

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND  
COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN KERALA -  
1919 TO 1964**

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**VINEETH R.**

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**Dr. K.N. GANESH**  
**Professor (Rtd)**  
**Department of History**  
**University of Calicut.**

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN KERALA - 1919 TO 1964** submitted for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research done by **Mr. VINEETH. R.**, under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any degree before.



**Dr. K.N. GANESH**  
Supervising Teacher  
Department of History  
University of Calicut

Calicut University  
Date:



## **DECLARATION**

I, VINEETH R., hereby declare that the thesis **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN KERALA - 1919 TO 1964** is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other degrees.

C U Campus  
14.02.2019

**VINEETH R.**  
Asistant Professor  
Department of History  
University of Calicut

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**Vineeth. R**  
Asistant Professor  
Department of History  
University of Calicut

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## Abbreviations

ACH	–	Archives of Contemporary History
AITUC	–	All India Trade Union Congress
CC	–	Central Committee
CIA	–	Central Intelligence Agency
Comintern	–	Communist International
CP	–	Communist Party
CPC	–	Communist Party of China
CPGB	–	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPI	–	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	–	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPS	–	Communist Party of Soviet Union
Cominform	–	Communist Information Bureau
CSP	–	Communist Socialist Party
HSRA	–	Hindustan Socialist Republican Association
INA	–	Indian National Army
INC	–	Indian National Congress
<i>Inprecor</i>	–	International Press Correspondance
IPTA	–	Indian People Theatre Association
JNU	–	Jawaharlal Nehru University
KPAC	–	Kerala People's Arts Club
KPCC	–	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
KSP	–	Kerala Socialist Party
NSS	–	Nair Service Society
PB	–	Politbureau
PSP	–	Praja Socialist Party
RIN	–	Royal Indian Navy
RSP	–	Revolutionary Socialist Party



- SNDP – Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam
- SRP – Socialist Republican Party
- USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- WPP – Workers and Peasant Party

## INTRODUCTION

The October revolution of 1917 provided a political alternative for those who wanted to fight against the existing exploitative capitalist system. As argued by Eric Hobsbawm, 'this revolution had given a positive signal to those parties and trade union movements who wanted to create an alternative socio-political order against Capitalism and human suffering'.<sup>1</sup> This revolution paved way for the first successful socialist experiment in the world in the form of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) (1921) which continued up to its disintegration in 1991. This event gave a momentum to those who believed in the establishment of a socialist system across the world.

The important feature of this revolution was that it took place as a result of an alliance between the working class and peasantry, in which the middle peasants and the agricultural laborers had allied with the industrial proletariat of Russia. This strategy was developed by the Russian Social Democratic Party (RSDP) as result of a long debate with the Narodniks (who advocated for an agrarian revolution, carried out by the rural peasantry). This revolution was made possible by the formation of a party organization, suitable for the circumstances of Tzarist Russia. This organization was evolved through a prolonged debate within the Russian Social Democratic Party, regarding the correct revolutionary strategy to counter the Tzarist autocracy.

The Russian revolution of 1917 provided some immediate tasks which the Russian Social Democratic Party was required to fulfill after the revolution. The immediate Challenge they faced was the Russian Civil War

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, London, Abacus, 1995, p.56.

which was supported by the foreign powers. They also had to face the economic collapse, caused by the First World War. In order to face this situation they had done two things: the first was the introduction of a policy known as 'War Communism' and the second was the formation of Communist International in 1919.

The Communist International was formed to ensure the spread of socialist revolution across the world. The strategy of the International was influenced by various debates which took place in the International Socialist movement from late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They include the question of the worker-peasant alliance, the question of colonialism, the debate over national self determination, the debate over correct revolutionary strategy and the correct form of party organization etc. From the first congress itself this international emphasised on the importance of colonial question. This issue initiated a debate within the communist international from the Second Congress. The debate was over the attitude towards the anti-colonial movements in various countries. This debate was continued till the dissolution of the International in 1943. This debate had made significant impact on the communist movements in the colonies like India.

It was along with the second congress of the Communist International the Indian communist party formed at Tashkent. It was the Indian Muhajirs (Muslim immigrants) and Indian revolutionaries abroad who played a major role in the formation of the Indian communist party at Tashkent. Later they established contact with some Indian leaders like S.A Dange (Bombay), Muzaffar Ahmed (Calcutta), and Singaravelu Chettiyar (Madras). These leaders took some efforts to create a platform for the Communist Activities. This resulted in the formation of workers and peasants' parties in different parts of India. It was in this context that the emergence and growth of the communist movement in Kerala took place.

In Kerala, the discussions about Socialism became prominent by the second decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century as evident from the writings of people like K. Ramakrishna Pillai, Sahodaran K. Ayyappan *et al.* The Russian revolution of 1917 made certain impact upon the intellectuals and writers in Kerala. Though these intellectuals might not have a detailed understanding about Socialism, they believed that it will help to resolve the suffering of the common people. It was after the 1930s a clear cut socialist consciousness was developed in Kerala. This could be attributed to certain developments which took place in India and abroad. The major factor was the Great Depression of 1930. It was the Soviet Union who survived the Great Depression because of its planned economy. The youth in Kerala were disillusioned with the congress leadership over the suspension of civil disobedience movement and the attitude of Congress leadership regarding the hanging of Indian revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh. This situation attracted people towards alternative political ideas including socialism.

This study aims to assess the relationship between the International Communist Movement and the Communist Movement in Kerala from the period of the establishment of Communist International 1919 to the split of communist party in 1964. In Malabar, the main focus of the communist activity was the struggle against the British Colonialism and the existing Janmy system. While, in Travancore and Cochin the main emphasis of the agitation was the struggle for responsible government. In Kerala, generally this movement was emerged against the policies and attitudes of the Indian National Congress. From early 1930s successful attempts were made to systematically organize the working class and the cultivators. Most of the early activists of these movements were hailing either from the middle class or the grass root workers.

The important feature of the communist movement in Kerala was that, it ends the distinction between the political and cultural activity. The culture was used as an instrument for propagating the socialistic ideas among the people of Kerala. The cultural activity was closely integrated with the struggle of the working class and the peasants. Another important feature of the communist movement in Kerala was its continued and relentless support for the establishment of a united Kerala for the Malayalam speaking population. It was these consistent struggles that enabled the Communist Party for coming to power through democratic means in 1957. After Habsburg and Thuringya (Weimar Republic) Kerala was the first place where the communist party assumed the power through parliamentary means.

It was during the period between 1919 and 1964, the major debates in the Indian communist movement were took place. They include the debates on nationality question, over correct revolutionary strategy, the discussion over culture and revolution and the debates on the peaceful transition to Socialism. In this study it is intended to assess the relationship between the international communist movement and its Kerala experience till 1964. The impact of international developments upon the communist movement in Kerala is also attempted to analyse in this thesis.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

A critical analysis of the relationship between the international movement and the communist movement in Kerala from the establishment of Communist International (1919) to the split of CPI in 1964 is tried in this thesis.

For understanding the factors, which determined the future strategy of the Communist International, various debates in the international communist movement like the workers-peasants alliance, the debate on colonialism, the

National question and the question of party organization etc are analysed in this thesis. It is also intended to assess the role of these debates in the formulation of Comintern's strategy on colonial question.

Secondly, this study aims to analyse the Comintern's strategy on colonial question. In this, the debate within the International regarding the colonial question, including the debate between M.N Roy and Lenin in the second congress is also attempted to take up. Similarly, an analysis of the changes in the strategy of Comintern regarding the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries is also attempted here.

Similarly the impact of this debate on Indian communist party is tried to understand in this work. Some questions like how the internal debates within the Comintern impacted the strategy of Indian Communist party until the dissolution of Comintern in 1943 were tried to pose here. Likewise the process of the emergence of Communist movement in Kerala is studied in detail. In this an attempt is also made to assess the growth of socialist consciousness in Kerala and how the younger generations of Malayalees were frustrated with the leadership of Indian National Congress. The role of various agencies in inculcating the socialist consciousness among the younger generation of congress men in Kerala are also attempted to explore. The process of the transition of Kerala unit of the congress socialist party into the communist party and the role of various agrarian and labor movements which accelerated this transition were discussed here. This study also aims to analyse the strategic shifts in the international communist movement during the period of Imperialist War and the People's War. Here a detailed discussion about the strategy a People's War and how it impacted the communist movement in India in general and Kerala in particular are attempted. A detailed discussion is attempted about the new strategy of the communist movement to overcome its initial isolation due to the policy of

people's war. The method of using culture as an important vehicle for anti-Fascist propaganda is also discussed. Here a discussion is also made regarding the communist party's attitude towards various community organizations.

Similarly a discussion on the postwar situation and the re-intensification of communist party led struggles is brought here, in this the various agrarian and working class struggles and their impact upon Kerala are also discussed. Here an analysis on the communist party's new policy regarding the nationality question in the postwar scenario is also made. This study also aims to analyse the second congress of the CPI and the factors which led to the adoption of Calcutta thesis.

Another important objective of this study is to assess the debates within the Communist party regarding the suitable way of revolution in India and how this debate led to the adoption of the new programme in 1951. Likewise a discussion regarding the transition of communist party towards the parliamentary system including the formation of first Communist led ministry in Kerala is attempted here.

This study also intends to discuss the impact of the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) and the subsequent Sino-Soviet split on Indian communist party. Likewise the Sino-Soviet border dispute and its role in the subsequent split of the Indian communist party in 1964 is also analysed here. Finally, this study aim to assess the impact of the split on Kerala and the factors which contributed to it.

## **Review of literature**

There exist a plenty of literature on the Communist movement in India in general and Kerala in particular. The Cold war rivalry and the formation of the first communist led ministry in Kerala had accelerated the production of this literature. The earlier writers like John H Kautsky, G.D Overstreet and

Marshall Windmiller viewed the Communist movement in the context of Soviet influence. They scholars argued that the policies of Indian Communist party were dictated by the Soviet Union and Comintern.

About 1970s attempts were made to publish the documents regarding the rise of Communist movements in India. Men like G. Adhikari visited Moscow and collected major documents regarding the initial years of the communist movement. Their attempt was resulted in the publications of voluminous work entitled the *Documented History of Communist Party of India*, published in early 1970s. Likewise, others like Subodh Roy published certain documents of the communist movement which were available in the national archives of India.

From early 1980's new kinds of studies were conducted regarding the relationship between communist movement and the Indian national movement. A work entitled *Indian Left; Critical Apprisings* edited by Bipan Chandra is an example. They argued the Indian communist movement failed to understand the significance of the Indian national movement especially the role of Gandhi that is why communist movement in India failed to get domination in Indian society. This argument was further advanced by Bhagwan Singh Josh and Sasi Joshi through their two volume work *Struggle for Hegemony in India; Colonial State Left and National Movement*. They argued that the communists in India failed to understand the nature of colonial state that is why the Indian communists underestimate the Gandhian struggle. Others like Sobhanlal Datta Gupta tried to analyse the role of Comintern in determining the destiny of Indian communist movement. To him, the policies of Comintern made a significant influence in the policies of Indian Communist party. He added that in the early days of its foundation, the Comintern had certain form democratic character. But after the death of Lenin in 1924 the Comintern became an instrument of Soviet foreign policy.



The emergence of communist movement in Kerala has been subjected to serious debates among the social scientists from early 1970s. The major factor which persuaded some European and American social scientists to work on Kerala was the ascendancy of the first communists-led ministry in Kerala. Different writers have given different interpretation regarding the raise of Communist movement in Kerala.

People like Robin Jeffrey situated the movement in the context of decline of matrilineal system. He compared Kerala situation with that of China and Vietnam. He argued that there were certain similarities like, oppressed peasantry, high population density and social disintegration. According To him, the social disintegration which followed the destruction of the matrilineal system played a crucial role in directing Malayalees towards communism.<sup>2</sup>

Donald S Zagoria linked the emergence of communist movement with population density and literacy. To him, communism struck deeper roots in those areas, where the percentage of literacy was low.<sup>3</sup> Victor M Fic viewed the Communist Movement in the eyes of caste and community.<sup>4</sup> He understood communist movement in Kerala only on the basis of voting pattern of 1957. He emphasized the caste factor subjecting the voting pattern of 1957 to detailed analysis. He argued that ‘communists were voted on communal lines through which there was a shift in the voting pattern of the upper caste Nairs

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<sup>2</sup> Robin Jeffrey, ‘Matriliney, Marxism, and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala, 1930-1940’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1, November 1978, pp. 77-98.

