CHAPTER IV

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE
COMINTERN POLICY IN INDIA, 1925-1934
The Communist Movement in India emerged during freedom struggle as a result of direct impact of October Revolution in Russia. Like many revolutionaries of the world the Indian revolutionaries were also the first to grasp the message of October Revolution. That is why, many of them sneaked into Russian territory after passing through great difficulties caused by the then British colonial rulers. A Soviet scholar M. A. Persits has rightly pointed out that it was in Soviet Russia that the pioneer forces of the Asian Communist movement were trained and formed in the context of a revolutionary upsurge among its working people. It was there, through practical work, rather than through theory alone, that they realised that they needed a Marxist-Leninist party as a powerful organising guiding force.... It was there, too, that Lenin's famous dispute with M. N. Roy, the first Indian communist, took place. Lenin expended too much energy and so much time for his discussions and disputes with Roy, for he saw him as a typical representative of Eastern emigrant revolutionaries who were turning to Marxism.

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

1 M. A. Persits, Revolutionaries of India in Russia, (Moscow, 1983), p.13.
Asia. Some of its leaders were the exponents of the most left-radical views in the Communist movement that was emerging in the East.²

Quoting P. Unni Krishan's article published in Link, 1964, Persits has provided an important information about an Indian emigre, the 23 years old Nisar Mohammed of Peshawar who became a communist in Soviet Russia and appointed to the post of Minister of Education of Tajik Soviet Republic, and later unchanged over to research.³ According to another account the Indian revolutionaries, once they turned up on Soviet soil, clashed in heated debates about socialism which often split them in to small groups of parties of Socialist principles. It happened in Termez in August 1920, where one of such debates took place. There was "Quite a clash" between them, as an official of the Council for International Propaganda reported. As a result, the Indians broke into two groups: a "nationalist majority" led by Mamed Akbar, a land owner's son, and a minority (22) "communist trend" headed by Abdul Qwayum.⁴ Later on Abdul Qwayum, just like Nisar Mohammed, adopted Soviet citizenship and served as a Red Army Commander in the city of Kalinin and shared in rebuilding railway transport and industry.⁵

In this way, we may find dozens of such cases about Indian revolutionaries, who played an important role not only in Indian

² Ibid., pp. 17-18.
³ Ibid., p. 112.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 113-14.
⁵ Ibid., p. 115 (Quoted).
freedom struggle but also in the fight for socialism in Russia. We have already mentioned about first two Indians, the Jabbar and Sattar brothers who had met Lenin in 1918 and also about the activities of other top revolutionaries like M. N. Roy etc. in Comintern. Behind the background of such activities, the first attempt to form a Communist Party of India was made on the Russian soil itself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, M. N. Roy immediately after returning from the Second Congress of the Comintern to Tashkent announced the formation of the Communist Party of India on October 17, 1920. Besides M. N. Roy six others who took part in the foundation of the party were Mrs. Evelyn-Trent (Roy's American wife) Abani Mukherji, Rosa Fitingov (Abani's Russian wife), Mohammed Ali(Ahamad Hasan), Mohammed Shafiq Siddiqui and M.P.B.T. Acharya. According to the minutes of the meeting: "It adopted a resolution establishing the condition of 3 months' probation period (as candidate member) for those persons who wished to join the party. Comrade Shafiq is elected as secretary. The Indian Communist Party adopts principles proclaimed by the Third International and undertakes to work out a programme suited to the conditions in India." It was under signed by M. Acharya as Chairman and Roy as Secretary.

According to another document related to the formation of the party a letter was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan written on December 20, 1920 which says: "It is hereby testified that the Communist Party of

India has been organised here in accordance with the participles of the Third International. The Indian Communist Party is working under the political guidance of the Turkestan Bureau of Comintern.7

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

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

7 Ibid., p. 233.
"The new Revolutionary Committee should consist of two Indians and one representative of the Russian Communist Party. The Indians should be explained that they would not be forced to join the party. Comrade Roy may be kept for propaganda and literary work only." ⁸

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

The above documents are enough proof to show as to what extent the Comintern was involved in the affairs of the Communists Party of India at Tashkent. At the same time, perhaps inner conflict was the sole reason as a result of which the Indian Communist Party in Tashkent could not flourish for a long time and therefore, an urgent need was felt to form a Communist Party on the Indian soil.

In the previous chapter we have already mentioned about Communist University of the Toilers of the East which was known in Russian as Kommunisti Cheskii Universitet Trudiashchikhsia Vostoka (KUTV). It played great ideological role in training hundreds of revolutionaries of the East including

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⁸ Ibid., pp. 231-2.

⁹ Ibid., p. 232.
many dozens of Indians too. This University was established on April 21, 1921 following a decree of the All Russian Central Executive Committee. The decree stipulated that the KUTV was to be located in Moscow and was to be under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities which was instructed with the organization and direction of the project. Speaking on the fourth anniversary of the Communist University, Stalin defined the purpose of the following words:

"There are two lines of activity at the University: one, the purpose of which is to train cadres competent to attend to the needs of the Soviet Republics of the East, and the other, the purpose of which to train cadres competent to attend to the revolutionary needs of the toiling masses of the colonies and dependent countries. Hence the two kinds of tasks that confront the University of Toilers of the East.

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

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11 Ibid., p. 174.
The KUTV proved to be another landmark in the field of political education for the Indian emigres in Moscow after Indian Military School's closure at Tashkent. Soviet scholar Persits has pointed out that the news of the creation of the Communist University of Toilers of the East reached India quickly and made many of its nationalist revolutionaries eager to study in Moscow. He further reveals: "One Indian Communist we could never identify, who had left the Soviet capital in August 1921, reached Bombay on December 15, wrote to the Secretary of the Indian Communist Party, to tell him about his nearly seven months' travels throughout the land (until June 2, 1922). He said that he had passed through ten industrial centres of India and met many how wanted to go to Moscow to learn the art of revolution of that number, "some 50 young students were ready to pay their way to Moscow, if there was a chance for them to enrol at the Communist University."13

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

12 Persits, n. 1, p. 208.

13 Ibid., p. 209.
with the Communist International, the first revolutionary organ of the world proletariat to extend the hand of Comradeship to the oppressed peoples of the East.”

In their second message, the Indians expressed their gratitude to the RCP(B) for the welcome we have received in Russia and the opportunities for study and improvement that have been given to us here...." Regarding Indians study in Communist University, Soviet sources have disclosed some interesting informations. It is already mentioned earlier that the sharp differences among Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent had surfaced to the boiling point. M. N. Roy was the centre of all these conflicts among Indians. So Persits says that in the prevailing situation, the Comintern took what was a wise decision, indeed. The idea behind it wads to help Indian revolutionaries learn Marxist-Leninist theory so as to switch them from futile pursuit of an immediate Socialist revolution to a strategy of long and fundamental preparations for it. That was, at the same time, a real way to shaping the Communist Party of India, a true party of the Indian working class. Therefore, in April 1921, the Small Bureau resolved to stop work with Indian immigrants in Turkestan and transfer all Indians to Moscow to be admitted to the just established Communist University of the Toilers of the East.

Thus, the Tashkent and later on the Moscow based Indian

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15 Ibid.,

16 Ibid., pp. 206-207 (Quoted from original sources).
communist revolutionaries despite their differences, played historical role in formation of real Communist Party of India in 1925 in India. In this regard, the official documents mention four trends from which individuals and groups in their search for a new paths for the struggle for independence turned to scientific socialism and communism under the impact of October Revolution. These four trends are the following:

1. Indian national revolutionaries operating from abroad in the period of the First World War and thereafter from Germany, the USA, Turkey and Afghanistan who earlier functioned through the Berlin Committee and the "provisional government" of "independent India" or otherwise, and later came to be influenced by October Revolution- persons like V. Chattopadhyaya, M. Barakatullah, M. P. B. T. Acharya, M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherji.

2. National revolutionaries from Pan-Islamic Khilafat movement, who went abroad in the war period (1914-16) and those from the great hijarat movement of the post war period and who similarly came under the influence of the October Revolution such as Mohammed Ali Sepasse, Rahmat Ali Khan, Firozuddin Mansoor, Abdul Majid and Shaukat Usmani

3. National revolutionaries of the Ghadar Party organised among the Sikh and Punjabi labour (U.S.A.) before and first world war, who staged an unsuccessful armed action at the time when the Komagata Maru arrived in India. The persons directly drawn towards the ideas of Marxisms-Leninism come from the second period of the movement when it was revived and reorganized by

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Rattan Singh and Santokh Singh and who took the initiative to establish contact with Communist International.

4. The fourth and the most important trend was of the national revolutionaries in India itself—from the left wing of the National Congress, the terrorist organizations and parties, the Khilafat movement, the Akali movement (specially its Babar Akali left-wing linked with the Ghadar Party). Individuals and groups of this trend—when disillusioned with Gandhi's ideology of non-violent resistance after the debacle of movement in 1921-22 or those who never accepted it—turned to scientific socialism and to building the class organizations of workers and peasants under the impact of the October Revolution and later became the founders of the Communist group in the country—Dange in Bombay, Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras, Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta and Inquilab group in Lahore.

All these groups functioned separately without having any contact in each other in the beginning, however, it was Comintern again which came forward to unite them. As recalling those activities Muzaffar Ahmad writes: "At various times, both earlier and later, attempt to build the Communist Party began at four places in India. These attempts were not the outcome of any decision taken after discussions at a joint meeting of those who first ventured upon this task; they started independently of each other and at a different places: one even did not know the other. Calcutta, Bombay, Lahore and Madras are separately from one another by a distance of more than a thousand miles. Far apart from one another as we were, we ventured upon the task of building an all India Party. We were able to do so because
communism is an international movement.\textsuperscript{18}

In fact, Sripad Amrit Dange was the first to be contacted by the Comintern as his book "Gandhi vs. Lenin" drew the attention of the leaders of October Revolution. The first paragraph of the book begin with: "On 15th March 1917 the success of the first Russian Revolution was announced to the world by the abdication of the Czar, the "Autocrat of the Russia." The English statesmen and all the world hailed it as one step towards the realization of democracy in the world. But when Kerensky’s Government was over thrown by the Second Russian Revolution of November 7th and the Russian policy, directed by the Bolshevik in the Soviet Government, was changed by the peace with the central powers and when Russia withdrew from the war, then as if by magic, the British statesmen began to see the hideous monster of despotism and danger to the whole world, in the place, in which not long ago, they were disposed to find the very heaven of democracy. They began to cry down the Bolshevik and Russia as "Treachorous", then refused to have any connection with her government and began to spread news of alleged devilish atrocities on the part of Bolsheviks, in other nations...."\textsuperscript{19} In the book, Dange made an interesting comparison between Gandhi and Lénin. Covering their common aims in destroying social evils of the day specially the misery of the poor and subverting despotism.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} Muzaffar Ahmad, n.6., p. 78

\textsuperscript{19} S.A. Dange, \textit{Selected Writings} (Bombay, 1974), p. 74.

