound crisis: in 1921-1923 its membership had dropped from ten million to a few hundred thousand. The withdrawal of masses could be explained in the light of the temporary defeat of the freedom movement.\textsuperscript{93}

Later on, the Fifth Congress of the Comintern was held from June 17 to July 8, 1924 in Moscow at crucial stage when Lenin was already dead. This Congress was attended by (504) delegates from 49 Communist and Workers' Parties. The key issue at the Congress was that of rallying the ranks of the working class and of the whole world revolutionary movement in face of the attacks of the Capital, especially the task of strengthening the communist parties.\textsuperscript{94} The Congress had to deal with the question of the policy and tactics of the Communist parties in the new conditions. The "Left" demands in the Comintern considered that the events in Germany, Bulgaria and Poland in the autumn of 1923 augured a new epoch of revolutions. From this appraisal they drew the conclusion that it was necessary to aim at the direct establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the capitalist countries and abandon the tactics of the united front, in which they saw merely a manoeuvre, and a short-lived one at that, instead of a basic principle of the struggle to win the labour masses. In the national-colonial question, which was another talking point at Congress, the "Left" concentrated the weight of their attack against the slogan of a united anti-imperialist front.

\textsuperscript{93} A. Antonova, G. Bongard Levin, and G. Kotovsky, \textit{A History of India} (Moscow, 1979), vol. 2, p. 173.

The Solution of the complex problems of theory and practice facing the Congress was rendered extremely difficult by the fact that the Communists of the world had this time assembled at their Congress without Lenin. The death of the leader of the international communist movement was indeed an irreparable loss for the Comintern.95

According to Communist Party of India sources, the Fifth Congress of the CPI took place soon after the arrests for the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case had taken place. These arrests were effected in all the four provinces where communist groups had come into existence or were in the process of formation. Ghulam Hussain was arrested in the Punjab, Shaukat Usmani in U. P., Muzaffar Ahamad and Nalini Gupta in Calcutta, and S.A. Dange in Bombay. There was a warrant of arrest for Singaravelu Chettiar but it was not implemented because of his illness, Gulam Hussain made an approver's statement to the police and he was not produced for trial and the case against him was withdrawn.

The point here is that the arrests having taken place some time before the case was actually launched in April 1924, it was not possible for any delegate to go from India. What was not possible in 1922, because of the elementary stage of the movement, could have been possible in 1924 had it not been for the arrests. This is shown by fact that at the beginning of 1924 Gopen Chakravarty did manage get away from India secretly with the help of Nalini Gupta, who after his several trips since the end 1921 to the beginning of 1924 had acquired sufficient experience in this matter. Gopen recalls that he heard of the Kanpur arrests just

95 Ibid., p. 211.
when he had reached Berlin. He says he was present at the Fifth Congress along with M. N. Roy and Mohammad Ali. He says Rahmat Ali Zakaria and Noor Ahmad were also present. Perhaps all of them were observers or delegates without vote.96

The next day after the inauguration of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, on June 18, 1924, the delegates gathered at the Lenin Mausoleum, where they were addressed by M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., On the subject of "Leninism and the Comintern". Kalinin said: "Comrades, I believe that long before this Congress it was clear to every one of you that the first word uttered at the Congress would be about Lenin. That goes without saying. The leader of the Russian revolution, the leader of Bolshevism, was also the leader of the Communist International. This was no historical accident. What we call 'Leninism', contains within itself the most consistent the fullest and most effective internationalism."97

So far as, national and Colonial question is concerned, the Comintern adopted a resolution which said: "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. One of the fundamental principles of Leninism, that Communists should resolutely and constantly fight for self-determination, rights of nationalities(Secession

96 Adhikari, n. 77, pp. 13-14.

and the formation of independent states), has not been applied by all the sections of the Communist International in the desired manner.

In addition to winning the support of the peasant masses and of the oppressed national minorities, the executive committee in its instructions always 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, and in the first place a constant struggle against imperialist Colonial policy of the bourgeoisie in every country. In this respect the activities are everywhere very weak.98

The report on national and colonial question was made by Manuilsky. According to G. Adhikari a resolution in connection with this report correctly stated that in order to win over the people of colonial and semi-colonial countries there must be a “further development of the direct contact of the executive with the national movement for emancipation. Roy it seems moved an amendment to this stating that while generally keeping in touch with the national liberation movement as a whole direct contact must be maintained with “The revolutionary element of the same.” This amendment was rejected in the commission on the ground

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that it did not correspond with the (Lenin's) theses adopted at the Second Congress. These theses had clearly stated, "All Communist parties must support by action the revolutionary liberation movements in these countries. The form which this support should take should be discussed with the communist party of the country in question, if there in one."  

One of the most important resolution adopted by the fifth Congress of the Comintern was related to fascism. Describing fascism as one of the classic form of the counter revolution in the epoch when capitalist societies were decaying, the resolution asked the communists to implement the following programmes:

A. IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE

1. Genuinely revolutionary strategy and tactics, which give the proletarian petty-bourgeois, and peasant masses confidence in the Communist movement....

2. educating the working class to understand the counter-revolutionary and anti-working class character of fascism

3. explaining to the Petty-bourgeois and peasant masses... the functions of fascism in the service of capitalism.

4. an active foreign policy. Fight against the imperialist peace Treaties, reparations, League of Nations swindle.....

5. fight for revolutionary unity with the Union of Soviet Republics. An active Leninist policy in the national question. Fight for the right of self determination and secession of

99 Ibid., p. 351.

all oppressed nations.

6. ...fight for the international united front under Comintern leadership ...

B. IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND MILITARY SPHERES

1. Formation of armed defence detachments against armed fascism.
2. Disarming of the fascists...
3. Fascist demonstrations to be answered by counter demonstrations of workers with armed protection.
4. Terrorist fascist actions (Destruction of Trade union offices, printing works, etc; attempts on workers and workers' leaders, etc.) to be answered by general strikes, the use of working-class mass terror by reprisals against the fascists, their leaders, their printing works and other understandings.
5. Stopping railway transport when the fascists organize marches, meetings, and demonstrations.
6. Driving the fascists out of the factories; sabotage; passive resistance; strikes in factories where fascists are employed or are used to supervise and to split the workers.

At the same time left deviation and anarchism were heavily prevailing within the communist parties against which the Comintern had repeatedly warned. So far as, India is concerned, during the years 1923-1924, Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) Continued to look at India with an eager eye. India being economically one of the most advanced of the underdeveloped countries, with a numerous proletariat, the International expected it to break out into open rebellion sooner than any other Asian land.101

101 Demetrio Boersner, n. 83. p. 142.
Though there was no official communist party in India at that juncture, the different communists groups operating throughout the country were just on the verge of uniting themselves to form a parties which was materialised in December 1925. Due to withdrawal of non-cooperation movement earlier by Gandhiji, the Communist groups found more ground to follow the extremist course in the freedom struggle. At the same time, understanding of the Communist International was also coincided with the Indian communists, as it was pointed out that the right wing and the left wing of the Indian National Congress were drifting away from each others, and it was felt that while the upper bourgeoisie was betraying the national liberation by aligning its interests to serve the imperialists, the petty-bourgeoisie continued to be a revolutionary. Such understanding by Indian Communists as well as the Communist International cast its shadow for decades on the future of anti-colonial and communist movement in India. Thus the period under study in this chapter had to pass through many ups and downs, a trend which continued to prevail further during prolonged period in the struggle for national emancipation.