<sup>3</sup> Zagoria, Donald S., "The Social Bases of Communism in Kerala and West Bengal: A Study in Contrast, in *Problems of Communism*, Vol.XXII, 1973. p.16.

<sup>4</sup> Victor M Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India: Rise of Communist Power, 1937–1969*, Bombay, Nachiketa Publication, 1970

in favor of the communists which enabled them to emerge victorious'.<sup>5</sup> In another work T.J. Nossiter tried to evaluate communist political activity in terms of the modification of Marx's theory by practice in the specific context of Kerala. To him, from its origin, the communist party had been essentially pragmatic as reflected in its willingness to pursue an electoral strategy. Like Victor M. Fic, T.J. Nossiter gave importance to caste and community and its shifting alignments in the shaping of communist politics in Kerala. Dilip Menon had offered somewhat similar observation but in a different way. To him, the major reason for the rise of communist movement in Malabar was the reshaping of communism into a doctrine of caste equality. This was done through the forging of feelings of community.<sup>6</sup> Abandoning class as a marker of identity even when discussing class pleaded agitations; instead, he put forward the notion of conjunctural community. A community according to Dilip Menon was not an achieved entity but only represents an aspiration. It was always in the process of formation without reaching its realization. Dilip Menon discussed three themes; they were community of subsistence, community of worship and community of caste. Others like E. Balakrishnan argued that this movement was imposed in Kerala from Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, various studies came out regarding the communist led peasant movements. The Study on Kayyur by K.K.N. Kurup, the study of Prakash Karat on the peasant movements in Malabar and the study of K. Gopalan Kutty regarding the transformation of Communist movement in Malabar require special mention. Similarly, various memoirs written by those

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<sup>5</sup> Donald S. Zagoria, 'The Social Bases of Communism in Kerala and West Bengal: A Study in Contrast', In *Problems of Communism* 1973.

<sup>6</sup> T.J. Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation*, California press, September 1, 1983

<sup>7</sup> Dilip Menon, 'Conjunctural Community; Communism in Malabar, 1934-1948', *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol. XXII, No. 51-52, 19<sup>th</sup>, December, 1992

people who directly participated in various movements of the Communist party had utilized for this study. They include works of men like K.C George, A.V Kunhambu, EMS Namboothirippad, A.K Gopalan and N.E Balaram et al. But these studies do not go in to the details of the relationship between International Communism and the Communist Movement in Kerala.

### **Organization of the study**

Besides introduction and conclusion this study is divided in to six chapters. The first chapter gives a background for this study. Here, it intends to analyse the various debates which provided a background for the communist international. An attempt is also made to discuss the Comintern's formulation of colonial question and its implications on India up to the sixth congress of the Communist international in 1928.

The second Chapter discusses the 7<sup>th</sup> congress of Comintern and the strategy of united front. It also intends to analyse the emergence of communist movement in Kerala and its early strategies up to the Second World War.

The next Chapter is an attempt to analyse the expansion of Communist movements in Kerala during the period between 1939 and 1945. It also discusses the formation of Communist Party in Kerala and its earlier strategy of Imperialist War. The strategic shift from Imperialist War to People's War and its implication upon the Communist Movements in Kerala are also discussed here.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter analyses the postwar upsurges led by the Communist Party in Kerala and its implications.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter is trying to assess the Communist attempt to find an Indian way of revolution. It also analyses various debates within the Communist Party regarding the nature of new Indian state and Indian

Bourgeoisie. It also intends to discuss the Communist led ministry in Kerala and its programme between 1957 and 1959.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter tries to locate various factors which led to the split of CPI in 1964 and its impact upon Kerala.

### **Methodology and sources**

This study applies a combination of empirical analysis and interpretation of various primary and secondary sources, including party documents, pamphlets, letters, biographies, auto biographies, news papers. This study also uses various books and articles published by different social scientists for conceptual frame work. Various primary sources were consulted from places like Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi, Archives of Contemporary history, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Kerala State Archives, Thiruvananthapuram, M.N Smaraka Mandiram, Thiruvananthapuram, Appan Thampuran Memorial Repository, Thrissur, Keluvettan Study and Research Center, Kozhikkode etc.

## **Chapter I**

# **COMINTERN AND THE COLONIAL QUESTION**

The October revolution of 1917 provided a new ray of hope for world revolution among various working class movements in the world. This revolution has taken place as a result of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. Immediately after the revolution the Russian Social Democratic Party (RSDP) took some immediate steps to consolidate the existing victory after the October revolution and to pursue the goal of world revolution. These steps were taken in the form of War Communism (1918) and the establishment of Communist International (1919). This should be situated in the context of the emerging complex socio-political situation after the revolution, including the civil war. Communist international played a major role in the International Communist Movement between its establishment in 1919 and its dissolution in 1943. During this period the world communist movement especially in the colonial countries was mainly influenced by the debates and discussion in the communist international on various issues including the national and colonial question. The debates in the International can be understood properly only when we analyze the debates within the Russian Social Democratic Party and the world communist movement from the late nineteenth century. The debates had taken place over many issues including the question of alliance between the working class and peasantry, nationalism versus internationalism, the colonial question, the question of revolutionary strategy and the relationship between culture and socialism.

## **The Question of Workers Peasant Alliance**

The question of worker peasant alliance was the important cornerstone of the Russian Social Democratic Parties' revolutionary strategy especially after the Russian revolution of 1905. The formation of this concept should be seen in the context of the existing socio-political backwardness in that country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the subsequent emancipation of the serfs gave a severe blow to the age-old Russian landed aristocracy and gave a foundation of capitalist development in Russia. The important result of this was the changing status of the peasantry and the system of land tenure. The Marxist groups in Russia were emerged through contesting the view points of Narodniks about the destiny of the Russian peasantry. To Narodniks the natural peasant economy would be an alternative to the capitalist system. To them, the basic feature of the Russian peasantry was its unchanging Character. To Narodniks, this peasantry can be considered as an important revolutionary force. They believed, because of this unchanging character there is no scope for capitalist development in Russia. The early Russian Marxists believed that the Russian peasants were conservative and were largely kept apart from revolutionary consciousness. For instance, Plekhanov, who earlier took a Narodnik position, had subsequently changed his perspective in 1892. He stated that the peasants in Russia, as in the west are fundamentally a conservative factor; he wrote in 1892 "we perceive no social forces in our country in which opposition or revolutionary groups could find support. He therefore was convinced of the fact that the revolution in Russia must take the course which the revolutionaries in the advanced capitalist countries had been following as laid down in the Communist Manifesto".<sup>1</sup> To him, the first stage of the revolution

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<sup>1</sup> E.H., Carr, *Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol.II, London, Macmillan & co. Ltd, 1963, pp. 10-11.

would be a bourgeois capitalist revolution which would encourage the development of Russian industry and destroy such obsolete feudal system of land tenure as the peasant commune. He added when the capitalism had been triumphantly established in town and countryside, leading to its final overthrow by the proletarian socialist revolution. To Russian Marxists, the Narodnik idea of proceeding to socialism through the peasant commune without an intervening capitalist stage and without the creation of a strong proletariat was Utopian.<sup>2</sup> Lenin considered that main shortcomings of these groups were that they conceived of the capitalism and its essential feature of exchange as a 'matter of chance' rather than a 'particular defined system' within the economy.<sup>3</sup> The agrarian question was very vital as far as the Russian Marxists were concerned. About 90 percent of the Russian populations were peasants and Agricultural laborers. Lenin's early writings carried on their dispute with Narodniks, and stressed the importance of the necessity of capitalist development in Russia. While writing in 1900 he maintained that "in the Russian community village the role of capital is not confined to bondage and usury, that capital is also invested in production, it is apparent from the fact that the well-to-do peasant puts his money into the improvement of his farm, purchase and renting of land, the acquisition of improved implements, the hiring of workers etc., and not only into trading establishments and undertakings".<sup>4</sup> To him, independent development of merchant's and usurer's capital in Russian countryside retards the differentiations of the peasantry, the formation of rural bourgeoisie and a rural

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Tamas Krausz, *Reconstructing Lenin: An Intellectual Biography*, Delhi, Aakar, 2015, p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> V.I., Lenin, 'The Differentiation of the Peasantry, the Development of Capitalism in Russia', in Utsa Patnaik, Ed., *Agrarian Question in Marx and His Successors*, Delhi, Left Word, 2011, pp. 91-92.

proletariat; the whole of the peasantry would represent a fairly even the type of poverty stricken cultivators, among whom only usurers would stand out, only to the extent of possessing money and not to the extent of organization of agricultural production. To him, another important phenomenon of the Russian countryside that retards the differentiation of the peasantry was the survivals of Corvee economy. To him, “labor service presupposes and requires the middle peasant, one who is not very affluent (otherwise he would not agree to the bondage of labor service) but is also not a proletarian (to undertake labor-service one must have one’s own implements, one must be at least in some measure a “sound” peasant)”.<sup>5</sup> By contradicting Narodniks, Lenin argued that Russia has entered the capitalist path. In the course of his studies of the causes of peasant differentiation, he analyzed about the emergence of the market economy. To him, the fundamental cause of the struggle of economic interests arising among the peasantry is the existence of a system under which the market is the regulator of social production.<sup>6</sup> The Russo-Japanese war of 1905 had generated a strong discontent among the various sections of Russian society including the Russian peasantry. The revolution of 1905 was the first symptom of an upsurge of the factory proletariat against the industrial capitalism and the age old revolt of the Russian peasants against the existing agrarian condition. As argued by Tamas Krausz, the 1905 revolution expressed all the fundamental contradictions of the new forms of development, the failure of the Tsarist regime, the defeat in the Russo-Japanese war which revealed the military weakness of the empires and the increasingly desperate social problems endangering social and political unity forms within.<sup>7</sup> This revolution initiated a new kind of debate

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Tamas Krausz, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.



and discussions within the Russian Social Democratic Party. Russian Marxist like, Leone Trotsky used the concept of 'Permanent Revolution' during this period. To him, the principal driving force of Russian revolution was the proletariat. To Trotsky the proletariat stepped forward for the first time with its own objectives.<sup>8</sup> But other social democratic leaders like Lenin understood the role of rural peasant masses. On January 9- 1905, it was the urban workers who started the revolution; and the mass industrial strike of the autumn of 1905 was one of its important achievement. But already in February 1905 the peasants of backward regions of the Baltic provinces and of the Caucasus were in revolt. In April 1905 the third Bolshevik party congress in London openly incited "the peasantry and the village proletariat" to a "collective refusal to pay taxes and dues" or "not to obey the military conscription and the orders and comments of the government and its agents".<sup>9</sup> In the same month Lenin had proclaimed the immediate goal of the revolution as the establishment of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry"; he viewed it as an intermediate stage between the capitalistic and the communist society. Writing in 1875, Karl Marx maintained that between the capitalist and communist systems of society there will be an intermediate stage which lies the period of revolutionary transformation of one into the other. To him, this corresponds to a political transition period, whose state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>10</sup> Lenin's pamphlet 'Two Tactics' was an elaboration of this theme. In this, he distinguished between the bourgeois stage of revolution, in which the proletariat would be in alliance with the peasantry as a whole, or democratic revolution, in which the proletariat would rally the poor peasants

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<sup>8</sup> Leone Trotsky, *1905*, Availed from Marxist Internet Archives, dn., pp. 37-38.