\textsuperscript{20} For the detailed study, see, Ibid., pp. 92-95.
In May 1922, S.A. Dange began to publish a weekly English journal called "Socialist", which was India's first Marxist Periodical. It gave detailed coverage of the works by Marx and Lenin and discussed aspects of the national liberation movement in India. In September 1922 the "Socialist" announced the formation of the Indian Labour Socialist Party of the Indian National Congress. The name of this Marxist group which counted among its members S.A. Dange, S.V. Ghate, K.N. Joglekar and R. S. Nimbkar, shows that the emergence of a Marxist wing of the national movement at that period was viewed by Dange and his associates as the creation of a left faction within the Congress.21

As the activities of the four communist groups of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore are well known in the process of forming the Communist Party, a Soviet scholar G. Kotovsky has mentioned about a Marxist group in Varanasi. He says: "In 1922 Shaukat Usmani after returning from Moscow set up a communist group in Banares."22 The details about this group is not available. However, between 1922 and 1924 the communist activities grew fast particularly in the industrial centres of the country. In the meantime contacts were established with Communist International. The growing strength of the communists inside India and their frequent contacts with the leadership of Comintern alarmed the British rulers. That is why between 1922


22 Ibid.
and 1924 four conspiracy cases against Indian communists were held at Peshawar alone. But the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, 1924 become every important because almost entire top leadership of the different communist groups of the country was implicated in this case.

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

Out of the 13 accused S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, Nalini Gupta and Shaukat Usmani were arrested and the session judge delivered the verdict on May 22, 1924 and sentenced them to 4 years of imprisonment. The two main charges against the accused in Kanpur case were: (1) Communist International was trying to set up a branch in India through the accused; (2) The accused were trying to set up a workers' and peasants' party.

Meanwhile, regarding the happenings of those period, Communist leader Muzaffar Ahmad writes in his autobiography: "Members of the Communist Party of Great Britain came to India

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23 Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, p. 339.

to help us. They were, of course, sent by the Communist International..... Percy Glading a member of the British Communist Party, came to India in January 1925, but he could not contact the real Communists. I was then in jail. In this context, it seems that Muzaffar Ahmad’s episode regarding the visit of Glading to India was deliberately underestimated if not distorted. Giving some interesting details of Glading’s visit, Overstreat and Windmiller had pointed out that the Fifth Congress of the Communist International had asked for a "very close contact between the sections (of the Comintern) in the imperialist countries with the colonies of those countries". Following this, early in 1925, the CPGB began to act on the instructions by forming a Colonial Committee and by sending another emissary, Percy E. Glading, to India to survey the revolutionary situation. Roy opposed the trip. Glading arrived in India on January 30, 1925, visited few big cities, and left on April 10. When he returned to England he reported to the CPGB that "No Indian communist groups existed at all". About Glading’s visit, David N. Druhe says that during his brief visit he had contacted not only the representatives of All India Trade Union Congress but also the Indian National Congress. He further wrote that CPGB had evinced the pleasure over Glading’s visit and its Colonial Department commented: "This visit was extremely useful indeed. Our representative was able to attend the All India Trade Union

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

Congress and held many conversations with the representatives there.27 Quoting British documents, Haithcox has given a little more information regarding Glading's visit in which he says: "In February 1925, Percy E. Glading (alias R. O. Cochrane), a prominent member of the British Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions, had travelled to India with credential from Roy. His primary mission was to make a study of Indian labour conditions. While in India he helped organise a labour party with the noted Indian nationalist Lala Lajpat Rai as president. The party proved abortive, however, and having accomplished very little in his short three-month stay, he returned to England in April. On his return, he presented an unfavourable report on the progress of communism in India."28

Quoting different original sources, Druhe says that during the years 1924-1925, new leaders were emerging in India to take the place of the convicted Kanpur Conspirators, notably Satya Bhakta, and S. V. Ghate. Bhakta, an odd character, was really a non-Marxist and a pacifist and apparently had been drawn to Communism out of a purely idealistic motivation. Ghate, on the other hand, was a militant labour organiser and readily absorbed the doctrines of Bolshevism.29

It was at about same time that the fifth enlarged plenum

27 David N. Druhe, Soviet Russia and Indian Communism (New York, 1959), p. 70 (Quoted).


29 Druhe, n. 27, p. 70.
of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) was held in Moscow from March 21 to April 6, 1925. The plenum discussed the experience of Communists' participation in the national liberation movement and on April 6 adopted a resolution evaluating the political situation in India, Indonesia and Egypt and offering to the Communists of these countries a number of recommendations on programmatic and tactical questions. About India the plenum said: "One of the most important tasks of our Comrades in India at the present movement on the eve of a decisive struggle for the independence of India." It recommended to the Indian Communists to Continue their work in the Indian National Congress and the all-India mass organisations, with the aim of creating "a national revolutionary mass party and an all-India anti-imperialist bloc", to find ways and means "to force the Indian bourgeoisie to conduct a decisive political struggle and to support all militant actions against imperialism on the basis of an anti-imperialist united front." 

It further emphasised that the main task of the Indian communists was to work for uniting the Communist groups and elements in order to build a strong party of the working class, the Communist Party. In another suggestion the plenum came out with the slogan to the Communists of the East to take initiative

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32 Ibid.
to form people's parties or workers' and peasants' parties or to work with them if already formed, and seek to make them political organisations of an anti-imperialist front.33

Before the finalisation of the above resolution, an American delegate to the fifth plenum of the ECCI, Mr. Dorsey, who was also the chairman of colonial commission, in his report said: "In India, the reports of the delegates show that the movement is now in a process of transition, finding new forms and tactics to correspond with the real basic revolutionary nationalist movement in India. The old Gandhi movement on non-violence and non-cooperation has collapsed and was followed by the Swarajist Party with its policy of parliamentary obstruction. This party has come to the point of collapse and is now tending to decompose into a small centre group between the big bourgeois parties on the one side and the revolutionary mass movement on the other. The masses of India are discontented with Swarajist programme of self-government. They are demanding separation from the British Government."34 He further says that the colonial commission proposed the following policy for India: "The Commission is of the opinion that it is now necessary for the Communists to continue work in the National Congress and in the Left-Wing of the Swaraj Party. All nationalist organisations should be formed into a mass revolutionary Party, an all-Indian anti-imperialist bloc. The slogan of the People's Party, having for the main points in its programme: separation from the Empire, a

33 Ibid.
democratic republic, universal suffrage and the abolition of feudalism—slogans put forward and popularised by the Indian Communists—is correct."35 The commission also instructed the Indian Communists to direct their efforts towards securing leadership over the masses of the peasantry, to encourage the organisation and amalgamation of trade unions, and to take over the leadership of all their struggles.

Another resolution adopted by the fifth plenum dealt with the 'American colonial situation', which says: "Within the past few years the United States has emerged as a great imperialist power. It has subjected various colonies such as Hawaii, Cuba, the Philippine Islands, etc. It is carrying on an active imperialist policy especially in China, and Persia, as well as in other countries and is endeavouring to subject all of North, Central and South America to its domination. In the last few months we have seen it come forward with the Dawes Plan, the first great effort of the American capitalist class to subjugate the entire world to its financial and political control. In this revolution the American Workers Party is requested to organise resistance to American imperialism in all the countries under the latter's sway, all the colonies in the Central and South America, and to develop the Anti-Imperialist League which had just been formed by the Communist Parties of United States and Mexico."36

So far as, Soviet policy towards colonial question is concerned, we find that differences continued to emerge between Comintern and Indian leaders. As, it is well known fact that M. N.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.
Roy was playing a very important role in the Comintern conferences during that period, he was also surrounded by so many controversies regarding his stands towards anti-colonial movement in India, as we have already gone through his difference with Lenin which have been analysed in the previous chapter. However, his differences with the Comintern continued even after the demise of Lenin. In this regard Overstreet and Windmiller have written that Roy had a much more difficult time at the Fifth Congress than he had had at previous congresses, for the threat implied by the resolution forced him to state his position more boldly than ever before. Despite concessions to the prevailing view, such as his earlier reference to the bourgeoisie as the "vanguard of the revolution", Roy's basic disagreement with Comintern strategy emerged so clearly that the chairman of the colonial commission, Manuilsky, was provoked into charging Roy with deviationism.37

After the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, M. N. Roy went to France where he was arrested along with his wife on January 30, 1925. Later on he was exile to Luxembourg. In spite of the fact that Soviet leaders in the Comintern had developed various differences with M. N. Roy, however, after his deportation from France, the Comintern organ 'International Press Correspondence' published an article, "M. N. Roy and British Imperialism", written by an author called Ale-Kemal Fauladi, who expressed tremendous admiration for his role in anti-colonial movement in India. He says: "As a matter of fact, however, Roy and his comrades in exile of the Indian Communist Party have

37 Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, p. 72.
compressed within a few years an amount of work whose revolutionary value with regard to India is comparable in many respects to that of the work done with regard to Russia by the Bolshevik leaders in their period of exile in Western Europe. It was Roy, who gave for the first time a political- and, under the circumstances, a dramatic-expression to the objective forces of revolt in India when, in 1922, he intervened in the Indian National Congress with an open revolutionary manifesto which was nothing less than a Marxist view, of the historic struggle of the oppressed peoples of the East for political freedom." 38

He further points out: "As regards the Indian situation itself as it is today, we hope to deal with this in a different article. We shall give here two extracts from the most recent manifesto of Roy to the Indian National Congress held in December 1924. It is to be noted that this time manifesto of Roy was countersigned by some members of the Executive Committee of the Congress itself- a fact which shows that the revolutionary wing of the Congress is ready to come out in the open. It may also be noted in passing that a considerable section of this committee voted for a resolution appreciating the services render by Lenin to the cause of the world revolution."39

Coming back to earlier Comintern's direction to Indian communists to form the worker's and peasants' parties, it should be noted that during the course of 1925, Ghate and other communist leaders followed the then official line and

38 International Press Correspondence, no. 18, March 5, 1925, p. 253.

endeavoured to form front worker's and peasants parties. The first such party was formed on November 1, 1925 in Calcutta and bore the imposing name of the "Labour Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress." The mentioning of the National Congress is significant, for the communist were beginning to feel they might be able to infiltrate into that organisation which would supplement their organising workers' and peasants' parties. Later on many such parties were formed in Bombay, U.P and Punjab.

According to Druhe, in the latter part of 1925 the gains made by the Indian communists were more than offset by a schism in their ranks. One group which was led by S.V. Ghate followed the orthodox views of Moscow and aided in the formation of Labour Swaraj Party of Bengal and planned the further founding of workers' and peasants' parties of that type in other parts of India, which process would be culminated in the foundation of an All-India workers' and Peasants' Party in which the communist element, while maintaining its secret identity as such, would be the dominating factor. Another group was led by Satyabhakta. The latter group desired the communist Party in India to act openly under its own name, to carry on, by constitutional means, agitation of a Marxist nature and to be independent of the Kremlin.

Quoting the judgment of Meerut Conspiracy Case, Druhe wrote that Satyabhakta had indicated his views in two manifestos.

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40 *Workers' and peasants' Party of Bengal, A Call to Action* (Calcutta, 1928), p. 39, Quoted in Druhe, n. 27, p. 70.

41 Druhe, n. 27, pp. 71-72
appearing on July 16 and October 21, 1925 entitled respectively "The future Programme of the Communist Party" and "The First Indian Communist Conference." In these documents Bhakta presented the thesis that the transition from capitalism to communism might be achieved without injustice or violence, a view which naturally subjected him to vigorous criticism from Communists outside his own circle.\textsuperscript{42} In an apparent effort to heal the breach in the Communist movement in India, the pro-Comintern communists led by Ghate and Joglekar and the independent communists led by Bhakta and Singaravelu Chettiar met in the First Conference of the Communist Party of India in Kanpur on December 26, 1925.\textsuperscript{43}

This conference was convened by Satyabhakta, who was not a member of any of the recognised communist groups functioning in India at the time and the leaders of which were prosecuted and sentenced in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case.\textsuperscript{44} The official CPI documents have revealed that the first session took place on 25 December 1925, in a special pandal built near the Congress pandal in Kanpur. According to \textit{Kirti} (February, 1926) 300 delegates attended the Conference. however, the confidential report of Government of India gives the number as about 500. In the first session, saklatvala's message was read out. This was followed by the speech of the chairman of the reception

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p. 72 (Quoted).

\textsuperscript{43} Unsigned article, "The Cawnpore Conference ," \textit{Near East and India} (vol. XXiX, no. 765, January 14, 1926), pp. 43-44, Quoted in Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Adhikari, n. 6, vol. 2, p. 591.
committee Hasrat Mohani and then by the presidential address of M. Singaravelu.\textsuperscript{45} The second session met in the evening of 26 December. This was devoted to resolutions, while the Third session was held on 27 December which was devoted to the adoption of the constitution and to the elections of the Central Executive Committee. On 28 December, 1925 the Central Executive Committee met and elected the office bearers, the president, the vice-president, the general Secretaries and the members of the CEC in charge of the various provinces.\textsuperscript{46}

Later on, S. V. Ghate disclosed that the resolutions Committee at the conference consisted of Satyabhakta, K. N. Joglekar, Janki Prasad Bagerhatta, S. Hassan (Lahore), C. Krishnaswami and he himself.\textsuperscript{47} He further reveals: "Satyabhakta objected to the name Communist Party of India as he smelt Bolshevik flavour and wanted the name to be Indian Communist Party. Ultimately our suggestion was accepted. The resolutions were placed before the open session on the third day. president M. Singaravelu Chettiar, two joint secretaries Bagerhatta and myself and an executive Committee were elected. Muzaffar Ahmad was in the executive committee. (K. N. Joglekar and R. S Nimbkar were also in the executive committee-Researcher). Within four days, Satyabhakta announced the formation of new National Communist Party and left the organisation in the formation of

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, p. 613.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 606
which he himself was a party. When he was approached to hand over the minutes and documents of the conference, he refused to pass them on since he had established his own party.\textsuperscript{48}

In the midst of so many controversies arising from very inception of Indian communist Party at Kanpur, some interesting observations were made by different important leaders, who founded the party. In this context the organiser of the Communist Conference Satyabhakta wrote in a document called, "the First Indian Communist Conference: An important question before us is the name of the party. The principal aim of communism is the control of the wealth of country by whole society and to make every person equal partner of it. We believe in the truth of this principle and try our best to carry it into practice. But many of our friends urge us to connect the Indian Communist Party with the communist parties of other lands and specially with the Communist International of Moscow as an indispensable condition. Without such connection it is a misnomer, in their opinion, to call this organisation a communist party. We have already pointed out in a previous communication that such a step is not possible for us owing to the fact that government will at once try to suppress our activities on the slightest move towards this direction. It should be at once admitted that we are not in a position to employ violent methods in the pursuit of our propaganda as is the case with the communist parties of other countries.\textsuperscript{49} He further wrote: " Other friends have suggested from time to time to approach the Communist International of Moscow with intention

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid. pp 606-607, also see, Haichcox, n. 28, pp. 45-46.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p. 637.
to get its financial help for our propaganda in this country. But those friends are evidently forgetting that such a step is quite impossible and highly injurious to our interests."\(^50\) However, it seems that there was at least one issue on which satyabhakta and communist International had similar opinion, i.e., whether the Indian Communist should support the Indian National congress or not. On this issue he says: "...... After all the Congress is a well-established and influential institution and the best interests of the country require us to reform it and not to get against it. We appeal to all members of the party to become also members and delegates of the Congress with the intention of changing it into an instrument of service to our people."\(^51\) Contrary to the Satyabhakta's opinion regarding the Communist International or Soviet Russia Moulanahs Hasrat Mohani, Chairman of the reception Committee at Kanpur Conference, appealed to establish swaraj or complete independence by all fair means. After the establishment of swaraj to see that it takes the form of the Soviet Republic on which all principles of communism will come into force.\(^52\)

In the presidential address to the delegates of the conference Singaravelu Chettiar paying glowing tribute to Lenin, said: "The greatest loss which the world communists have suffered during recent times is that caused by the death of Nikolai Lenin, by his death the world had grown sadder. Here was a man who cared nothing else in the world except the well-being

\(^{50}\) Ibid.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 638.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., pp. 640-41.
of suffering humanity. Such a man was snatched away by the cruel hand of death at a time when the great workers’ state in Russia needed his advice and guidance.”

After the formation of the communist party of India, the workers movement grew very fast throughout the country. In the meantime Communist International began to pay much attention on communist affairs along with national liberation movement in India. According to Soviet sources the problems of the national liberation movement in India were discussed in March 1926 once again at the sixth Plenum of the enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International. It underlined in its resolution: "No one says that the communist are able to lead the Indian proletariat in a historic struggle for national independence and social liberty. It still had not had objective information on the Kanpur Conference (Roy was largely to blame for that), and so the resolution noted that many attempts that had been made to unite the scattered communist groups had been so for unsuccessful. As the most important task of Indian communists the Plenum nominated the setting up of a strong communist party on the basis of the existing communist groups. It underlined the importance of work by Indian Communists within the unions so as to turn the All-India Trade Union Congress into a militant proletarian organisation. The Plenum further noted that the peasantry, whom the proletariat was to lead, would be a decisive factor for the destiny of the Indian revolution. Therefore, Indian

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53 Ibid., p. 644.

communists were recommended to adopt a detailed programmed of work among the peasant masses so as to unite the various peasant organisations into a single general national organisation under the influence of Communists."55

So far as, the Indian Communists' relation with Indian National Congress is concerned, the communists had to enter that organisation as a most active force so as later to occupy a vanguard position in the popular struggle for national emancipation. In this regard, the Comintern recommended Indian communists to do the following:56 to work within the Indian National Congress; to form an alliance with its left-wing groups for the purpose of putting pressure on the right; to strengthen the left-wing of the Congress, so that it might go over to national revolutionary position. At the same time, Comintern believed that the communists should fortify and extend their own influence and mass base within the Indian National Congress; that way (acting wherever the masses are to be found) they would be able to establish a broad revolutionary organisation on the basis of the Congress's left-wing; to influence its policy, but by no means try to "seize" control of it or turn it into a Communist Party."57

After the Sixth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, George Allison another leader of British Communist Party came to India. He reached Bombay on April 30, 1926.

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 146
57 Ibid.
Muzaffar Ahmad writes: "I never heard him say what instructions he had received from the Red International of Labour Unions at the time of coming to India but from his programme of activities we got the impression that he would do trade-union work openly, while maintaining contact with the party secretly. He was in Bombay from May to October 1926 and did not have to face any dangerous situation there."\(^{58}\)

In fact, George Allison had come to India under an assumed name, Donald Campbell. He was sent out to help bring into existence a militant trade union movement in India. In a letter dated November 1926 and addressed to Indian Comrades, the foreign bureau of the CPI says," I hope you are already informed about Campbell.... His main task is to help the development of the left-wing inside the Trade Union Congress. He has been advised to keep out of party politics except in an advisory capacity where necessary. Some other Comrade especially charged with this task will meet you soon if he has not done so already."\(^{59}\) Thus George Allison became deeply involved in trade union activities specially in Bombay and Calcutta. However, his identity was disclosed in early 1927 and was arrested in Calcutta and sentence to rigorous imprisonment for 18 months.\(^{60}\) Later on Philip Spratt from the British Communist Party, a graduate from Cambridge University came to India in December 1926. He was sent by Clemens Palme

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\(^{58}\) Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, p. 460.


\(^{60}\) For the details of Allison arrest and trial, see Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, pp. 462-64.
Dutt, the brother of Rajni Palme Dutt. He was followed by another top British Communist Benjamin Francis Bradley (Ben Bradley) who arrived in India in September 1927. They also got deeply involved in communist movement in India. As a result, Spratt and Bradley, both were later arrested in famous Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929.61

During the activities of British Communists advised by Comintern in India, some important events took place in 1926-27. For the first time Communist Party of India brought out a Manifesto to the All India National Congress 62 in December 1926. It was a historical document in the sense that for the first time theoretically the communist expressed their readiness to cooperate with Indian National Congress on the basis of anti-imperialist and democratic demands. This Manifesto was addressed to the Congress session at Gauhati held in 1926.