<sup>9</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx, *Critique of Gotha Programme*, Socialist Labor Party of America, 2005, (1922), p. 48.

against the reactionary elements in the peasantry.<sup>11</sup> To him, “a people’s revolution cannot be timed in advance, that it is prepared artificially, but that it comes about of itself”. He argued that the revolution has begun in Russia with the abolition of serfdom, and it was the backwardness of political superstructure as compared with accomplished revolution in social relations that make the collapse of the superstructure inevitable.<sup>12</sup> He made it clear that a joint struggle of the revolutionary social democrats and the revolutionary elements of other democratic movements are inevitable and indispensable in the era of the fall of the autocracy.<sup>13</sup>

The important part of this pamphlet was his formulation of the different stages of the proletarian revolution. He stated “we should bear in mind that the revolutionary movement, however their high levels since the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, still have many stages to pass through before our socialist and democratic parties will be reconstructed on a new basis in a free Russia. In another pamphlet entitled ‘Two Tactics of Social Democracy’ he argued that the preparation of correct tactical decisions was of immense importance for a part which desires to lead the proletariat in the spirit of sound Marxist principles and not merely to lay in the wake of events.<sup>14</sup> In this he pointed out that the establishment of democratic republic in Russia is possible only as result of victorious popular insurrection whose organ would be a provisional revolutionary government, which alone will be capable of securing complete

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<sup>11</sup> V.I. Lenin, ‘Two Tactics’, 1905 in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. VIII, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977 (1962), pp. 148-162.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152-159.

<sup>14</sup> V.I., Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*, 1905, Vol IX, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977 (1962), pp. 17-46.

freedom of agitation.<sup>15</sup> He continued by stating that to advance the revolution, and to take it beyond the limits which the monarchist bourgeoisie have advanced. To him, the social democratic party which operates in a bourgeois society cannot take part in politics without marching, in certain cases, side by side with bourgeois democracy. To Lenin, the tactics of remaining the party of extreme revolutionary opposition does not in any way exclude the expediency of partial and episodic seizure of power and the establishment of revolutionary communes in any city or district, exclusively for the purpose of helping to spread the insurrection and there by disrupting the government. To him, “beyond the bounds of democratic, there can be no question over the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie having a single will. Class struggle between them was inevitable, but it was a democratic republic that this single will be the most thorough going and widespread struggle of the people for the socialism. Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy, and privilege. In the struggle against this past, in the struggle against counter revolution, a “single will” of the proletariat and the peasantry is possible, for here there is unity of it”.<sup>16</sup> In this pamphlet Lenin had formulated the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. Like Marx he also envisaged an interim stage during the process of transition in to the proletarian revolution (i.e., the social democratic revolution). As a part of this he envisaged a socialist revolution which will ultimately lead to a classless society. At the same time they also had to counter the Narodnik plan for a peasant commune. To Lenin, the social democrats were faced with particularly urgent task of defining the class character of the various proletarian parties, of accessing peasant class

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 46-84.

relations and, accordingly of defining, their attitude towards other parties. He argued that the Black Hundreds Parties (the union of Russian people, the monarchist, the council of united nobility etc.) are coming up more and more resolutely and definitely as a class organization of the feudal minded landowners, and are with increased arrogance robbing the people of their revolutionary gains, thereby causing an inevitable intensification of the revolutionary struggle. The social democratic party must expose the close link between them and Tsarist regime and the interest of big feudal landownership, and explain to the masses that an uncompromising struggle must be waged for the complete abolition of these relics of Barbarism.<sup>17</sup> To him, the social democratic party (while taking advantage of the conflict between these parties and the black hundreds autocracy it should develop the revolution) carries on most relentless struggle against these parties.<sup>18</sup> The Russian revolution of 1905 had completely changed the outlook of many of the Russian communist leaders regarding the nature of the future revolution in Russia. It was in this revolution the rural peasantry was mobilized under the leadership of the urban proletariat. Immediately after the revolution, Lenin wrote “the growth and outcome of the Russian revolution depended in tremendous measures’ on the growth of the peasants’ political consciousness”.<sup>19</sup> He asked the peasants to have an understanding that the red banner has been raised in the towns is the banner of the struggle for the immediate and the vital demands, not only of the industrial and agricultural workers but also the millions and the tens of millions of small tillers of the soil. To the Bolshevik party “the red banner of

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<sup>17</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘The Present Stage in the Democratic Revolution’, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol XI, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1972 (1962) pp. 135-137.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘The Proletariat and the Peasantry’, 1905-1906, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. X, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978 (1962), pp. 40-42.

class conscious workers means, that they support with all our might the peasants struggle for full freedom and all the land”, it means that “we do not stop at this, but go on further, we are waging besides the struggle for freedom and land, a fight for socialism. The fight for socialism is a fight against the role of capital”.<sup>20</sup> He considered the agrarian interest of the peasantry was the part and parcel of the power and economy in Russia. He rejected the Menshevik’s suggestion that the agrarian question could be resolved through Municipalisation of land as the property of local governments. Lenin and the Bolshevik thought in terms of the nationalization of the large landholdings because this was to their thinking the best means to expropriate the estates and unseat the monarchy.

By assessing the 1905 revolution Lenin stated, ‘the December events confirmed another of Marx’s profound propositions, which the opportunists have forgotten, namely, that insurrection is an art and that the principal role of this art is the waging of a desperately bold and irrevocably determined *offensive*’.<sup>21</sup> To Lenin, the Russian Social Democratic Party has not sufficiently assimilated this truth. He stated, ‘We ourselves have not sufficiently learned, nor have we taught the masses, this art, and this rule to attack at all costs. We must make up for this omission with all our energy’.<sup>22</sup> It is not enough to take sides on the question of political slogans; it is also necessary to take sides on the question of an armed uprising. Those who are opposed to it, those who do not prepare for it, must be ruthlessly dismissed from the ranks of the supporters of the revolution, sent packing to its enemies, to the traitors or cowards; for the day is approaching when the force of events

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> VI Lenin, ‘Lessons of the Moscow Uprising, in VI Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XI, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1965, pp.171-178.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

and the conditions of the struggle will compel us to distinguish between enemies and friends according to this principle. It is not passivity that we should preach, not mere “waiting” until the troops “come over”. The social democratic party must proclaim from the house tops the need for a bold offensive and armed attack, the necessity at such times of exterminating the persons in command of the enemy, and of a most energetic fight for the wavering troops. The third great lesson taught by Moscow concerns the tactics and organisation of the forces for an uprising. Military tactics depend on the level of military technique. The basis of our work is a correct estimate of class interests and of the requirements of the nation’s development at the present juncture. The social democratic party should rallying, and shall continue to rally, an increasing section of the proletariat, the peasantry and the army under the slogan of overthrowing the Tsarist regime and convening a constituent assembly by a revolutionary government.<sup>23</sup>

As a response to the peasant uprising of 1902-1903 and the 1905 revolutionary agrarian movements, the Tsar government through Stolypin strove to quicken the demise of the village community by encouraging well to do peasant to secure private land holdings’. In accordance with Stolypin’s initiative the Tsar issued a decree on November 1906 giving every head of household who owned land the right to convert his farmstead into private ownership and out of land commune. Lenin considered Stolypin’s reforms ‘progressive’ for their destruction of the feudal chains and their acceleration of the evolution of capitalism. However by contrast to Plackanov and Mensheviks he refused any and all form of political support for these reforms and excluded any possibility of cooperation with bourgeoisie. Besides this he considered the Stolypin a modernizer and a “market economy” guardian of

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

the autocracy, rather than its opponent.<sup>24</sup>

To the Bolshevik party, “the agrarian question in Russia was determined by the difference between Russian and western European conditions. To them, the difference between Europe and Russia stems from Russia’s extreme backwardness. In the west, the bourgeois agrarian system is fully established”<sup>25</sup>. To Lenin feudalism was swept away long ago, and its survival is negligible and plays no serious role. The predominant type of social relationship in western agriculture is that between the laborer and employer, the farmers or landowners. To the party the capitalist relation in Russia were overshadowed to a tremendous extent by the feudal relation.<sup>26</sup>

To the Russian Social Democratic Party, in a revolutionary period the old “superstructure” falls apart. And, in full view of everyone, a new one is created by the independent action of the most diverse social forces, which reveal their true nature in practice. Lenin declared the lessons of January was a hard one, but it revolutionized, it will now teach the revolutionary proletariat not only how to fight but also how to win. To the party “this revolution taught the need for actual unification of all local revolutionary organization. They believed that the revolution had dislodged a backward social democratic doctrine at one stroke. Another obstacle to practical unity in work in common with the new Iskrists (Social democrats) had been removed, which of course, does not mean that differences on principle have been entirely eliminated”.<sup>27</sup> To Lenin the first and absolutely necessary step is the

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<sup>24</sup> V.I., Lenin, *op. cit.*, *Two Tactics*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>25</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘The Essence of the Agrarian Problem in Russia’, 1913, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978 (1963) p. 73.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘Revolution Teaches Proletarian’, in V.I., Lenin, *op. cit.*, *Collected Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 146-155.

proclamation of a provisional revolutionary government to unite all military and political activities of the revolutionary people and direct these activities towards a single aim. Unless there is such unity, unless the provisional government universally revolutionized by the revolutionary people, unless it assumes all power, any seizure of institutions and any proclamation of a republic will remain merely an outburst of senseless rebelliousness”.<sup>28</sup>

The Russian Social Democratic Party declared that the aim of the 1905 revolution was both economic and political. The economic aim concerned the whole proletariat, including the wage workers. The political aim was mainly concerned with the liberation of the entire Russian people from the yoke of the autocracy, serfdom, and police tyranny. After February 1905 revolution the revolutionaries established soviet workers of deputies in cities like St. Petersburg. To Lenin, the soviet of workers deputies, as an organization representing all occupations, should strive to include deputies from all industrial, professional and office workers, domestic servants, farm laborers etc. from all who want and able to fight in common for the better life for the whole working people. To him, the soviet must proclaim itself as the provisional revolutionary government, or form such a government, and must by all means ensure the participation of various social groups not only the workers, but, the sailors, soldiers, revolutionary peasantry, and the revolutionary bourgeois intelligentsia. To them, the soviet must select a strong nucleus for the provisional government and reinforce with the representatives of all revolutionary parties and all revolutionary excluding the liberal democrats. To him, unless the proletariat and the peasantry unite and make an alliance with social democrats the Russian revolution cannot be successful. To him, this will be a temporary alliance for the practical necessity and the

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*



final objective the independent assertion of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.<sup>29</sup>

After the 1905 revolution the Tsarist regime took some measures to conciliate the liberal bourgeoisie and the monarchist. It was in the form of a constitutional reform which established Russian Duma. This initiated a debate within the Russian Social Democratic Party on the question of their participation in the Duma. Commenting on this Lenin stated that the “Tsarism deals with the landlords and big bourgeoisie, who in return innocent pseudo constitutional sops that are quite innocuous to the autocracy are to be gradually drawn away from the revolution, i.e., from the fighting people and reconciled with the autocracy”.<sup>30</sup> To him, the tactics of the social democrats should first of all consist in support the idea of boycott. The working class is interested in supporting the sections of the bourgeois democracy which is more revolutionary; it is interested in extending and intensifying political agitation. He maintained that a boycott of the Duma means a more vigorous appeal to the people by the bourgeoisie, a development of its agitation, a greater number of opportunities for their agitation, and a more intense political crisis, which is the source of revolutionary movement. The participation of the liberal bourgeoisie in the Duma means a slackening in its agitation at the present time, its appeal was more to the Tsar than to the people, and the approach of counter revolutionary deal between the Tsar and the bourgeoisie. The Russian Social Democratic Party declared that the establishment of Duma was undoubtedly a concession to the revolution, but a concession made (and this is still more indubitable) so as to suppress the

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<sup>29</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘Our Task and the Soviet of Workers Deputies’, in V.I., Lenin, *op. cit.*, *Collected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 20-24.