Muzaffar Ahmad says about the above Manifesto: "It was printed in London by the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. We got printed copies of the manifesto in packets by post in Calcutta. Comrade Abdul Halim arranged to distribute them in Gauhati."63 Earlier on the advice of Comintern several units of Workers' and Peasants' Parties were set up by the Communists particularly in Bengal, Bombay, U.P. and Punjab. These parties were set up as left-wing nationlist organisations

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

62 For the detailed study of the Manifesto, see, G. Adhikari , n. 6, vol. IIIA, pp. 231-35.

63 Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, pp. 467.
of workers and peasants with in Indian National Congress. However, Comintern, attentively studing the prospects for the Workers' and peasants' parties in India, experienced increasing doubts about the expediency of that form of organisation; it feared that the work to create such parties might none the less hamper the organisation of a united communist party.64

The year, 1927 was marked by yet another historic event, i.e., the holding of the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union. Bukharin presented a detailed report, "The International Position and Tasks of the Communist International," in which he said:" The British Government has manoeuvred very cleverly in regard to India of late years. It has certainly not succeeded in winning over the broad masses. But the British Government has of late made a number of concessions to Indian industry. Formerly India exported raw material and imported manufactured goods from the "mother" country, Great Britain. It was the former policy of Great Britain towards India to leave that country the role of a purveyor of raw materials, without permitting it to develop its own industry.

"But under the influence of the development of the Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution, and the entire capitalist crisis and particularly under the influence of the movement in India itself, the British Government permitted the introduction of special customs tariffs in India and this somewhat widened the sphere of development for India's industry. It proceeded to get more and more into touch with the leaders of the intellectuals and of the Indian bourgeoisie in regard to self-administration and

64 A. Reznikov, n. 54, p. 149.
managed to persuade a considerable portion of the once very revolutionary Indian bourgeoisie to form a bloc with the British imperialists, so that the Indian bourgeoisie had in many cases taken up the fight against the "agents of Moscow," action on the argument that the old master (Great Britain) is better than the "unknown new" (Moscow)." 65

In an interrogative manner, Bukharin further stated: "Is it, again, out of the question that the Indian proletariat and peasantry should make common cause with the national bourgeoisie? In my opinion it is not. Is it impossible for us Communists to form permanent blocs after the manner of the Kuo-Min-Tang in India? As I see it, such an understanding is out of the question for us to attain. Can there be a question of temporary co-operation or a parallel activity in individual cases? Assuredly so. Can there be any question of a more lengthy support of the Indian bourgeoisie on our past? By no means. For this bourgeoisie, or at any rate a considerable past there of, fails to fulfil those condition which Lenin laid down. In the first place, the Indian bourgeoisie in not prepared to wage any lengthy fight British imperialism. Secondly, and this is also an important point, it carries on an active fight against the Communists, to whom it refuses to grant freedom of action in anything like an adequate degree. On the contrary, even now it treats us like an absolutely hostile force. That is a proof that we must adopt a different tactics in this case. The relationship of the classes is different in this country and therefore the whole position is different

65 International press Correspondence, no. 73, Dec. 29, 1927, p. 1680.
although India is also a colonial region."\textsuperscript{66}

In a typical style of his own, he concluded: "If I were to take a country like Egypt, Persia, or indeed any other such country, I would easily demonstrate that in each of these countries there are special typical features in regard to social relations, which would force us to analyse concretely the situation in that particular country most attentively without contenting ourselves with any general theses on the colonial question. This last is in any case not the right thing to do."\textsuperscript{67}

As mentioned earlier regarding their formation of the workers' and peasants' parties in different part of India, following the advice of Communist International, a Soviet scholar describing in detail, the role of the Comintern writes that in December 1927, the Comintern prepared a letter to the Central Committee of the Workers' and peasants' party of Bengal. Above all it pointed out that the formation of a workers' and peasants' party by no means signified the need to preserve and safeguard the ideological, political and organisational independence of the Communist Party of India. That was a correct, timely and very important piece of advice. It also recommended combining illegal forms of struggle with legal ones and to strive for the right to a legal existence. At the same time, it felt that the major dangers for Indian Communists were legalism and adoption of bourgeois nationalist positions. Finally, the letter clearly expressed the view that the workers' and peasants' party should not be simply a "legal cover" for the Communist Party. To avoid that, wrote the

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
Executive Committee, it was sufficient merely to change the name and have only one party with legal and underground organisations.68

Within the framework of Comintern's policy the first All-India conference of Workers' and peasants' was held in Calcutta from 21 to 24 December, 1928. In his presidential speech eminent Indian revolutionary, Sohan Singh Josh said: "All empires have proved to be a curse everywhere....India will get freedom only when the British interest are cleared away bag and baggage...India can attain true liberty only through revolution and not by framing constitutions ... All people who believe in revolution and class straggle should join our party....The Bolsheviks of Russia have shown us the way. It will be an act of ingratitude on our part to forget their help. We are thankful to them."69

Referring to this conference Soviet scholar Reznikov says that it adopted a policy of attraction the revolutionary sections of the Indian National Congress into those parties. The Comintern sent a message to the conference. It supported the revolutionary movements of working and oppressed people, and therefore welcomed the conference of parties fighting against imperialist tyranny and feudal reaction at one of the most important sectors of the world anti-imperialist front. However, it expressed its doubt about whether the workers' and peasants' parties were an expedient and effective form of organisation. It believed that the

68 A. Reznikov, n. 54, pp. 149-50.

69 Sukhbir Choudhary, Peasants' and Workers' Movement in India, 1905-1929, (New Delhi, 1971), p. 241, also see, Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, p. 127; Druhe, n. 27, p. 98.
revolutionary worker-peasant alliance should arise not in the form of united worker-peasant party, but on the basis of actual cooperation between the proletarian party and peasant allies (the Comintern was trying to avoid the dissolution of the recently formed Communist Party of India in non-communist worker-peasant organisations.)"\(^70\)

He further elaborates that in regard to an evaluation of the political situation in India, the Comintern felt at the time that the country was confronted by a national revolution whose aim was to overthrow the foreign yoke; the working class, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie would be the moving forces of that revolution. Again and again the Comintern stressed the need for an independent political party of the working class.\(^71\)

Concluding his analysis, Reznikov wrote: "A "reorganisation" of united parties into the communist party took place at the Calcutta Conference, and its new Executive Committee was elected. Soon after, by decision of the Executive Committee the workers' and peasants' parties were declared disbanded so that part of their membership could be accepted into the Communist Party of India, turning it into a relatively mass party."\(^72\) In the meantime, the Sixth Congress of Comintern was held in Moscow from July 17 to September 1, 1928. On the eve of this Congress, a typical situation prevailed within the Communist International. There were large scale expulsion from the

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\(^70\) Reznikov, n. 54, p. 150.

\(^71\) Ibid., pp. 150-1.

\(^72\) Ibid., p. 151.
Communist International on the theoretical grounds. According to Soviet sources, the Comintern carried on a determined struggle with "ultra-left" deviations within its ranks, displayed in a repudiation of capitalist stabilisation, in the refusal of Communist to work in the reformist trade union, and abandonment of the tactics of the united front. The main issue which was discussed in the Sixth Congress, included the report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International; the Programme of the Communist International; means of combating the danger of the imperialist war; the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies; the economic situation in the USSR and the situation in the CPSU. The questions on the agenda fully reflected the urgent problems facing the international communist movement. Soviet sources reveal that about 600 proposals and amendments were submitted in the Congress. Main discussion centred around new economic policy, war communism, defining fascism and the meaning of finance capital, etc. Some of the delegate proposed the inclusion of war communism in the programme as a general rule for all countries. They were of the opinion that the transition period from capitalism to socialism always be a period of war communism and war communism represented a direct road to socialism.

The Congress adopted a new programme of the Communist International which evaluated the strength of imperialism and the strength of the revolution, gave a profound analysis of the general crisis of capitalism and drew the conclusion that the downfall of

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74 Ibid., P. 273.
capitalism and the victory of the world socialist revolution were inevitable.\textsuperscript{75} At this Congress the question of "socialism in one country" became a hot point of theoretical controversy in the international communist movement. Trotsky called this concept as revisionist and pleaded that the "victory of proletarian revolution in a single given country is impossible without the support of a world revolution."\textsuperscript{76} In a significant development, the programme divided the whole world into three categories of nations, e.g., countries of highly developed capitalism, countries with a medium development of capitalism, and uncompleted bourgeois-democratic reforms and colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries. The programme suggested three different kinds of revolutions for the said categories of nations, e.g., direct transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in highly developed capitalist nations; from bourgeois-democratic revolution to socialist revolution in some of the medium developed countries while in some other medium developed countries it suggested different type of proletarian revolution having a large number of bourgeois-democratic tasks to fulfil. In third category of nations which were colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries, the programme said that transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat was conceived only as the outcome of a whole period of transformation of bourgeois-democratic revolution to socialist revolution, while in the majority of cases successful socialist construction will be possible only if direct support is obtained from the countries in which the proletarian

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 277.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
dictactorship is established.77

Soviet researchers have pointed out that the questions concerning the Comintern's strategy and tactics with regard to the national and colonial question occupied an important place in the work of its 6th Congress in August-September 1928. The Congress theses correctly observed that in upholding their class interests against imperialism, the bourgeoisie in the colonies there by also uphold national interests and that there was reason to regard the whole of the national bourgeoisie as embracing anti-national, comprador positions.78 Quoting documents of the Communist International, these researchers write that the Congress decisions also included a number of important statements which stressed the danger of leaping our unaccomplished stage of the revolution and noted the difference that existed between the forces of bourgeois national reformism and the feudal imperialist camp; national-revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties were at this stage regarded as allies of the revolution. They stated that the creation of genuinely proletarian parties in the backward countries was a task of primary importance for national liberation movement.79 They further point out that those important decisions has a positive impact on the development of the revolutionary struggle in the colonies.

77 See for the details, *International Press Correspondence* no. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1761; also see, Ibid., p. 278.


79 Quoted in Ibid.
the same time the Sixth Congress put forward a number of mistaken proposals. For example, the struggle to overcome petty-bourgeois influences amongst the masses was prematurely declared to be the priority task. Underlying these guide-lines was the comparatively widespread view that the national bourgeoisie had on the whole lost its importance as a force fighting against imperialism and that political differentiation among classes had reached such a level that the masses of the peasantry and the semi-proletarian strata in the towns were ready to go over to the side of the working class and stand in opposition to the national bourgeoisie.80

So far as, Comintern’s policy towards India is concerned, famous Bolshevik leader, N. Bukharin, in his report to Sixth Congress of the Comintern, said: "The situation in India is shaping itself differently. There the situation and the correlation of forces are different from those in China, where in the course of an entire period, in the course of many years, the bourgeoisie conducted an armed struggle against the imperialists. This is a fact: It is otherwise in India. There it is inconceivable that the bourgeois will play a revolutionary role for any length of time. This of course, does not apply to the various petty bourgeois parties or terroristic organisations now existing in India. I have in mind the principal cadres of the bourgeoisie, the Swaraj Party."81 Bukharin further says: "I am not in a position to make an economic analysis of the situation in India, but I should like to

80 Ibid., pp. 502-503.

81 International Press Correspondence, no. 41, July 30, 1928, p. 734.
state that I do not share the opinion that India is ceasing to be a colonial country and that a process of decolonisation is going on there: That theory is a one-sided one. On the contrary, recently, following the period of concessions, British imperialism has increased its colonial oppression of India in general and of the Indian bourgeoisie in particular. This compels the Swaraj Party once again to manoeuvre against British imperialism. It is manoeuvring. But this is a far-cry from armed struggle. At the very first outbreak of mass action the Swaraj Party will turn towards British imperialism and seek to compromise with it. I have in mind such mass action in which the masses will advance independent radical slogans such as a demand to confiscate the land radical slogans for the defence of working class interests."

In his concluding remarks in the report, He said: "It seems to me that in the event of independent mass action and the advancement of more or less revolutionary slogans the Swaraj bourgeoisie will very rapidly come to an agreement and compromise with British imperialism. Now it manoeuvres. At some points it may play even an objectively revolutionary role, but it is inconceivable that it will play a revolutionary role for any length of time. There is no doubt, and this must be emphasised, that the bourgeoisie will desert to the camp of counter-revolution on of the first manifestation of a mass movement. The Communist Party must from the very outset expose the half-heartedness of the bourgeoisie, accentuate the slogans, from the very beginning come out against the bourgeoisie

\[82\] Ibid.
and open the eyes of the masses of the workers to the future behaviour of the Indian Swarajist bourgeoisie. A mechanical application of Chinese tactics to India is fraught with great danger. A special analysis and special tactics based on the particular conditions prevailing in India are necessary.  83

So far as, Indian representation at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern is concerned, seven delegations took part in it, though the Comintern had allotted a delegation of ten people. These seven people were Sikander Sur, Narayan, Clemens Dutt, G.A.K. Luhani, Raza, Mahamoud and Mazut. However, only two of them attended the Congress with their disclosed identity and the remaining five people did not openly reveal themselves. For example, Sikander Sur was originally Saukat Usmani, Narayan was Saumyendra Nath Tagore, Mahmud was Mohammad Safiq, Raza was Masood Ali Shah, and Mazut was Habib Ahmad Nasim.  84

About their dramatic visit to Moscow Muzaffar Ahmad had pointed out that Usmani and his party had gone under the leadership of Masood Ali Shah. From the Iranian Consul in Karachi all of them got new international passports issued in their names as Iranian subjects. But for Masood Ali Shah, they would not by any means have got these passports. Masood Ali Shah was not only a person of high birth but also a member of the Shia community. Iran, it should be noted, is inhabited by people of the Shia community. Usmani and party reached Moscow just when the Sixth Congress of the Communist International was about to commence.

83 Ibid.

84 See for the details, Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, p. 111; Haithcox, n. 28, p. 124; Druhe, n. 27, p. 95.
Everybody was glad to see them, for it was the first time that an Indian delegation had travelled all the way from India to Russia in this manner to attend any Congress of the Communist International. The delegates had not only heaps of credentials with them, they were also known persons. Shaukat had been released after serving his term of conviction in the Bolshevik conspiracy case. His name was recorded in the register of the Communist International. Muhmmad Shafiq was the first Secretary of the emigrant section of the communist party of India, Which was still a section of the Communist International. Shaukat Usmani and Safiq were accepted as delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International and the other two were possibly sent to the Congress of the young Communist International. As for Shaukat Usmani, he was even elected to the Presidium of the Sixth Congress.85

In a significant speech delivered at the Sixth Congress, Sikander Sur (Saukat Usmani) said: "Comrades, I wish to express appreciation of Comrade Bukharin's draft thesis on behalf of the Indian Delegation. At the same time I have to complain of the negligence of the Communist International as no definite step has been taken during the period of lost nine years to bring about the formation of a communist Party in India. It is high time that this Congress realises the potentialities of the formation of a strong Communist Party in India, in view of the unprecedented revolutionary wave now developing there. The present situation in India is very complicated. British imperialism, in co-operation with the national bourgeoisie is oppressing the Indian workers. At

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85 Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, pp. 449-50.
the same time, British imperialism is endeavouring to break up the Indian industries and to disorganise all the important ones in order to facilitate the import of the commodities of Lancashire. A similar process is going on in favour of the Japanese textile goods. Simultaneously with this they have also closed down Railway Engine Repair Shops which employed 150,000 workers, thereby throwing 150,000 helpless Indian workers to the ranks of unemployed."86

Giving detailed account of workers strike in India and exposing British imperialist design in the country, Sikander Sur concluded his speech by saying: "Alongside with the break-up of old established industries, British imperialism is directing Indian capitalism towards new industries, as for example the aviation and hydro-electric developments. The iron industry, which had been given facilities to develop within recent years, has now come under the direct control of British imperialism so that they can utilise it in the next coming war. As to the next war, British imperialism is laying its preparations in India, and is creating a war psychology, also in the peasant areas. At present there is in India a strong movement which can be utilised as a revolutionary force against British imperialism. We are heavily suffering under the shortage of organisers. Without a band of organisers we cannot lead the masses in a revolutionary direction. It is, therefore, very necessary that the Congress here should give special attention to the movement in India, and to help us to

86 *International Press Correspondence*, no. 44, August 3, 1928, p. 775.
organise a strong Communist Party there."  

Another Indian delegate Raza (Masood Ali Shah), welcoming aforesaid Bukharin's thesis, said: "I must admit that it is not without faults and shortcomings in same respects, especially where the Indian question is dealt with. Firstly, in his thesis comrade Bukharin puts that "The policy of British Imperialism hampers the industrial development Of India" by the Indian Capitalist, but never the less he totally ignores to mention the new industrialisation policy of the British Government, inaugurated during and immediately after the world War. The statement is a bit unclear and ought to be elaborated, in as much as chronologically speaking, hampering of the industrial development followed the industrialisation policy. Secondly, he makes no mention of the war agrarian policy adopted by the British Government, called the "Uplift Movement", the aim of which is to import agricultural machinery and modern systems in agriculture with a view to developing capitalist methods of production and thereby creating a wealthy class from among the peasantry with the ultimate object of raising the consuming power of the peasantry. Thirdly, he does not mention anything in his thesis about the existence of the several workers' and peasants' parties working in the different provinces of India, though it cannot be overlooked that they have so far been the organisers of the workers in their present struggle against the bourgeoisie. I must say that in this struggle every credit must be given to our comrades who are Communists and who are influencing the whole movement through the workers' and

87 ibid.
Peasants' Parties."\(^{88}\) Regarding the organisation of the Indian Communist Party, he said: "I, personally, and the majority of the Indian delegates, stand for the immediate organisation of a strong, highly disciplined Communist Party. In view of the fact that there is a strong militant working class already existing in the country, side by side with a paupersied virile peasantry it will be quite ridiculous even to think of the working class fighting without the historical leadership of the Communist Party. It may be argued that workers' and peasants' parties are playing quite the same role for the present. But these parties can only be regarded by the Indian Communist Party as auxiliary forces. Taking into consideration the experiences gained in China as a result of the betrayal by the kuomintang of our Chinese heroes, we must not be so optimistic with regard to the cooperation of the bourgeoisie. I am convinced that in India we must have a strong Communist Party whose business will be to organise in working class and peasantry, capture the trade unions, utilise the auxiliary forces, create the revolutionary youth movements and direct them properly and also exploit the antagonism existing between the nationalist and foreign bourgeoisie and expose the national bourgeoisie on every step they take against the interests of the toiling masses and finally, organise propaganda work in the army with the ultimate view of shattering to pieces the foreign domination and usher in its place a democratic proletarian dictatorship."\(^{89}\)

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 783.

\(^{89}\) Ibid.
toiling masses of India that some definite policy must not only be adopted by the VI Congress but also given full operation. The emancipation of India from the yoke of the British imperialistic domination is an international problem and I request all the organs of the Communist International, in general and the British Communist Party in particular, to come into closer contact with us for the achievement of our coming goal."  

Overstreet and Windmiller say that on the question of the workers' and peasants' parties, then, the lines were clearly drawn. The Russian wanted to liquidate them, the British wanted to maintain them. It is now appropriate to examine the attitude of the Indian delegates on this important issue. Quoting Comintern's document they wrote that among the Indians, Usmani and Tagore were the most active in the debate. On the key issue of the WPP, Usmani, Raza and Mazut sided with the Russians. Agreeing with the draft thesis which, in effect, called for the liquidation of the WPP, Usmani said that the workers' and peasants' Parties exist owing to the wrong tactics and instructions of the Comintern, while Raza said that they must criticise the policy of the Comintern in conducting the WPP. Saumyendra Nath Tagore, on the other hand, tried to defend the workers' and peasants' Parties tactic under

90 Ibid.

91 Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, pp. 115-16.

92 Ibid., p.116.
the new strategy.\textsuperscript{93}

In the main report presented by Kuusinen at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, India was given a special importance regarding colonial question. Posing question: "Why should Indian Conditions be dealt with specially here", Kuusinen answered: "Of course firstly, because of the enormous importance of India among the colonies, because of the class character of the colonial monopoly which is particularly noticeable in India, and also because I hold the view that a serious revolutionary crisis will develop in India in the not far distant future."\textsuperscript{94}

According to soviet scholars during the debate following Kuusinen's report a dispute arose on the question of imperilism's role in the colonies. Some of the delegates claimed that imperialist colonial policy promoted industrialisation in the colonies, that India, for example, was undergoing a British-Controlled process of industrialisation. This point of view objectively implied defence of the social democratic theory of "decolonisation", according to which imperialism plays a progressive role in the colonies by forcing the pace of capitalist development and converting the colonies into capitalist countries. The theory of decolonisation was designed to justified imperialist policy in the colonies and weaken the peoples' struggle against imperialist oppression.\textsuperscript{95}

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the British

\textsuperscript{93} See for the details, Ibid., pp.116-17.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 114 (Quoted).