<sup>30</sup> VI Lenin, ‘The Boycott of Bulygin Duma and Insurrection’, in *ibid.*, pp.180-214.

revolution and withhold a constitution. By rejecting this constitutional reform the party put forward some demands like convocation of a popular constituent assembly, political freedom, the immediate repeal of all laws that contradict the freedom, complete cultural and political freedom for all oppressed and disfranchised nationalities, an eight hour working day, the establishment of peasant committees for the support and implementation of all democratic reforms, including the confiscation of land from the landlords.<sup>31</sup>

In April 1917, while assessing the circumstances after the February revolution, Lenin asked the peasantry to go further than the bourgeois and seize the land from the land-owners. To him, the essential condition for the Bolshevik revolution was to liberate the peasantry from their traditional political affiliation and to rally them under the leadership of proletariat. In this he emphasized the need for the formation of soviets consisting of the Russian proletariat and peasantry across Russia. It was this soviet which facilitated the capture of power by the Bolshevik party in October 1917. At the end of that month he pointed out that “peasants who were already seizing the land without compensation or paying a quarter of the rent” and in the provinces of Penza “peasants are taking over landlords and stock” and the prevalence of such occurrence is attested by constant exhortations to the peasants from the provincial government and its supports to await the decision of the constituent assembly.<sup>32</sup> The April conference of the Bolshevik party passed a resolution on the agrarian question. This resolution demanded the confiscation of the land from the landlords; church and the state; the immediate transfer of the land “in to the hands of peasantry, organized in soviet peasants’ deputies or other really and fully democratically elected organ of self-government” and the nationalization of the land which would transfer the right of the

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-34.

distributing to the local democratic organs. To Lenin, it was important that the poorer peasants should be formed in to a separate fraction or a separate group in all peasant organizations. He emphasized that large landlords estate should be turned into a model farm to be cultivated socially with agricultural workers and skilled agricultural experts. About July, unrest was growing rapidly across Russia; the whole machines of government cracking under the stress of repeated crisis. In the middle of August The Journal of All Russian Peasant Congress, which was controlled by the Socialist Revolutionaries, published A “Model Decree”. The main provisions of this decree include the expropriation of landowners estate, the vesting of all property in land in the people, prohibition of hired labour, prohibition of the buying and selling of land, distribution of land “on a basis of equality according to the labor standard or to the consumer standard, as local condition shall warrant” and periodical redistribution by the organs of local self-government.<sup>33</sup> Lenin, who had convinced of the imminent prospect of revolution, declared that the modal decree was accepted itself as a programme.<sup>34</sup> In his April thesis Lenin envisaged the formation of workers and peasants soviet and declared a slogan of all power to the soviets. It was this formation of the soviets which facilitated the October revolution.<sup>35</sup> The alliance between the working-class and the peasantry in the socialist revolution became an important aspect of the Bolshevik revolutionary strategy. It was this concept which determined the position of Bolshevik party towards issues like national and colonial question. But in 1920s in countries like China, the communist parties took different position regarding the peasantry. Leaders like Mao Zedong formulated

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

strategies which give predominance to the peasant masses in the overthrow of landed aristocracy.

### **The Debates on Nationalism and Nationality Question**

The most important factor which determined the strategy of communist international was the issue of nationalism and national question. The question of nation and nationalism had been a matter of debate in the international communist movement from the time of Marx and Engels itself. Marx did not reject the existence of various nationalities in Europe. At the same time he was not ready to accept the arguments of German intellectuals that nation consists of the highest stage of human civilization. In his work '*German Ideology*' Marx characterized the state (every state) as a 'substitute for community'.<sup>36</sup> To Marx the road to emancipation was the abolition of the egoistic system of private property, and the substitution of common ownership in the place of private property. To him, this change can only be brought about through the revolutionary action of the proletariat. To him, a true community can be realized only when classes have been abolished and the state as such has disappeared other subgroups such as nationalities. To Marx, the communist revolution will abolish the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried by the class which no longer counts as a class in society. And is in itself the expression of dissolution of all classes, nationalities etc. within present society. In the words of Horace B Davis, some time Marx identified nation with state. But while Marx calling for abolition of state, which he looked on as a coercive, class dominated mechanism, and while he expected that nationalities would be absorbed in the community after classes were abolished. On the contrary, he insisted that nationalism was the necessary condition and prerequisite for the true

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<sup>36</sup> Horace B. Davis, *Nationalism and Socialism Marxist and Labour Theory of Nationalism 1917*, Delhi, Akar Books, 2011, pp. 1-6.

internationalism which he envisaged for the future.<sup>37</sup> To Davis, “the failure of revolutions of 1848 and later on the Paris commune of 1871, Marx and Engels had considered all along as a possibility namely, that other countries would have to pass through the stage of capitalism before arriving socialism. Both of them opposed oppression of one class by another, so they opposed oppression of one people by people of another nation.<sup>38</sup> To Davis, Engels favored what has been called a “West European” solution to the nationality problem of ‘Eastern Europe’. This trend he welcomed since it assisted the growth of large economic units. Engels was using the theory of “historyless people” according to which, people that has never formed a state in the past cannot be expected to form a viable state in future. Marx and Engels favored splitting up the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but not on the line ultimately adopted. They had no special objection to the dual monarchy continuing, and considered the possibility that it might become a unitary state through the unifying influence of transport and trade. To Davis, Marx and Engels welcomed the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 not only because they had long been anxious to see defeat of Louis Napoleon and removed from the scene, but also because they considered that the German movement was already superior to that of France. Marx and Engels did not believe that anyone of the principle of democracy as developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century had validity by itself as long as the system of private property persisted, and so they sometimes gave the self-determination rather short shift.<sup>39</sup>

Around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the right of nations to self-determination became an important matter of debate within the international communist movement. Both Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg had taken two

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13-44.

opposite positions on this issue. Lenin strongly emphasised the right of self-determination of nations, by opposing it, Rosa Luxemburg said that there was no such right, and putting forward this slogan when the terms were not defined.<sup>40</sup> Writing in 1908 on the Polish question Rosa Luxemburg maintained that the Russian Tsardom derives its inner strength from social relations within Russia itself. To her, the historical basis of Russian absolutism was a natural economy resting on the archaic communal property relations of the peasantry. To her the foreign policy of the Tsarist Russia is conducted to benefit the bourgeoisie. To her the restoration of Poland could bring about the downfall of Russian absolutism only if it simultaneously abolishes the social basis of the Tsardom ie., the remnants of the old peasant economy and the importance of the Tsardom for both the nobility and the bourgeoisie.<sup>41</sup>

In an article on national autonomy, she maintained that in a class society, “the nation” as a homogeneous socio-political entity does not exist. Rather, there exist within each nation, classes with antagonistic interests and rights. To her, there literally is not one social area, from the coarsest material relationship to the most subtle ones, in which the possessing class and the class-conscious proletariat hold the same attitude, and in which they appear as a consolidated “national entity”. In the sphere of economic relations, the bourgeois classes represent the interest of exploitation, the proletariat the interest of labour. In the sphere of legal property; the interest of proletariat demands the emancipation of the property-less man from the domination of propertied. In the area of judiciary, bourgeois society represents class “justice” the justice of well fed and the rulers; the proletariat defends the

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<sup>40</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *The National Question: Selected Writings* (Ed.,) Horace B. Davis, Delhi, Aakar Books, 2009 p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, ‘Polish Question’, in *ibid*, p. 52.

principle of taking in to account social influences on the individual of humaneness. To her, this circumstances shows that the “rights of nations” cannot be a yardstick for the position of the socialist party on the nationality question. She suggested to the socialist parties, with respect to the nationality question, they must take class antagonism into account. For example the Czech nationality question has one from the young Czech petite bourgeoisie and another for the Czech proletariat. To her while the Jewish question is formulated in one way in the mind of the Jewish bourgeoisie, and in another for ‘enlightened Jewish proletariat’. She maintained that for social democracy, the nationality question is, like all other social and political questions, primarily a question of class interest. To her, the rights of association and assembly, free speech, the free press, etc., are the legal forms of existence of a mature bourgeois society. But the “right of nations to self determination” is only a metaphysical formulation of an idea which in bourgeois society is completely nonexistent and can be realized only on the basis of a socialist regime. She called upon the social democracy to realize not the right of nations to self-determination but only the right of the working class, which is exploited and oppressed, of the proletariat, to self determination.<sup>42</sup> Lenin had opposed her stand on nation’s right of Self-determination. To him, throughout the world, the period of final victory of capitalism over feudalism had been linked up with national movements. To him, self determination of nation means a political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, ‘The National Question and Autonomy’, in *ibid*, pp. 136-140.

<sup>43</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘The Right of National Self Determination’, in V.I Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.XX, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, pp. 396-399.

Commenting on Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin pointed out that from the standpoint of national relations, the best condition for developments of capitalism were undoubtedly provided by the national state. To him, such a state which was based on bourgeois relations, can eliminate the exploitation and oppression of nations. It meant that Marxist cannot lose sight of the powerful economic factor that give rise to the urge to create national states. To him, it means that “self determination of nations” in the Marxist programme cannot form a historic-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state. Lenin argued that, there should be a distinction between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the National movement, was concerned. On the one hand there was a period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movement and in one way or another draw all classes of population into politics through the press, participation in representative institution etc. on the other hand, there was the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, a period that may be called the ‘eve of capitalism’s downfall’.<sup>44</sup> By criticizing Rosa Luxemburg he made it clear that she did not get her argument to hang together even on the question of the social structure of the government in Russia with regard to bourgeois Poland; as for the concrete, historical specific features of the national movement in Russia. To Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg has decided to make her article a ‘collection of errors in logic that could be used for school boy exercise’.<sup>45</sup> For Rosa Luxemburg’s

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



'tirade were a sheer nonsense and a mockery of a historically concrete presentation of the question'.<sup>46</sup> To Lenin, in western countries the national question was settled long ago. He maintained that Rosa Luxemburg had lost her sight of the most important thing, the difference between countries where bourgeois reforms had long been completed, and those where they have not. To Lenin, in Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois democratic revolutions did not begin until 1905. By assessing the particular Russian condition Lenin argued that the Russians occupy a vast, unbroken territory. The specific feature of this nation were; the subject people (which on the whole, comprise the majority of the entire population 57 per cent). In Russia the oppression of this subject people were much stronger here than the neighboring states (and not even the European states alone). Besides this the development of capitalism and the general level of culture were often in the non Russian border regions than in the centre. It was in the neighboring Asian state that we see the beginning of the phases of bourgeois revolutions and national movement which were spreading to the same of the kindred nationalities within the boarder of Russia. To Lenin it was precisely the special concrete, historical features of national question in Russia that make the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination in the present period a matter of special urgency in Russia. However he maintained that the proletariat's policy in the national question (as in all others) supports the bourgeoisie only in a certain direction, but it never coincides with the bourgeois policy. The working class supports the bourgeoisie only in order to secure national peace (which the bourgeoisie cannot bring about completely and which could be achieved only with complete democracy) in order to secure equal right and create the best condition for class struggle. Therefore, it is in opposition to the practicality of bourgeoisie that the proletarian advance

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

their principle in national question; they always give the bourgeoisie only conditional support. What every bourgeoisie is out for in the national question is either privileges for its own nation, or exceptional advantages for it. To him, the proletariat opposed to all privileges, to all exclusiveness. To demand that it should be 'practical' means following the lead of the bourgeoisie falling into opportunism. By opposing Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin supports the right of nation to self-determination. This was done in the view of the existing peculiar conditions in Tzarist Russia.<sup>47</sup>

While supporting this cause he maintained that the proletariat should support this cause only to certain extent and they should not forget the interest of the proletariat while supporting the national bourgeoisie for practical purpose. This formulation of Lenin had made profound impact upon the latest debates in the communist international especially on the national and colonial question. Participating in the debate over the national question Austrian Marxist like Auto Bauer argued that a nation can be defined as the totality of people who are united by a common fate so that they possess a common national character. To the common fate is shown in the discussion to signify primarily a common history; that common national character involves almost necessarily a uniformity of language. To him, it is necessary that the group in question would have common reactions to specific stimuli, common custom, and a common conception of the group's future.<sup>48</sup>

This debate acquired a new dimension after the outbreak of the First World War and the subsequent disintegration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International. When the First World War broke out in 1914 many of the European socialist parties began to support their respective national governments. This weakened and

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 400-410.

<sup>48</sup> Horace B. Davis, *op. cit.*, *Nationalism and Socialism...* pp. 150-151

destroyed the second international. This initiated a discussion on the question on nationalism in the international socialist movement. Many European socialist parties even while talking about socialism strongly supported the war efforts of their respective national governments. As stated by Lenin “the socialist of France and Belgium were excellent at exposing German imperialism. To him, they were amazing purblind with regard to British, French and particularly the bourgeois Russian imperialism”.<sup>49</sup> To him, it is not socialism that has collapsed; in the shape of the present day European internationalism, but an insufficient socialism i.e., opportunism and reformism. By supporting the stand of the Russian social democrats he declared that in each country the socialists (who were not opportunists) ought to consider the national chauvinism as their main enemy like the Russian social democrats who attacked the Tsarism and Russian chauvinism. To him, whoever wins the war, Europe was threatened by the growth of chauvinism; revenge seeking, militarism etc.<sup>50</sup>

To the Russian Social Democratic Party the war had clearly defined the character of the bourgeoisie, as an imperialist and dynastic war. A struggle for market and for freedom to loot foreign countries, a desire to deceive, disunite, and slaughter the proletarians of all countries by setting the wage slaves of one nation against those of another , so as to benefit the bourgeoisie. It declared “the conduct of the leaders of German Social Democratic Party, the strongest and most influential in the second international (1889-1914), a party which has voted for war credits and repeated the bourgeoisie chauvinist phase of the Prussian Junkers and the bourgeoisie was the sheer betrayal of socialism.” To Lenin, the betrayal of socialism by the most leaders of the

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<sup>49</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘The European War and International Socialism’, in V.I., Lenin, *op. cit.*, *Collected Works*, Vol.XX, pp. 20-23.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

second international signified the ideological and political bankruptcy of the second international. To him, this collapse has been mainly caused by the actual prevalence in it of petite bourgeois opportunism, the bourgeois nature and the danger had been indicated by the finest representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries. He accused the “international opportunists” of preparing to wreck the second international and substituting bourgeois reformism in its stead, by rejecting the class struggle with its inevitable conversion at certain moments into civil war, and by preaching class collaboration, by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the guise of patriotism and the defense of fatherland, and ignoring or rejecting the fundamental truth of socialism. Long ago set forth in the communist manifesto.<sup>51</sup> To Lenin, many socialist parties of the second international had forgotten their own slogan “The working class has no country”. To him, instead of waging a struggle against national chauvinism many parties were supporting the positions of their respective national government by supporting their war efforts, accepting parliamentarism and bourgeois legality. To Lenin, the significant of this war was that it had clearly defined the character of bourgeoisie, imperialist and dynastic war. It was a struggle for market and for freedom to loot foreign countries. To him, this was striving to suppress the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and democracy in the individual countries. He believed the basic objectives of this war was to deceive, disunite, and slaughter the proletarians of all countries by setting the wage slaves of one nation against those of another so as to benefit the bourgeoisie these are the only real content and significance of the war.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘Position and Task of Socialist International’, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.XX, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-23.

On November 1<sup>st</sup> 1914 the social democrats carried a manifesto from the party central committee which declared “the proletarian International has not perished and shall not perish. To it the working masses in the face of all obstacles will create a new International. Long live the International brotherhood of the workers against the chauvinism and patriotism of the bourgeois of all countries. Long live the proletarian International purged of opportunism. In the following years, these ideas were a constant theme of Lenin’s thinking and writing. The issue of the second or third International became closely involved with the issue of the attitude of the European socialist parties towards the war. In September 1915 the Zimmerwald conference in its draft manifesto demanded the formation of a strong International.<sup>53</sup>

By rejecting the arguments of various European socialist parties Lenin proposed the formation of a new international which will be free from the social chauvinism of the second international. The third international which formed in 1919 was aimed to spread the socialist revolution to different parts of the world like the October revolution in Russia. Till its dissolution in 1943 it played a major role in shaping the policy of various communist parties of the world including the colonies. There were various factors which determined the nature of debates and discussions in the new international.

### **Imperialism and Colonial Question**

From early twentieth century the question of colonial oppression came in to the attention of the world communist movement. At the same time this international took a keen interest in the national and colonial question. To the

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<sup>53</sup> E.H., Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol.XIII, London, Macmillan&co Ltd., 1961, pp. 567-569.

International, the national and colonial question was an integral and inseparable part of the World Revolution.

In the nineteenth century the question of colonialism and its impact in the Asian-African countries got the attention of the socialists including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Both Marx and Engels were against the exploitation of backward Asian-African countries by industrially advanced capitalist countries. At the same time they believed that this colonial domination will lead to the destruction of the pre-capitalist communities in these countries. To Horace B Davis, “the under developed peoples generally received harsh treatment at the hands of Marx and Engels in their early years. The Montenegrin were ‘cattle robbers’ and ‘pious freebooters’, the Mexicans were ‘Lazy’ and ‘Les derniers des hommes’. The idea that the ‘backward’ peoples might get farther faster if they restricted the encroachment of Saint Bourgeois, and made their own selection of the blessing of civilization in their own time, was indeed slow and penetrating Marxism”.<sup>54</sup> On opium war he stated; it would seem as though history had first to make this whole people drunk before it could rouse them out of their hereditary stupidity. To them, even Tsarist Russia was capable of exercising a civilizing influence in the east, according to Marx and Engels. The latter defended the operations of the Tsar in central Asia in the following terms; Russia...“is really progressive in relation to the east. For all its baseless and Slavonic dirt, Russian domination is a civilizing element on the black sea, the Caspian Sea and central Asia and among the Bashkirs and Tartars etc”.<sup>55</sup> Commenting on United States aggression in Mexico Marx stated; thus the United State’s aggression against Mexico in 1847 was condoned on the ground that Mexico was bound to come under the domination of some advanced power, and it was better all round

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<sup>54</sup> Horace B Davis, *op. cit.*, *Nationalism and Socialism...*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

that power should be the United States rather than England. It would develop California better and more quicken than the 'Lazy Mexicans' could or would, and the world economy would be the gainer. Commenting on the French occupation of Algeria Engels stated; "the struggle of the Bedouins was a helpless one, and though the manner in which brutal soldiers, like Bugeaud have carried on the struggle was highly blame-worthy, the conquest of Algeria in an important and fortunate fact for the progress of civilization. The piracies of Barbaresque states, never interfered with by English government as long as they did not disturb their ships, could not be put down by the conquest of one of these states, and the conquest of Algeria has already forced the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli and even the emperor of Morocco to enter upon the road of civilization. They were obliged to find other employment for their people than piracy and other means of filling their exchequer than tributes paid to them by the smaller states of Europe. And if regret that the liberty of the Bedouins of the desert has been destroyed, 'we must not forget that these same Bedouins were a nation of robbers, whose principal means of living consisted of making excursions either upon each other, or upon the settled villagers, taking what they found, slaughtering all those who resisted and selling the remaining prisoners as slaves".<sup>56</sup>

Commenting on British colonialism in India, Marx stated; Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresting and unchanging society. The question therefore, is not whether the English had the right to conquer India, but whether we prefer India be conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, pp.60-64.

Russian, to India conquered by the Britain.<sup>57</sup> To Marx, 'England has to fulfill a double mission in India, one destructive, the other regenerating- the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundation of western society in Asia. Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moguls, who had successively overrun India, soon became Hinduised, the 'barbarian conqueror' being, by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superiors civilization of their subjects, the British were the first conquerors Superior, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilization'.<sup>58</sup> They 'destroyed it by breaking native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by leveling all that was great and elevated in the native society'.<sup>59</sup> Commenting railway construction in India Marx stated, "the English millocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminishing expenses, the cotton and other materials for their manufactures. But when you have once introduced machinery into the locomotion of a country, which possesses iron and coals, you are unable to with hold it from its fabrication. You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processing necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with railways. The Indian will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the now ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindus themselves shall

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<sup>57</sup> Karl Marx, 'The Future Results of British Rule in India', in Iqbal Husain (Ed.), *Karl Marx on India*, New Delhi, Tulika (for Alighr Historians Society), 2008, pp.46-49.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*



have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether”.<sup>60</sup>

In the 1840s Marx had advised the Irish workers to make common cause with chartists, whom he expected to stage a workers revolution that would result in freeing Ireland. Later, he favored using the Irish nationalist movement to break the power of British landed aristocracy, first in Ireland and then in England. He contemplated independence for Ireland, and thought it might be followed by federation. The main consideration here was economic development, which would be facilitated by retaining large units where they existed (and forming new ones where possible).<sup>61</sup>

To Horace B Davis, Marx considered the possibility that India might win its independence before the social revolution take place in England and still thought that the British capitalism would perform a useful function in India even if at tremendous cost, in shaking that country out of its centuries old conservatism and backwardness. In 1862 Marx quoted Mazzini stated that the English Soldier seemed a ‘demi-god’ during the Indian insurrection 1857.<sup>62</sup> The opinion of Marx, according to which England’s presence in India could be expected to have a constructive effect, was based on the assumption that India, like other Asian countries, was still suffering under fossilized ‘oriental despotism’; that in order to progress it would have to pass through a capitalist stage; and that England would supply the impulse to that capitalist transformation. Later however, in 1877 and after, with special reference to Russia- which they believed to be also an ‘oriental despotism’. Marx and Engels considered the possibility that this ‘capitalist stage of development might be skipped and the village commune might be recognized directly as a

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Horace B Davis, *op. cit.*, *Nationalism and Socialism...*, p. 65.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

step towards the future socialist society'.<sup>63</sup> Marx wrote to Vera Zasulich on March 8 1881; the analysis presented in capital gives reasons neither for nor against the vitality of the village community, but the special study which have made for it, and for which he have searched for the materials in original sources, has convinced him that this community is the strategic point of social regeneration in Russia.<sup>64</sup>

In 1901 the Paris congress of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International, Rosa Luxemburg, proposed a resolution deploring the twin evils of militarism and colonial policy. The Russian revolution of 1905 transferred the immediate centre of interest from Africa to Asia, where the national revolutionary movements- the Persian revolution of 1906, the “young Turk” revolution of 1908, the Chinese revolution of 1912, and the beginning of Indian nationalism- stirred in the wake of the Russian upheaval.<sup>65</sup>

The question of colonies was taken up by the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1906. While assessing the prospects and results of the 1905 Russian revolution Trotsky stated that “Indian bourgeoisie was strong enough to impose the hegemony all over the nation. Whereas the Russian bourgeoisie has singularly failed to establish a state coalition after February, and Chinese bourgeoisie could only establish its rule for only some two decades and chiefly in the cities, the bourgeoisie of India won not only in political independence but successfully prevented a proletarian or agrarian revolution in the process.”<sup>66</sup> In 1908 an article entitled ‘Inflammable Material In the World Politics’, Lenin stated that “British liberal bourgeoisie was

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>65</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, *The Bolshevik Revolution...*, p. 227.

<sup>66</sup> Leon Trotsky, quoted in Jairus Banaji, ‘The comintern and Indian Nationalism’, in K.N., Panikkar Ed., *Nationalism and Left Movement in India*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1980, p. 213.

angered by the labor movement at home and frightened by the mounding revolutionary struggle in India, more and more frequently, frankly, and sharply demonstrating what brutes the highly civilized European politician, men who have passed through the high school of constitutionalism can turn into when it comes to a rise in the mass struggle against capital and capitalist colonial system”.<sup>67</sup> He further stated that “the native slave of civilized British capitalist have been a source of worry to their masters. There is no end to the act which goes under the name of British system of government of India”.<sup>68</sup> He further emphasized that “in India too, the proletariat has already had the consciousness of mass struggles and that being the case, Russian style British regime in India has doomed by their colonial plunder of Asian countries”.<sup>69</sup>

In 1913 in her work *Accumulation of Capital* Rosa Luxemburg linked imperialism with the accumulation of capital. She wrote “the imperialist phase of capitalist accumulation, which implies universal competition comprises the industrialization and capitalist emancipation of the hinterland where capital formally realized its surplus value”.<sup>70</sup> To her the characteristics of this imperialist phase were lending abroad, railroad construction, revolutions and war.<sup>71</sup>

To her, the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century shows in particular in the world-wide movement of capital, especially in Asia, and neighboring Europe; in Russia, Turkey, Persia, India, China, and also in North America. To her, the loans serve to divert accumulated capital from the old capitalist countries to

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<sup>67</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘Inflammable Material in World Politics’, 1908, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.XV, 1977 (1965), p. 184.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, London, Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1913.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

the new ones. She argued that the Railroad construction in Asian African countries during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth on the other hand almost exclusively served the purposes of an imperialist policy of economic monopolization and economic subjugation of the backward communities. To her, the achievement of capitalist autonomy in the hinterland and backward colonies was attained amidst wars and revolutions. To her the backward communities must shed their obsolete political organizations, relics of natural and simple commodity economy, and create modern state machinery adapted to the process of capitalist production. The 1905 Russian revolution and the 1911 Chinese Revolution were in this category.<sup>72</sup> She tried to situate imperialism in the context of the 'capital accumulation'. She did not look at the role of the international finance capital and the monopolies in the evolution of imperialism.