\textsuperscript{95} Sobolev, n. 30, p.284.
delegation decided to vote against the acceptance of the theses on the Colonial question moved by Kuusinen, the delegation tabled an amendment to the Kuusinen's theses and requested the Presidium to circulate it to the delegations and requested for voting upon it at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. The British delegation proposed that in view of a number of accusations and charges which had been made during the Congress debate, it desired to make the following statement:

"In the first place, we repudiate the allegation that any time we have defended the theory of "decolonisation". We regard this allegation as an attempt to cover up the non-Leninist theory of "agrarisation". As can be seen from the speeches of all the members of the British Delegation who have opposed the theses of comrade Kuusinen, we have not for a moment entertained or supported the absurd and Un-Marxian theory of "decolonisation". We are not responsible for things which have been written by comrade Roy or Comrade Luhani or other comrades in the past. We are responsible for that we have said ourselves, and it is upon what we say that we take our stand. We have never suggested that imperialism in any way has weakened the oppression of the colonies, or their dependence upon or rule by finance capital, on the contrary, we have never suggested that imperialism was a progressive force in the colonies; on the contrary, we have never stated that imperialism soften the contradiction within the colonies, or as between in colonies and the imperialist metropolis, on the contrary, we stated, and we stand by it that
these contradictions are enormously accentuated."\(^96\)

The British delegation further said: "We stated, and we still stand by this, that in the first place "decolonisation" in the real sense of the word involves a revolution, that there is no "decolonisation" without revolution, and secondly, that imperialism hastens the development of the objective conditions which make for successful revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. The road of the colonies to real "decolonisation", that is, to independence and emancipation, can take one of two forces. Either, in the event of a proletarian victory in the metropolis, the victorious working class of the former imperialist country will help the colonies to move towards socialism, avoiding the capitalist stage of development. Or, the other road is through a national revolution which, in the epoch of war and revolutions and the existence of the U.S.S.R., will grow into a Socialist Revolution. In this case, the bounden duty of the proletariat in the ruling country is to help the colonies in these revolutions by using every possible means to fight the imperialists and defeat them."\(^97\)

An Indian delegate G.A.K. Luhani taking a stand almost similar to the British delegation, pointed out: "I consider it necessary to declare that I have nothing whatever to do with the so-called "decolonisation of India"theory which comrade Kuusiven described in his speech introducing the draft theses on the Revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi colonies. What

\(^96\) *International Press Correspondence*, no. 91, December 27, 1928, p. 1743.

\(^97\) Ibid.
he, and some other comrades taking part in the discussion, said in this connection is a complete travesty and misrepresentation of what some of us wanted to convey in the provisional use of the term in quotation marks. I repudiate entirely the interpretation which Comrade Kuusinen has given to our use of the term."

Following the difference of opinion among the delegates, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern stressed upon the unity of all the communists groups and the formation of an independent centralised party, which was a major task of the Indian Communists. The Congress required the Communist parties of the imperialist Countries to establish close, regular and constant contacts with the revolutionary movement in the colonies in order to give this movement active support and practical assistance.

Summing up the above issue, Overstreet and Wind Miller have pointed out: "Although debate on the new line continued for some time after the Sixth Congress, this Congress did mark the beginning of a new strategy for India. From its long-held policy of supporting bourgeois nationalism the Comintern moved toward one of opposing its. The denunciation of the theory of decolonisation, with which M. N. Roy's name had become associated, tended to obscure the fact that in essence the new line was that which Roy had advocated so vigorously since 1920. It was only on specific tactical questions that the Comintern differed with Roy. The Comintern wanted to liquidate the WPP,


99 Sobolev, n. 30, p. 286.
while Roy and the CPGB did not. Roy and the CPGB favoured two parties, a legal WPP dominated by an illegal CPI; and there is little doubt that under the conditions then existing, both legal and political, this would have been the most effective approach. The WPP was, after all, a going concern, one which had been organised at the cost of considerable time and money. That it had some political potential was evidenced by the difficulty in liquidating it, as will be shown. But regard less of what would have been best for the Communist movement in India, the Russian view prevailed, and Comintern support was withdrawn from the WPP. 100

The controversy about the role of national bourgeoisie arose again in this Congress. It brought India once again at the centre of controversy like Second Congress of Comintern. Regarding the formulation about temporary agreements with the national bourgeoisie, the Indian delegates attending the Congress raised their voice against it. One of the Narayan (Saumendra Nath Tagore) said: "I consider the formulation to be fundamentally wrong. After our experience in India in 1922, when the bourgeoisie betrayed the great mass movement, which shook India from one end to the other, it; is high time now to formulate it more clearly to show that the bourgeoisie can never fight imperialism genuinely.... Even political alliance with the bourgeoisie means the abandonment of the slogan of agrarian revolution, which means the virtual abolition of revolutionary struggle in the colonial countries, especially in such a

100 Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, pp. 120-21.
predominantly agricultural country like India."\(^{101}\)

During and after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern the controversy regarding ideological position of the Communist towards national bourgeoisie engulfed the Asian Communist Parties. Indian Communists became worst victim of sectarianism. The above speech by Indian delegate is an outstanding example of sectarianism. Comintern tried time again to advise Indian Communist to save them from deviations but ultimately failed. It was the period of the second non-cooperation movement launched by Indian national Congress in 1927-28. The foot-print of ideological position of communists could be clearly seen in this movement. In the meantime, M. N. Roy's political differences with Comintern leadership regarding his ideological position in India became very acute and ultimately he was expelled from the Comintern in 1929. There are some interesting facts regarding Indian delegates, who were present at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. Muzaffar Ahmad has written in his autobiography: "Attempts, of course, were being made to collect information from India about these delegates. It was impossible to collect any information through telegram from the Soviet Union. By the time we received a cryptic telegram from London in Calcutta and sent also a similarly cryptic reply, the Sixth Congress had ended. We informed that the delegates, without a single exception, had gone with forged credentials and there was one suspicious character among them, the rest being fools. Shaukat Usmani slipped away as soon as the Congress ended and before our message was received.

He went for a change to Crimea and then returned to India via Europe. About the others, we did not receive any news at first. That the other three-Masood Ali Shah, Habib Ahamad, and Shafiq-were in Moscow even in April, 1929.\(^{102}\)

In this regard Muzaffar Ahmad has presented a sensational fact from a letter written to him by famous Indian revolutionary Raja Mahendra Pratap, in which he says that one day at the dead of night one (it must be Masood Ali Shah) of these three, was awakened and taken away to an unknown place and nothing had been heard of him since. The soviet Government must have found out that Masood Ali Shah was a British spy and he must have been taken to the place of execution that night.\(^{103}\)

Thus we see that the entire period before and after the Sixth Congress passed through great upheaval and the Comintern got itself involved time and again in advising in Indian Communists to stand ideologically correct, however, sectarianism continued to prevail in the Indian Communist Movement.

The period between 1928 and 1929 proved to be very significant as for as the growth of communist influence among the workers and peasants in concerned the Communist Party has pointed out that by the end of 1928 the British rulers were in panic before the massive working class upsurge. They did not realise that the mass activity of the working class was a historic phenomenon, a part of the national-liberation awakening and continued to play an important part in it. They thought that

\(^{102}\) Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, p. 450.  

\(^{103}\) Ibid.
militant working class movement is the handiwork of a few British trade-unionists like George Allison, Ben Bradley and Philip Spratt. So they brought the public safety bill, enabling them to take action against British Communists in India. They thought that the strikes take place because of intimidation and pressuring by agitators, "so they brought in the trades disputed bill. They thought the strikes are sustained by the financial assistance received by the strikers from international trade union organisations. They tried to stop this. Actually this assistance was important only as a token of international solidarity. For instance the Bombay textile workers in the course of their great strike (April-October, 1928) received only about Rs. 50,000 (according to Government figures).\textsuperscript{104}

Ultimately, the British Home Department decided to launch a conspiracy case against all communists and trade union leaders including two British communists, Spratt and Bradley. This is how, the Meerut communist conspiracy case was launched in 1929 in which 31 prominent communists leaders were arrested. According to Adhikari a defence committee formed to render leader aid to the Meerut prisoners. Prominent leaders including Nehru, Choudhury visited the Meerut court and jail to express their sympathy and solidarity.\textsuperscript{105} Reacting to the arrest of Indian communists in Meerut conspiracy case, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a letter to Walter Citrine, secretary of the British trade union Congress General council, saying "I would like to point out that this trial can not be isolated from the general situation and must be treated as one phase of the offensive which the Government here

\textsuperscript{104} Guidelines...n.17, pp.24-25.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 26.
has started against the Labour movement....There is a lot of shouting about communists and communism in India. Undoubtedly there are some communists in India, but it is equally certain that this cry of communism is meant to cover a multitude of sins of the Government."  

The Comintern also reacted sharply against the Meerut arrests and in a statement issued on April 7, 1929, it said: "Imperialism is hurling itself with all the force of military terror against the toilers of India. Their trade union leaders, their newspaper editors and the participants of open conference of workers and peasants are threatened with execution or with hard labour in prisons. Justice must be meted in the colonial chamber of torture without its 300,000,000 people."  

The prolonged character of Meerut trial provided tremendous publicity to Indian communists, which enhanced the popularity throughout the country. In this context, according to CPI sources the imperialist plan of isolating the communists from the mainstream of national movement having thus miscarried they had ultimately to let out the prisoners in a hurry after sentencing them to long terms of imprisonment. Thus the secretary of state for India wrote to the Viceroy on 18 February 1933: "I am somewhat exercised in my mind over the severity of some of the sentences passed in Meerut case and I think it is right to let you know that there is a general feeling of uneasiness on the subject in various quarters here. I realise that it is  


107 Druhe, n. 27, p. 107 (Quoted)
difficult for government to take any action in the matter at the present stage when an appeal is pending but my difficulties here will not be made easier if there is delay in hearing appeal and possibly another 6 months elapse before matter is settled in court. You are no doubt alive to the difficulties of our position and I shall be glad to learn your view on it."108

The year 1929 was also the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist International. On this occasion, a set of 34 points slogans was issued by the agitation and Propaganda Department of the Executive Committee of the communist International which the main political line of entire campaign was drawn, which was to last two months from the beginning of the March to the 1st of May. The mention of India was made in the eleventh slogan in which it was said: "The colonial and semi-colonial peoples throughout the world are in revolt against imperialism. The Comintern honours the fighters of China and Moscow, Syria and Nicaragua, Mexico and India who have fallen in battle against imperialist plunder. The Comintern lowers its fighting banner in honour of the fallen heroes of Indonesia, Shanghai and Canton. Long live the victorious struggle for the oppressed nations against imperialist oppression."109

The twelfth and the Thirteenth slogans were indicative of sectarian approach being pursued by the Comintern. In these slogans it was stated that the bourgeoisie aided by the reformists had been ruthlessly suppressing the toiling masses of

108 Guidelines..., n. 17, p. 31.

109 International Press Correspondence, no. 13, March 8, 1929, p. 232.
the colonial and semi-colonial countries.... Bourgeoisie of The Colonial and semi-colonial countries had been and was betraying the national revolutionary movement against imperialism. The liberation movement of the Colonial and semi-colonial countries will be triumph. Only as a movement of the masses of workers and peasants under the hegemony one of the working class.110