In 1916 Lenin gave theoretical formulation to imperialism through a pamphlet entitled, *Imperialism; the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. To him, imperialism has emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism. Lenin had pointed out that capitalism became imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development. The main thing in this process was the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly: cartels, syndicates, and trusts, and merging with them. To him, imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. He added this was happened through two simultaneous processes. on the one hand, financial capital is a bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialist; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories which were not captured by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up. In this pamphlet he identified five stages of capitalist development; the first stage there developed a concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which played decisive role on the economic life; in the next stage the bank capital was merged with the industrial capital and thereby created a financial oligarchy. There after the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquire exceptional importance; in the next stage there took place the formation of international monopolist capitalist association which shares the world among themselves and the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist power is completed.<sup>73</sup>

Lenin was trying to investigate the net correspondences in which the local peculiarities of capitalism and of the possible overthrow of Tsarist monarchy. This investigation finally led to the development of the concept of the “Russia and the weak link” in the chain of imperialism. He pointed out the system of dependence build on debt, in the course of which Great Britain, for example, “grants loans to Egypt, Japan, China and South America,” while her military political power “protects her from the indignation of her debtors, and her navy plays here the part of bailiff in case of necessity. To him, from the military standpoint, as well as from the standpoint of expansion, the separation of the colonies is practicable, as general rule, only under socialism; under capitalism it is practicable only by way of exception or at the cost of a serious revolts and revolutions both in the colonies and the metropolitan countries.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> V.I., Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, New Delhi, Left Word, 2010, p. 114.

<sup>74</sup> Tamas Krausz, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-95.

“This question was appeared in a Bolshevik party Document in a resolution of the April conference of the Bolshevik party 1917, which observed that “contemporary imperialism, by strengthening the urge to subjugate weak people, is a new factor in intensifying national oppression”.<sup>75</sup> Within two weeks of October revolution on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1917, the council of people commissars in Russia appealed to all working class Muslims of Russia and the east to rally around Bolshevism, to secure peace and to help all oppressed people and secure freedom. It had canceled all secret treaties, that partitioned the Turkey and Persia and on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1918 a Bolshevik appeal, addressing to all people and governments of Allied powers, called for self- determination.<sup>76</sup> An article in Pravda in November 1918 Stalin argued the October revolution was the first revolution in History of the world to break the Age-long sleep of the toiling masses of the oppressed peoples of the east and to draw them into the fight against imperialism. To him, the world significance of the October revolution was primarily, by this very fact built a bridge between the socialist west and the enslaved east, creating a new revolutionary front, which runs from the proletarian of the west through the Russian revolution to the oppressed people of the east, against world imperialism.<sup>77</sup>

In 1919 while analyzing the revolutionary prospects in India V. Kerzhentsev stated; ‘when India rise up against imperialism it will ignite revolution throughout the colonial world; Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia, South Africa, Egypt, China, Tibet, Persia all these will follow the Indian example. In a word he concluded the liberation of India from British domination will be a

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<sup>75</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, *The Bolshevik Revolution ...*, p. 230.

<sup>76</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India*, Calcutta, Seribaan Publishers, 2006, p. 60.

<sup>77</sup> Gene D Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism India*, California, University of California Press, 1959, P. 8.

signal for a whole series of Asian countries to take up the struggle against imperialism'.<sup>78</sup> To him, Britain has conquered and ruled India by "barbaric and insidious methods," he declared that India was ripe for revolution. He believed that the revolutionary movement will grow increasingly stronger in the coming months. For the fulfillment of these aspirations, the Bolsheviks needed both a revolutionary plan and revolutionary agents.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Debates on Revolutionary Strategy**

The Comintern's position on colonial question was closely connected with the debates in the Russian Social Democratic Party and the world communist movement over the revolutionary strategy before and after the October revolution. The important issue in debate was over the question of the correct revolutionary organization which starts from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The formation of Russian model of communist party organization was the result of a prolonged debate which took place within the Russian Social Democratic Party from the beginning of the twentieth century. This was over the question of party organization which could be suited for the peculiar Russian condition at that period. One section of the party which generally referred as the Menshevik (which means minority) did not support the existence of a strong centralized party organization. Instead they were stressed upon the importance of trade union which according to Lenin was a deviation towards 'reformism' and 'bourgeois democracy'. This section includes leaders like Julius Martov, Pavel Axelrod, Mikhail Lieber and Leon Trotsky (during his initial years). They believed not in a centralized party instead stressed for movements. On the other hand a majority of the party including Lenin had disagreement with the Mensheviks. To Lenin the role of Vanguard

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

fighters can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by most advanced theory.<sup>80</sup> To him, a basic condition for the necessary expansion of political agitation is the “organization of comprehensive exposure”. It was only through this the political consciousness can be created among the people and there by organize revolutionary activities. He further stated that the Working class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse. To him, in order to bring political knowledge to the workers the social democrats must go among all classes of the population; they must dispatch units of their army in all direction. To him, only a political organization like the vanguard party can take-up this task.<sup>81</sup> To Bolsheviks like Lenin, without a military disciplined party organization the Russian proletariat cannot overcome the situation which was created by the Tsarist rule. He considered the Menshevik idea of trade unionism as a ‘mere economism’ and it will not create a genuine class consciousness among the proletariat of Russia. These debates not only influenced the soviet communist party but also influenced different communist parties of Asia and Europe.

### **Comintern and the Colonial Question**

Other important factor which determined the strategy of the communist international was the debate on the nature of revolution. In his work ‘*Two Tactics of social democracy*’ Lenin proposes the stages of revolution. The debate on the revolutionary strategy had influenced the debates on the colonial question. From 1905 the alliance between the working class and peasantry became an important component of the proletarian revolution. But when the questions of colonies were discussed a question arose about the

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<sup>80</sup> V.I., Lenin, *What is to be Done*, New Delhi, People’s Publishers, 2011, pp. 25-26.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-73.



attitude of the communist parties of the colonies towards their respective national bourgeoisie. The discussion in the communist international should be understood in view of these developments. Lenin pointed out that ‘one of the indestructible tasks of the October revolution was that the workers, as the mentors of poor peasants, as the leader of the toiling rural masses, as the builder of the labour state, should go to the people’.<sup>82</sup> He stated that “we need mass crusades” of workers to every corner of this vast country. We need ten times more iron detachments of the conscious proletariat unreservedly devoted to communism. Then we shall conquer famine and unemployment. Then we shall succeed in making the revolution the real anti-chamber of socialism’.<sup>83</sup> This strategy of the Bolshevik party made a profound impact upon the Communist International and its national and colonial question. Unlike the Soviet Union the communist parties of the colonies faced a dilemma over their attitude towards their respective national bourgeoisie and the bourgeois organizations. Six months before the October revolution in his April theses Lenin had proposed the formation of an International that is free from the ‘social chauvinism’ of the Second International.<sup>84</sup> In 1918 in a pamphlet entitled ‘State and Revolution’, Lenin while agreeing with anarchist on the abolition of the state also stressed on the need for the temporary use of state as an instrument of revolution, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes.<sup>85</sup> While attacking Kautsky in 1918 he pointed out that Internationalism means the acceleration

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<sup>82</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, *The Bolshevik Revolution.....*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘April Thesis’, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, p.24.

<sup>85</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘The State and Revolution’, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, p.441.

of the world proletarian revolution not the defense of their motherland.<sup>86</sup> For him, the socialist revolution was essentially a world revolution, even if it was not possible for the working class to take power simultaneously in every country.<sup>87</sup> Addressing the opening session of the first congress of the third International, Lenin stated that, “The people were aware of the greatness and significance of the struggle now going on. All that was needed to find the political form to enable the proletariat to establish its rule, such a form is “The Soviet form with dictatorship of the proletariat”.”<sup>88</sup> Even though this question was considered as an auxiliary to the European revolution, some initiatives were taken to bring this question in to the forefront of the Comintern in the first congress itself. As stated by Raznikov, initially the Comintern considered the unity of the proletarian revolution in Europe would be an essential condition for the liberation and independent existence of the people of the colonies. It also maintained that the communist had to rise and solve the national and colonial question in the class intervention with the international interest of the proletariat’s class struggle aimed at eliminating all forms of oppressions including national oppression. To him under certain conditions the national liberation movement could become powerful of the revolutionary proletariat.<sup>89</sup>

While addressing the first congress Lenin stated that “the emancipation of the colonies is possible only in conjunction with the emancipation of

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<sup>86</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky’, V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.XXVI, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1981, p. 287.

<sup>87</sup> Fernando Claudine, *The Communist Movement from Comintern to Cominform*, London, Penguin Books, 1975, p.47.

<sup>88</sup> V.I., Lenin, ‘Addressing First Congress of Comintern’, in V.I., Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.XXVIII, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1974 (1965), p. 455.

<sup>89</sup> A.B., Reznikov, ‘The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist International in the National and Colonial Question’, in Ulinovsky, ed., *The Comintern and the East*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1979, p. 138.

metropolitan working class. The workers and peasants not only in Annam, Algiers and Bengal but also of Persia and Armenia will give the opportunity of independent existence only when the workers of England and France have overthrown Lloyd George and Clemenceau and taken state power into their own hand”.<sup>90</sup> The best expression of the colonial question can be seen in Manifesto of the inaugural congress of the Communist International in 1919, drafted by Leon Trotsky. It stated, the First World War, which was not the least of all a war over colonies, was also a war fought with the help of the colonies. The colonial population was forcibly dragged into the European war as never before. To the document, “Indians, blacks, Arabs, and the Malagasy fought on the European continent for what? Never has a capitalist rule shown itself more shamelessly. Never has the problem of colonial slavery been posed more sharply than it is today”.<sup>91</sup> Because of this, there erupted open rebellions and revolutionary ferment in all the colonies. According to this document, the liberation of colonies was possible only together with the liberation of working class in the imperialist countries. This Document pointed out that the colonial people would experience liberation only when the proletariats of the imperialist countries will overthrow their own exploitative government.<sup>92</sup>

At the same time many delegates had expressed their own opinions regarding the colonial question in this congress itself. For instance Rutgers, a representative from Holland argued that the Comintern should expand its activities in the field of national and colonial question even if the colonial people did not have much idea on it. He further stated that they were prepared to go forward together with the colonial people on the basis of opposition to imperialism, but his suggestions were ignored in the final draft of the first

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<sup>90</sup> Fernando Claudin, *op. cit.*, *The Communist Movement...*, p. 246.

<sup>91</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 51.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

congress. Another delegate Musthafa Subi from Turkey demanded that the destiny of European revolution was depended up on the fate of the revolutionary movement in the east. He further stated that the revolution of the people of the colonies against the European capitalism was necessary for Russia along with German revolution. To the document, the German revolution was under the constant threat of Anglo-American violence, and it awaits the helps from the East.<sup>93</sup> On the fifth day of the congress, in an article entitled ‘The Communist International and the Colonies’ in Pravda, Bukharin highlighted the importance of the revolutionary movement in the colonies for the metropolitan countries, and also warned against the false consciousness of the metropolitan proletariat regarding the colonies. He said “up to now the so-called civilized world has been based on the merciless plunder of the colonial people. It is there, in the colonies, that all the filth and dirt, all the barbarism and contempt of capitalist relations find its fullest expression. There you find the most repulsive decay and the most active agent generating capitalism”.<sup>94</sup> To him, it was not only the American, European, and Japanese bourgeoisie who benefited from this. He added “The proletariat looked down on the ‘barbarian people’ and thought them worthy only of being fertilizer for European civilization”.<sup>95</sup> Even though the colonial question was discussed in the first congress there was not a concrete plan of action on the subject.<sup>96</sup> During its foundation of the vision of an outbreak of revolution, with direct military help from Russia, was figured in Lenin’s understanding on the colonial question.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

It was the second congress in 1920 the Comintern had given special emphasis to the national and colonial question. The task before the second congress was to apply the principle of the revolution to the colonial people of Asia and Africa; and to develop the common struggle in which all the workers of the world, Europe and Colonies.<sup>98</sup> As identified by Claudin there were three important developments which persuaded the Comintern to give more attention to the national and colonial question. Initially the prospect of a proletarian revolution became more remote (even though at the time of the second congress, there was a brief resurgence of hope – dashed by the halting of the Red army before Warsaw). The anti-imperialist national liberation movement experience, in contrast with the ebbing of the revolutionary tide in the west, which was initially a considerable upsurge. To him, the national and colonial question had arisen sharply within Russia. Besides this the second congress was attended for the first time by delegates from the communist organizations that had begun to be formed in the colonies and dependent countries.<sup>99</sup>

It was through MN Roy this question came in to the forefront of the second congress. The main question which created a debate in the second congress was the attitude which the international should take towards the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries. It was in this congress there emerged a difference of opinion between Lenin and MN Roy regarding the attitude of the new International towards the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries. MN Roy argued for the complete rejection of the role of the national bourgeoisie in the emancipation of the colonial people. On the other hand Lenin believed that the national bourgeoisie can play a pro-active role in the initial days of anti colonial struggle. He advocated a temporary

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<sup>98</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, *The Bolshevik Revolution...*, p. 251.

<sup>99</sup> Claudin, *op. cit.*, *The Communist Movement...*, p. 246.

alliance between the incipient communist parties in the colonies and the respective national bourgeoisie in the initial stage of the revolution.

In his manifesto of August 1920 MN Roy argued that the nationalist movement in India has failed to appeal to the masses because it strives for a bourgeois democracy and cannot say how the masses will be benefited by independent national existence. Therefore growing spirit of rebellion in the masses must be organized on the basis of class struggle in the co-operation with the world proletarian movements. To him, British domination deprived Indians of the elementary rights indispensable for the organization of such struggle. The revolutionary movement must emphasize in the programme, the political liberation of the country. This does not make its final goal. A bourgeois democracy under which the native privileged class would rule and exploit the native workers in the place of British bureaucrats and capitalists.<sup>100</sup> He argued that the British proletariat cannot march towards final victory unless they take their comrades in the colonies along with him to fight the common enemy. He reiterated the proletariat in India as well as in other dependency of Britain was the vital factor in the international proletarian movement. Self-determination for India merely encourages the idea of bourgeois nationalism.<sup>101</sup>

By presenting his supplementary thesis before the second congress of the Comintern he stated that the overthrow of capitalism is not possible without the breaking up of colonial empire. For this he suggested that the communist international must widen the sphere of its activities. It had to establish relation with those revolutionary forces that are working for

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<sup>100</sup> M.N., Roy, 'An Indian Communist Manifesto', In G.Adhikari, Ed., *The Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol.I, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1971, pp. 152-153.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

overthrow of imperialism in the country subjected politically and economically. To Roy these two forces must be co-ordinated if the final success of the world revolution was to be guaranteed. In the supplementary thesis he further stated that the Comintern was the concentrated will of the world revolutionary proletariat. Its mission was to organize the working class of the whole world for overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of communism. The third international was a fighting body which must assume the task of combining revolutionary forces of all the countries of the world. Foreign domination has obstructed the free development of social forces. Therefore, its overthrow was the first step towards a revolution in the colonies. To him, the overthrow of the foreign rule did not mean the acceptance of nationalist aspiration but it opens the way to the smothered proletariat there.<sup>102</sup> To Roy, there were two tendencies within the anti-colonial movement in India; the first one was the bourgeois democratic nationalist movement with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order. And other was the mass action of poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from all sorts of exploitation. The thesis further argued that, bourgeoisie all the way try to control the peasants; the international parties affected must struggle against such control and help to develop class consciousness in the working masses of the colonies. To him, the real strength of the liberation movement in the colonies was no longer confined to the narrow circle of bourgeois democratic nationalists.

In most of the colonies there existed organized revolutionary parties which had close connections with the working class. The relation of Comintern with the revolutionary movement in colonies should be realized through the medium of this party groups, because they were the vanguard of the working class in their respective countries. The revolution in the colonies

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<sup>102</sup> M.N., Roy, 'Supplementary Thesis' in *ibid.*, pp. 180-87.

was not going to be a communist revolution in its first stage. But if from the outset the leadership is in the hands of communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses would not be led astray. In the first stage of the revolution in the colonies must be carried on with a programme which will include many petite bourgeois reform clauses, such as division of land etc... But from this it does not follow at all that the leadership of the revolution will have to be surrendered to the bourgeois democrats. On the contrary the proletarian party had to carry on a vigorous and systematic propaganda of soviet idea and organize the peasants and workers soviet as soon as possible.<sup>103</sup>

While participating in the debate on Roy's thesis Serrate of Italy complained that the definition of the term backward countries is too vague, and too indefinite not to be confused with chauvinistic interpretation of the term. He argued that "on the entire struggle for national liberation carried on by the democratic bourgeois, even when insurrectionary methods were employed, was not a revolutionary movement. It usually serves the interest of national imperialism striving to the surface or its serve for the interest of the capitalist imperialism of another country in competition with the dominating nation. He added that the struggle in the so-called backward countries can be carried only when the proletariat preserves its independence from the exploiters even those bourgeois democrats calling themselves revolutionary nationalist. By supporting Roy's position he maintained that only by means of proletarian revolution and though soviet regime can be subject nations obtains their freedom. This cannot be done by temporary alliance of the communists with the bourgeois parties called nationalist revolutionaries. To him, these alliances only demoralize the class consciousness of proletariat, especially in the countries where the proletariat has been tempered in the struggle against capitalism.

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*



To Roy every national revolution in a backward country is a step in advance steps for the proletarian revolution. To him, it was unscientific to distinguish the various forms of revolution. Every revolution is one of the verities of the social revolution. To Roy the people of the exploited countries whose economic and political evolution has been hampered must pass through the stage which European people had passed long ago.<sup>104</sup> This stand was supported by other delegates like Sultan Zade of Iran. Intervening in this debate Trotsky stated the Indian revolution can only be successful as a proletarian revolution.<sup>105</sup> Lenin disagreed with this position by characterizing it as left sectarianism.

To Reznikov, Lenin emphasized that the policy should not be based on abstract and formal principle, but first on precise appraisal of specific situation and primarily on economic conditions, second on a clear distinction between the interest of the general oppressed classes of working and exploited people and general concept of national interest, as which implies the interest of ruling class, third on an equally clear demarcation between the oppressed dependent and sovereign subject nations and the oppressing exploiting and sovereign nations.<sup>106</sup>

Drafting his thesis on the national and colonial question in the second congress of the Communist international Lenin stated that there should be a clear distinction between the oppressed, depend and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations, in order to counter the bourgeois democratic lies that play down the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by an insignificant minority of the richest and advanced country. This thesis pointed out the

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192-193.

<sup>105</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 53.

<sup>106</sup> A.B., Reznikov, *op. cit.*, 'The Strategy and Tactics...', p.141.

imperialist war of 1914-18 had very clearly revealed all nations and to the oppressed classes of the whole world the falseness of the bourgeois democratic phrases. To Lenin the Communist International's entire policy and the national and colonial question should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working class of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the land owners and the bourgeoisie. This union alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of oppression and inequality is impossible. The thesis asked the international to pursue a policy that will achieve the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of the national and colonial movements. The form of this alliance should be determined the degree of the development of the communist movement in the proletariat of each countries or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants of the backward countries or among backward nationalities. While rejecting the argument of Roy and Serrati Lenin argued that "all the communist parties must assist the bourgeois democratic liberation movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rest primarily with the workers of the country the backward nation is colonially depend on.

This thesis further emphasized the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine liberation movement against European and American imperialism and its attempt to strengthen the position of Khans, landowners, mullahs, etc; it stressed the need for supporting the peasants movements in backward countries, to give special support in the peasant movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestation or survivals of feudalism, and strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the west European communist proletariat and revolutionary peasant movement in the east, in the colonies, and in the backward countries. Though it supports the bourgeois national movement in

the colonies it clearly stated that it should be done only on the condition that, in these countries, the elements of the proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, were brought together and trained to understand that their special task is the struggle against the bourgeois democratic movements within their own nations.

The old age oppression of colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist power had not only filled the working masses of oppressed countries with animosity towards the oppressor nations, but had also aroused distrust in these nations in general, even in their proletariat.<sup>107</sup>

In defending his thesis at the plenary session, Lenin argued that the fundamental division in the world at the moment was between oppressing and oppressed nations. Lenin's support to the national liberation movement even of a bourgeois character was endorsed by Irish delegate, James Connolly. At the same time delegates from Persia and Korea were of the opinion that, as in British India, foreign capital had planted the beginning of industrialization and an industrial proletariat. They reiterated Roy's warning against too close a commitment to bourgeois-democratic nationalism.<sup>108</sup>

The Comintern commission had to deal with two sets of thesis on the national and colonial question presented by Lenin and Roy. The general theme of the liberation of the oppressed peoples through a worldwide proletarian revolution was common to both. But two minor and major differences appeared between them. Roy described the economic order prevailing in colonial and semi-colonial territories as pre-capitalist. The majority of the commission preferred to describe it as "Dominated by

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<sup>107</sup> V.I., Lenin, 'The Draft Thesis of the Colonial Question', in Utsa Patnaik, Ed., *op. cit.*, *Agrarian Question in Marx*, pp. 313-319.

<sup>108</sup> E.H., Carr, *op. cit.*, *The Bolshevik Revolution...*p.255.

capitalist imperialism” and this amendment to Roy’s thesis was adopted.<sup>109</sup> Roy also developed the thesis that the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries was able to stay off the proletarian revolution only by subsidizing the worker out of proceeds of colonial exploitation, and carried the argument to the point of asserting that revolution in Europe was impossible until Asiatic countries had thrown off the yoke of European imperialism. The third and major difference was over the question of tactics which, in one form or another, was the tactics which haunted the Comintern till its dissolution in 1943.

E.H. Carr pointed out that Roy’s thesis got same kind of support as Lenin’s thesis. He further stated, Lenin’s thesis emerged from the commission with a number of amendments. The most important of these had the effect of blunting the sharp edge of Lenin’s thought and of bridging disagreement by resort to a potential ambiguity: wherever Lenin’s draft had recommended communists in colonial countries to support “bourgeoisie-democratic national liberation movements” the specific epithet “bourgeois-democratic” was replaced by the comprehensive “revolutionary” which could no doubt be applied to a bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement, but had a less compromising sound.<sup>110</sup> The other important amendment insisted on “the struggle against the reactionary and medieval influence of the priesthood, of Christian missions and similar elements” and the struggle against Pan-Islamism and the Pan-Asiatic movement and similar tendencies”.<sup>111</sup> It should be noted that, while adopting the Lenin’s thesis on the colonial question the Comintern commission did care to adopt some of the provisions from Roy’s thesis before adopting the final draft. The idea of the united front was

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

conceptualized by Lenin during the 1905 revolution as an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry.

As stated by Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, MN Roy made a qualitative distinction between bourgeois nationalist and a revolutionary movement. On the other hand Lenin made a clear distinction between two types of democratic movements within the frame work of nationalism. One was the reformist oriented towards co-operation with imperialism, the other being radical section, playing a militant role against imperialism. Roy's strategy of revolution in colonial countries like India was based on a premise that it had to be a proletarian revolution led by the communist party, by assuming that industrialization had sufficiently developed in these countries. For Lenin bourgeois nationalism was the driving forces in the colonies. As far as Roy was concerned the agenda was to militarize the peasantry through the organization of peasant's soviet rather than to harbor the dream of proletarian revolution, since industrialization was yet to take off in the colonies.<sup>112</sup> Delegates like Roy and Pak Chin-Sun believed for the triumph of the revolution in the west, victory of the revolution in the colonies was necessary precondition. So it was vital on the part of the European proletariat to extend all possible help to the struggle of the colonial people. In a very similar vein, Pak Chin-Sun in his thesis entitled *The Revolutionary East and the Next Task of the Communist International* argued that The vanguard of the European and American proletariat, must fight hand in hand with the many millions of masses of the revolutionary East if it desire a speedy and successful victory over the capitalist class. Although the second congress concluded its transaction on the colonial question by adopting Lenin's colonial thesis and Roy's amended supplementary thesis, the difference in their thrusts, as manifested especially in their original versions, continued to exist for the

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<sup>112</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, pp. 67-68.

following years.<sup>113</sup> One month after the second congress in August 1920, the colonial question was brought to the forefront for a detailed examination in the first congress of the toiling masses of the East held at Baku, organized by a committee that included a number of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkish communists as well as G.K. Ordzhonikidze and Yelena Stasova, representing the Russian Communist party. While participating in the congress Matyushev one of the delegates, pointed out that the existing bourgeois movement did not have the capacity to achieve its victory. Pavlovich while identifying with Roy's thesis argued that the masses had to rise up against their native and foreign oppressors.<sup>114</sup> To him, "If the national-revolutionary movement leads merely to the formation of new, powerful eastern states in which local bourgeoisie rules, with Indian, Persian and other parliaments, within decades we will see another frightful world war. To him, the revolutionary national movement will improve the position of the masses of the people only if it constitutes a decisive stage toward a profound and far-reaching socialist movement".<sup>115</sup> Many delegates like Matyushev and Bela Kun laid emphasis on the importance of building peasants soviets in the east in the light of Lenin's colonial thesis.<sup>116</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1920, by the decision of a small bureau, the Turkestan or Tashkent bureau of Comintern was established in the functioning of which MN Roy, G. Safarov and G. Sokolnikov played a main role. On January 1921, the small bureau of Comintern decided to create a department of near East, on that day Turkestan bureau was brought under the department. The third congress of the communist international which held in 1921 stated that revolutionary national movement in India and the other

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69-70.

colonies is today as essential component of world revolution, equal as the apprising of proletariat in the capitalist countries of the old and new world.