The reflections of the above Comintern's understanding could be tressed from an article, "The Next Tasks of the Indian Revolutionary Movement", written by certain 'G. S.', published in International press Correspondence in 1931. The author says: "The Indian National Congress has definitely and irretrievably become the Executive Committee of the national bourgeoisie, which is linked up with feudal and semi-feudal land holdings and the exploitation of the peasants by the money-lenders. Its history is one long series of shameless treachery. It is now preparing an inconceivable treachery, the greatest of all. The national bourgeoisie fear lest the struggle against the English oppressors should become a struggle of the peasants for the seizure and distribution of landed estates, a struggle for the complete expropriation of the usurers and other medieval parasites of the Indian villages. They fear lest the struggle of the workers against the capitalists which commenced with elementary demands for wage increases and improvements in the conditions of labour should become a struggle of the working class for the revolutionary, democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the

110 Ibid.
peasants, a struggle for Soviets in India."\textsuperscript{111}

It was further said: "Some of the Comrades who are devoted to the cause of the revolution, and possibly many Indian workers consider that the National Congress is carrying on a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, that the Congress is organising demonstration, boycotts, refusals to pay taxes, etc., that the congress volunteers and even the leaders of the Congress are being imprisoned for the revolutionary struggle. These comrades do not understand that it is just for their bargaining with British imperialism and for making a deal with it that the Congress needs a mass movement with a Gandhist, non-revolutionary, non-violent and non-resistant character."\textsuperscript{112} The typical understanding of the another is repeatedly expanded in the above mentioned article. About Congress, Nehru the author says: "Under the present Conditions, the Congress can not rule the masses except by means of the most left and radical phrases. It can not crush the movement immediately. The forces of the British are also insufficient for this. Therefore, it tried to dismember it. The Younger Nehru, The Indian Kerensky, throws out Socialist phrases and almost states that he sympathises with the Soviet Government. So, the "left" Congressites vote for a general strike. Therefore, the Congress, suddenly undertook to organise a "labour week" and began to demonstrate in every possible way their crocodile sympathy with the working class."\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{International Press Correspondence}, no. 9, February 26, 1931, p. 179.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 182.
As obvious from the above facts that following the Comintern's policies during post Sixth Congress of Comintern, Indian Communists pursued rigorous sectarian policies in India. According to Overstreet and Windmiller, for nearly three years (until May, 1932). Comintern policy for India undeviatingly pursued the ultraleftist strategy mapped at the tenth plenum. and the Indian Communists loyally followed the Comintern's lead. During this period a series of workers strikes took place throughout the country, but indeed in failures. The trade union movement had to suffer from big setback due to textile workers strikes in 1929 followed by other strikes.

Evaluating the extent of set-backs faced by Indian trade union movement, the Red International Labour Union (R.I.L.U.), a body which was closely related to the Comintern, adopted a resolution at its Eighth Session in 1932, which was titled as "Immediate Tasks of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement of India." This resolution analysed in detail the success and the failure of trade union movement in India. It revealed: "The revolutionary Trade Union Movement is still unorganised in the chief districts of the country. The local groups and red trade unions are not connected with each other, they do not possess a clear-cut programme, do not support the strike movements of the workers outside their own towns. The red trade unions are for the most part top organisations, not connected with the working masses; they do not put forward workers militants, do not carry on work in the factories, and frequently, in practice pursue organisational-bureaucratic methods in them work, borrowed

114 Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, p. 144.
from, the reformists. In actual fact there is no all-India revolutionary, trade union movement as such. The Bombay organisations of the revolutionary trade union movement, being the foremost as regards connections with the masses, the most class-consistent in their policy and accumulated experience of the class struggle, are in no way characteristic for the whole country."115

It further says: "serious mistakes were also made by the revolutionary wing at the Calcutta Session of the Trade Union Congress. The representatives of the revolutionary trade union movement failed to put forward and place in the centre of the Session's attention the fundamental political problems, and likewise questions affecting the day to day needs of the working class; They failed to show skilful resistance to the national reformists, who endeavoured to split the Congress on organisational issues and to lay the formal responsibility on the revolutionary wing for the split prepared for and carried out by them, they did not display firmness in carrying out their decision to remain in the Congress as long as at all possible, fighting against expulsions and exposing the national reformists."116

The R.I.L.U. resolution came out with a detailed ten point programmes to be followed by Indian trade union movement. It Contained some typical suggestions, e.g. "The revolutionary wing must develop a determined struggle of the unemployed and their families on the basis of the following demands: confiscate the


116 Ibid., pp. 195-6.
rice stocks from the government and the profiteers, distribution of rice, free housing, free transportation and municipal services, special sick benefits in case of accidents, etc. There immediate practical partial demands must be linked up with the general slogans and demands of the unemployed: 1. Obligatory non-contributory social insurance; 2. Part time workers to receive full pay; 3. Unemployment benefits to be paid to all unemployed, and to amount to full wages; 4. Free the political prisoners; 5. Active support to the peasants in the non-payment of rents and taxes.\(^\text{117}\)

The resolution concluded by suggesting: "The overthrow of the imperialist yoke in India is the most effective and direct defence of the Chinese Revolution, and will constitute a powerful lever in the international working class struggle. The emancipation of India from the yoke of British imperialism will constitute the greatest victory over world capitalism. The Eighth Session of R.I.L.U. Central council calls upon the class trade union movement and the entire Indian working class, as well as the working class of Britain, and particularly the Minority Movement, to develop still more boldly and resolutely the struggle for the forcible overthrow of British imperialism, for the establishment of a Soviet Workers' and peasants' Republic of India."\(^\text{118}\)

At this crucial juncture an open letter to the Indian Communist written by the Communist parties of China, great Britain and Germany was published in Comintern's central organ

\(^{117}\) Ibid., p. 198.

\(^{118}\) Ibid., p. 200.
in 1932. This letter also continued to carry extremist understanding of Indian situation. It began by saying "The revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses for their national and social liberation has reached a turning point. National bourgeoisie which has betrayed the revolutionary people are trying their best to preserve their influence over the toiling masses, in order to ward off the approaching Indian revolution." According to this letter, it was entirely wrong view that the working class movement had entered a period of decline and depression as a result of defeat of the Bombay strike in 1929. However, it listed the reasons for the defeat of strike as a result of absence of a Communist Party, neglecting the spread of strike to Ahamadabad and Sholapur, the growth of unemployment in the first half of 1930, the terror of employer and the police etc.

The letter pointed out: "The biggest mistake made by Indian Communists consists of the fact that in reality they stood a side from the mass movement of the people against British imperialism. In spite of the fact that the documents of the Communist movement have spoken about this mistaken policy, no change has yet taken place and self-isolation from the struggle for independence still exists…. The self-isolation of Communists from the anti-imperialist mass struggle as a movement alleged to be purely a Congress movement, has created confusion in the Communist movement. It helped to increase among Communists—


120 Ibid.
intellectuals the disbelief in the strength of the proletariat and
the growth of its class-consciousness. It has hindered the development of the process of differentiation in the revolutionary
movement, has hindered the isolation of "Left" national
reformists from the working calls masses and objectively
strengthened the positions of the bourgeois National
Congress."121

Criticising the role of Indian National Congress and other
trade union groups the letter observed: "It is wrong to propose to
the revolutionary petty-bourgeois organisations to fuse with the
Communist Party. An alliance of the India Communist Party, but
while fighting for the leadership of the anti-imperialist and the
general peasant struggle, we must not forget the minute about
the separate organisation of the town and village proletariat and
the formation of a completely independent class party—the
Communist Party. While fighting in alliance with the peasantry,
the Indian proletariat must preserve its class independence and
this is the only guarantee, not only that it will be able to ensure
its hegemony (if a Communist Party exists) in the general
national movement, but that after the overthrow of the power of
the imperialists, it will be able to draw with it the majority of
the oppressed peasantry in the struggle for socialism."122

The three parties' letter put forward a special point for 'The
struggle against the National Congress and petty-bourgeoisie', in
which it was suggested: "The increase of the dissatisfaction of
the broad masses with the policy of the National Congress

121 Ibid., p. 437.

122 Ibid.
(negotiation in London, etc.), directly connected with the deepening of the crisis, the offensive of imperialism and the further revolutionising of the toiling masses has compelled the leaders of National Congress to follow the path of new "Left" manoeuvres in order to strengthen their influence. Very characteristic in this connection is the fact that the "Left" national reformists Subhash Chandra Bose, etc., have again raised the question of their readiness to create a separate organisation of "Left" and have begun to "criticise" the participation of the National Congress in the Round Table Conference etc. All this was done in order to fool the masses of the bourgeoisie show the process of ferment and disappointment which is spreading among the toiling masses and confirms the correctness of the platform of action of the Communist Party of India. Where it speaks of the necessity of the sharpest differentiation, criticism and exposure of "Left" national reformist, including its foremost detachment, the group of M. N. Roy, as the necessary prerequisite for the mobilisation of the toiling masses for a revolutionary struggle and the creation of mass Communist Party."123

Pointing out a series of mistakes committed by India Communists, the letter accused them of under estimating the danger of "Left" national reformism and of not waging sufficient struggle against it. It further said: "In all the statements of the Communists (leaflet for the Karanchi National Congress, etc.), the question of the "left" and their special function and role was not raised. A struggle is carried on against persons but the "programme", manoeuvres and nature of "Left" national reformism

123 Ibid., p. 438.
is not exposed. Such a mistake was made also at the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta. But it is not accidental that the "Left" national reformists are hastening to put on the "Socialist" armour and the renegade M. N. Roy swears devotion to the Comintern. The Left" will come more and more to the forefront, especially the Roy group, whose particular task is to carry on disintegrating work among the proletarian Vanguard."

Regarding organisational functioning of the party, in a mandatory style the letter commanded: "It must be thoroughly realised that the leading organs of the Party and the kernel of the Party organisations must be in an illegal position and that mixing the conspirative and open apparatus of the Party organisation of fatal for the Party and plays into the hands of the Government provocation. While developing the illegal organisation in every way, measures must be taken for preserving and strengthening the conspirative Kernel of the Party organisation. For the purpose of all kinds of open activities, special groups and Commissions, etc., should be formed which, working under the leadership of Party Committees, should under no circumstances injure the existence of illegal nuclei.

"The slogan of an all-Indian illegal, centralised Communist Party, ideologically and organisationally united, a true section of the Comintern, fighting for the Communist International must become the central slogan for gathering and forming the Party and for the struggle against wavering, against tendency of keeping to isolated circles, against toning down the struggle against national reformism and opportunist sectarianism, all of which

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124 Ibid., p. 439.
hinder the Victory of the working class."

Concluding the letter, the Communist Parties of China, Great Britain and Germany, while providing master advice to the Indian Communists. They revealed about the factional fight which were existing among different Communist groups in India. So, they said: "There can be no greater crime then if the Indian Communists instead of struggle for great historical aims of the Indian and world proletariat, will follow the path of unprincipled factional struggle, fractions and personal groupings. Unprincipled factional struggle will play into the hands of the British imperialists. True Communist groups must put the interests of the proletariat above everything else, direct all their efforts towards the rapid formation of the Communist Party settling all disputed questions within the framework of the Communist International and if necessary with its assistance. The Communists of the whole world do not doubt that, in spite of their present weakness, inexperience and certain isolation, the Indian Communists will show sufficient Bolshevist firmness, courage and decisiveness to come out on the broad All-India arena of struggle for the Party-the leader and organiser of the Indian revolution."  

The above mentioned three parties' "Open letter" reveals many things about the weakness of India Communists. On the one hand, it proves that the Indian Communists were unable to take correct ideological stands in the struggle against colonialism. On the other, it is also revealed that the Communist International

125 Ibid., p. 442.

126 Ibid.
had sovereign rights to intervene in internal affairs of other Communist Parties. Above all, the letter proves that the signatories on it were very carefully chosen by the Communist International. For example, Communist Party of China, one of the first signatory on the letter, belonged to a country located on the boarders of India, where (China) Communist movement was very strong; the second signatory the Communist Party Great Britain was chosen because India was a British colony, owing to which British Communists had direct access to India and the last signatory, Communist Party of Germany was assigned his job because it was the biggest Communist Party in Europe after the Soviet Union.

Another typical way of advising Indian Communists in relation to Communist and anti-colonial movement, was the publication of so many articles by different authors, some times by their original names and some times by fake names. However, it was not necessarily true that the analysis and advices given by Communist International indifferent garbs were correct. For example, in an article published in International press Correspondence in 1933, it was suggested that India was approaching towards revolution at a terrific speed. At the same time contradicting himself the author of the same article wrote: "The misfortune of Indian political development is that the Indian Communist party has not yet, captured a definite and

127 Kambgal, "The Expropriation of the Peasants and the Duties of the Communists in India", *International Press Correspondence*, no. 54, December 8, 1933, p. 1232.
impressive place on the All-Indian political arena."128 About the set-backs to the Indian Communist Movement the author has given some interesting logics, e.g., "Hitherto the Indian Social movement has suffered very much from petty-bourgeois and bourgeois counterfeits of socialism. It has suffered from the sweet sounding petty-bourgeois confusion of classes, from the identification of the working class and the peasantry and it suffered great losses because Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and the like, have been able to declare with impunity that the liberation of India from English domination would be the end of all exploitation. These servants of the bourgeoisie systematically undertook this falsification so as to bury the class struggle in India under a pseudo-socialist sauce. All the evil comes from British capital and if this ceased to exist, then all the classes of India would fuse together national unity."129

Referring to Gandhism another theoretician wrote in International Press Correspondence: "The bankruptcy of Gandhism is rapidly accelerating the process of the disillusionment of the revolutionary sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, especially the revolutionary youth, with national-reformism. The great peculiarity of the present situation in India is that the workers and peasants have accumulated tremendous experience in the class struggle, have seen in practice the policy of bourgeois national-reformism and its "left" variety. This practice proved the treacherous attitude of the India National Congress towards the struggle for independence, their betrayal of the interests of

128 Ibid., p. 1233.

129 Ibid., p. 1235.
the workers and peasants, and ever new sections of the toilers are realising this at the present time."\(^{130}\)

In another write-up the same has pointed out: "However, in the Indian Communist movement unclarity still exists, there are two deviations. One of the deviations is that some Communists see only the necessity of forming an underground Communist Party, contrasting this task to the task of winning over the masses and participating in democratic movements. The Comrades who take a line fall into sectarianism led by the national reformists. They do not see the difference between the leaders and the rank and file, isolate themselves from the movement for independence, they do not understand the necessity to cooperate with such democratic strata which are able to march together with the working class, even for a portion of the path, in the struggle against the imperialists. At the same time they display a failure to understand the necessity to utilise legal and semi-legal forms of mass movement."\(^{131}\)

Concluding his analysis he says: "The experience of the entire history of the Indian national movement, especially from 1919 to 1933, shows that the Indian bourgeoisie is dead for the revolution, and the further they go the more they collaborate with imperialism against the revolutionary masses. Experience shows that the National Congress, in spite of a number of peculiarities, is a class organisation of the bourgeoisie connected with the liberal land lords, and it consistently

\(^{130}\) V. Basak, "The Present Situation in India", *International Press Correspondence*, no. 39, September 8, 1933, p. 854.

\(^{131}\) Basak, n. 130, no. 41, September 15, 1933, p. 896.
opposes the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution. Experience shows that the path of passive resistance and compromises as preached by the leaders of the National Congress is completely bankrupt and only leads to the further enslavement of India."132

A little earlier a write up, which looked like a document without any a on the letter, was published in May 1933. According to This write up: "The Communist Party cannot exist legally under the terrorist regime in India, has been vividly demonstrated by the Meerut trial, and thousands of other facts. One of the mistakes of proletarian revolutionaries in the 1927-1929 period consisted exactly in the fact that they worked only openly and did not attempt to develop "underground" work, agitation and propaganda, and did not set up "underground" organisations. The point of view of the Communists is, while paying maximum attention to the establishment of a mass "underground" Communist Party, the only leader of the working class and thereby of the toiling masses of India, Communist must at the same time make full use of all legal possibilities."133

A year later, political thesis of the Communist Party of India was published by the Comintern which give deep insights about it activities in the Country. It also see a that above thesis was accepted taking into consideration all the advices given by the Comintern in the past, as it is obvious from the beginning remarks in which on behalf of the Comintern it is noted: "It gives us great pleasure to publish in the "Inprecorr" the draft of the

132 Basak n. 130, no. 42, September 22, 1933, p. 926.

133 "The Indian Labour Movement", International Press Correspondence, no. 22, May 19, 1933, p. 491.
political thesis sent to us by the provisional central committee of the Communist Party of India.

The publication of these thesis is a fact of great significance it shows serious progress of the communist movement. In place of scattered and politically disunited groups, we see that on the arena of the world history a united Communist Party is coming. And on the basis of its platform of action, the programme and decisions of the Communist International and the open letters of the various Communist Parties, It has began to work out its own tactical line and energetically develop practical activities."134 It was also noted that the cowardly and treacherous bourgeoisie, led by Gandhi, terrified at the prospects of a national revolution, his flinging itself into the arms of imperialism, and had appealed to stop the mass struggle. For the first time the Comintern accepted that the Communist Party of India had adopted a correct line as it was pointed out: "The draft of the political thesis correctly states that the Communists must do everything possible to expose the reformist, leaders of the national Congress and so using concrete example, that the Congress leaders are not fighting for independence but, on the contrary, are disorganising the Communist Party of India speaks in its theses about their tasks. The job is to put them now into

practice."\(^{135}\)

So far as, political thesis of the party is concerned, it has dealt with different issues in a detailed manner, e.g., British imperialism in India, the attitude of the various classes towards imperialism and the revolution, the role of the bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism, the role of the city petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, working class, the character of national revolution in India, strategy and tactics of the Communist party in the revolutionary struggle, etc.\(^{136}\)

About national revolution in India the political thesis says that the Indian revolution will have to carry the following tasks:\(^{137}\)

1. The complete independence of India by the overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation and nationalisation of all factories, banks, railways, sea and rivers transport and plantations;
2. the establishment of a Soviet government. The right of nations to self-determination, including reparation. Abolition of the native states. The creation of an Indian Federal workers' and peasant Soviet Republic;
3. the confiscation without compensation of all the lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British government, officials and moneylenders and handing them over for use to the toiling peasantry. Cancellation

\(^{135}\) Ibid.

\(^{136}\) For the details see, Ibid., pp. 1024-34.

\(^{137}\) Ibid., p. 1028.
of slave agreements and all the indebtedness of; the peasantry to moneylenders and banks,

4. the eight-hour working day and the radical improvement of Conditions of labour. Increase in wages and state maintenance for the unemployed, etc.

In a typical communist style of self-criticism the thesis realised that there was a tendency to regard the whole anti-imperialist movement of 1930-31 as a purely Congress movement and to remain aloof from it. It was a fact that the Civil-Disobedience movement of 1930-31 Communists did not realise the full significance of the movement and objectively isolated themselves from the struggle of the masses. This sectarian deviation too, must be corrected.\textsuperscript{138}

The Soviet scholar A. Reznikov has pointed out that in autumn of 1934 the Comintern sent the Communist Party of India the fresh letter expressing the idea of flexible and sensible tactics of a United Front. The Indian National Congress, the letter said, was continuing to act before the people as a centre organisation general national opposition to imperialism. It was leading considerable numbers of workers, wide sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry.\textsuperscript{139}

He further wrote that in 1934 the Comintern Executive was steadily coming to the conclusion that the Indian National Congress should be regarded as a colourful mixture of diverse political forces. The documents, decisions, theoretical analysis and practical activity of the Comintern in the period of political

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{139} Reznikov, n. 54, p. 153.
change which had stated in 1934 showed that there was a complex combination of elements of old and new tactics. Such a combination found expression in the letter sent by the Comintern Executive to the Communist Party of India in the autumn of 1934. On the one hand, the letter regarded the stepping up of Congress activity against colonial rule as a political manoeuvre. On the other, it felt that the gravest danger for the Communist Party of India was to separate the struggle against national-reformism from that of national liberation, from the fight for every day demands of the workers and peasants.\textsuperscript{140}

In this regard, according to some western scholars: "After 1933, the fundamental fact confronting international communism was the rise of a powerful enemy in fascist Germany. In response to this threat, the Soviet leadership steadily abandoned its "hard", leftist line, hoping thus to find new allies. This "softening" process culminated in 1935 when the Seventh Comintern Congress was called to announced the new policy."\textsuperscript{141}

Thus, we see through the entire political developments, discussed in this chapter that during the period 1925-34, the Comintern policies had to be changed at different stages to suit domestic developments within Soviet Russia as well as its foreign polices. During this period, the international communist movement saw the end of Lenin's understanding of anti-colonial movement and it also marked the beginning of 'cult of personality' which later on symbolised Stalin as the only

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., pp. 153-4.

\textsuperscript{141} Overstreet and Windmiller, n. 26, p. 157.
revolutionary authority in the World. This phenomenon badly influenced the Comintern's policies in the colonies. At this stage, though the Communist Party of India was very weak, it led the foundation of greater mistakes which influenced the future course of its history during anti-colonial movement in the country.