A congress of the revolutionary organizations of the Far East took place in January and February 1922, in Moscow and Petrograd, in which representative of China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, India, and Indonesia and of the people of Serbia participated. The congress stressed the importance of a correct understanding of the relation between national revolutionary movements on the working people for the social liberation on the other. It further stated taking note at same time that the toiling masses of the east smarting under the yoke imperialism can win their national and social liberation only in alliance with international proletariat.<sup>117</sup>

The fourth congress of the Comintern was held between 5<sup>th</sup> November and 5<sup>th</sup> December 1922. This was in the background of the declining tempo of the revolutionary upsurge of the working class in Europe and of the rise of Fascism in Italy besides this period also witnessed the rising tide of national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples and nations of Asia and Africa against imperialism. In this congress there were 408 delegates from 66 parties and organizations from 58 countries. The important agenda of the congress was the discussion on the Lenin's report on the five years of the Russian revolution and the prospect of the world revolution; the capitalist offensive and the offensive of the Fascism; the programme of communist international; the eastern and agrarian question.<sup>118</sup>

The ECCI in its second extended plenum 7-11 June 1922 asked to carry forward the tactics of united front and criticized the sectarian tendencies in some west European communist parties which underestimated its

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> M.N., Roy, 'Vanguard', in G.Adhikari, *op. cit.*, Documented History..., p. 505.

importance. In outlining the tactics of organizing the party Roy stated: a revolutionary mass party has to be organized as a part of the congress. To him, this should be a left-wing party fighting for the complete political and economic independence of the country from imperialism and the urgent demands and the democratic rights of the toiling masses. To him, the Communist party must be built on a very firm foundation, on the basis of Marxim–Leninism and its concrete and create application on Indian condition; he further stated communist have to fight both legal and illegal ways. To him, it was a mistake to range the colonial people all in a single category. These are the different stage of social economical evolution. The movement thus takes various forms in various colonies. In those colonial countries which are farthest developed the native bourgeoisie shows tendency to enter into compromise with world bourgeoisie while the feudal military elements of the backward colonial countries are a mere instrument of the world bourgeoisie. To him, the masses of the workers and peasants of the east must energetically fight against militarism. It is however only possible for the masses to participate in such fight under the leadership of a class party. To Roy the task before international 4<sup>th</sup> congress is to elaborate those fundamental principles that were laid down by the second congress of the communist international.<sup>119</sup>

The forth congress of the Communist International held that in the colonies and semi-colonies, it was the foremost task of the communists to create a nucleus of the communist parties to support the Anti-imperialist national revolutionary movement in every way, to rise communist parties to the level of the vanguard of this movement in the frame work of the national freedom movement and the strengthen the same. The important issue before the congress was to draw a prompt attention to the inconsistency of the

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.519-536.



national bourgeoisie and at the same time it underlined that it support the national revolutionary movement and stated that the national bourgeoisie was interested in the solution of the main task of the anti imperialist movement and that this must be fully utilized. It further emphasized that the working class movement in the colonies and semi-colonies must win for itself the position of independent revolutionary factor in all over anti-imperialist front. The temporary agreement with bourgeois democracy would be permissible only if its independent significance of the working class movement is maintained. The congress demanded the working class of those countries must unmistakably strive for an alliance with the peasant and semi proletarian masses. It maintained that the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries would achieve no success unless it gets the support of the peasant masses.<sup>120</sup> It should be kept in mind that during early twenties communist parties in different colonies were in an embryonic stage. For instance it was only in 1921 did the Chinese communist party, based on small propagandist circles, hold its congress. Immediately after this the Koumintang party under Sun Yat Sen wanted to reach a united front with the communist party with soviet supports. Sun Yat Sen signed a pact of friendship with Soviet government. Chinese communist party under Chen Duxiu initiated of the campaign against the privileges the Western powers enjoyed in China. Under its pressure the Chinese government refused to sign the Versailles Treaty which sanctioned the privileges.<sup>121</sup> In the words of Sobhanlal Datta Gupta in the 4<sup>th</sup> congress Roy questioned the relevance of understanding of the second congress by arguing that the colonial theses had rather schematically placed all colonial countries in one block and prescribed one single universal strategy

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 530-533.

<sup>121</sup> Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, London, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 319.

of resolution.<sup>122</sup> While presenting his report to the 4<sup>th</sup> congress, Roy classified the countries of the east in to three categories. The first category includes those countries which are nearing the highly developed capitalism, Colonies were not only import of capital from metropolis has developed industry, but native capitalism has grown. Leading to the rise of bourgeoisie with developed class consciousness, and its counterpart, the proletariat, which is also developing its class consciousness and is engaged in the economic struggle which is gradually coming into its political stage? There are those countries in which capitalist development has taken place but it is still at the lower level and in which feudalism is the backbone of the society and the other group of countries where primitive condition still prevail, where feudalism and Patriarchy is the social order.

The important aspect of this congress was the building of a united front with special emphasis on the agrarian programme. While framing the agrarian programme of communists of the countries of the east it demanded the complete elimination of feudalism and all its survivals and aims at the drawing in of the peasant masses in the struggle for national liberation. The congress characterized the feudal lords and the feudal bureaucracy as the support of foreign imperialism in the colonies; at the same time it drew attention to the fact that in colonies where the feudal-patriarchal system has not disintegrated to such extent that those indigenous aristocracy is completely divorced from the popular masses, the representative of this upper strata can play a part of active leaders in the struggle against imperialist policy of violence and suppression. The congress warned that “the refusal of the communist in the colonies to take a part in the struggle against imperialist tyranny on the ground of ostensible defense of their independent class interest is opportunism of the worst kind, which can only discredit proletarian

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<sup>122</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 87.

revolution in the east. Equally injurious is the attempt to remain aloof from the struggle for the most urgent and every day interests of the working class in the name of national unity of the civil peace with the bourgeois democrats".<sup>123</sup> It added the communist parties of the colonial and semi colonial countries of the east, which were still in a more or less embryonic stage, must take a part in every movement which gives them access to the masses. To the congress the anti-imperialist united front in the east is closely bound up with the slogan of the congress on the united proletarian front in the west.<sup>124</sup>

To the congress the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries now really afraid that in case foreign rule is overthrown as a consequence of development of this revolutionary upheaval, a period of anarchy, chaos, and disturbance of civil war will follow that will be conducive to the promotion of their own interests. This naturally weakened the movement in some of the countries but at the same time this temporary compromise does not fundamentally weaken the movement. The congress stated that the bourgeois national movements in the colonial countries were objectively revolutionary. But it warns against overlooking this movement, when struggle was fundamentally against the feudal order, and the bourgeoisie leading the people. But this cannot be said of the new bourgeoisie in the eastern countries or most of them. Although the bourgeoisie was leading the struggle there, it is at the same time not leading it against feudalism. To the congress, in the colonies there developed a triangular fight involving the colonial people who directed against the European imperialism on the one hand and against the native bourgeoisie on the other. This congress divided the national bourgeoisie in to two parts, the upper layer which was interestingly and

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> M.N., Roy, 'The Vanguard', in G.Adhikari, *op. cit.*, *DocumentedHistory...*, pp. 533-536.

owning big industrial and commercial interests interlinked with imperial capital, the other social section with its weak social background did have the determination, the courage to put itself forward. To Roy the object of this anti-imperialist united front was to organize all available revolutionary forces in a big united front against imperialism. This united front could not be realized under the leadership of bourgeoisie.<sup>125</sup>

The growth of native productive forces in these colonies there for course an irreconcilable antagonism of interest between them and world imperialism. It added the backwardness of the colonies reflected in the in the motley character of the national revolutionary movement against imperialism, which in their turn, reflected the varying state of transition from feudal and feudal patriarchal relations to capitalism. This 4<sup>th</sup> congress stated that, it will support all the revolutionary movements against imperialism. At the same time the congress reiterated that only constant revolutionary line of policy based on the active support of the masses and the unreserved break with all advocates of compromise with imperialism in the interest of maintaining class domination, can lead the oppressed masses to victory.<sup>126</sup>

To the Comintern, in the majority of the countries in the east (India, Persia, Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia) the agrarian question had attained a primary importance in the struggle for emancipation from the domination of the despotism of the great powers. The 4<sup>th</sup> congress pointed out that while in the advanced countries prior to the war, industrial crisis served as regulators of the social production, this function in the colonies performed by famine. It declared that the struggle for emancipation of the land from feudal dues and feudal obstacles, thus assumes the character of struggle for national

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 537-545.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 547-549.

emancipation against imperialism and feudal large land ownership (example of this were the Moplah rising against the landowners and the British in India in the autumn of 1921 and the revolt of the Sikhs in 1922) It declared that the revolutionary movement in the backward countries of the east could not be successful unless it is based on the action of the masses of the peasantry. It added the bourgeois movement did not extend beyond the limits of the common national interest of bourgeois democracy. To congress while the bourgeois nationalists regarded the labor movement merely from the point of view of its importance as a means for securing victory for themselves, the international proletariat regards the young labor movement of the east from the point of view of its revolutionary future. It further declared alliance with proletariat of advanced countries was dictated not merely by the interests of a common struggle against imperialism but also the fact that only through the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries the workers can obtain unselfish aid in the development of their productive forces. To the 4<sup>th</sup> congress an alliance with the proletariat in the west would lay the path towards an international federation of soviet republic. It pointed out the young proletariat of the colonies was still confronted by a prolonged struggle over a whole historical epoch, a struggle against imperialist exploitation and against its own ruling classes, striving to secure in its own hands the monopoly of all the advantages of industrial and cultural development and to maintain the masses of the toilers in their previous primitive state. The congress warned the working class; only by extending the struggle against imperialism of the great powers can its role as revolutionary leader be fulfilled. On the other hand, the economic and political organization and the political training of the working class would facilitate and extend the revolutionary scope of the struggle against imperialism. The congress asked the communist parties of the colonies to participate in every movement that give them access to the masses. At the same time it asked the parties to conduct an energetic

campaign against the patriarchal and caste prejudice and bourgeois influence in the labor unions, in order to protect these embryonic organizations from reformist tendencies and in order to convert them into mass fighting organization. To the congress the labor movement in the colonies and the semi colonial countries must first of all secure for itself the position of an independent factor in the common anti-imperialist front. To it only on the basis of recognition of this independence and maintenance of complete independence would be a temporary agreement with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary. It asked the European communists' to rally around themselves the native proletariat and gain its confidence by concrete economic demands like equal pay for white and native workers, protection of labor and labor infrastructure etc.<sup>127</sup>

To Roy, “the international has to develop the communist parties in these countries in order to take the lead in the organization of the united anti imperialist front”.<sup>128</sup> He made a distinction between the Indian National Congress leadership and the rank and file. He had said that Chauri Chaura proved the congress rank and file to be revolutionary. But their willingness to agree the suspension of the campaign as showed their subservience to reactionary leadership.<sup>129</sup>

As pointed out by Sobhanlal Datta Gupta ‘the difference between the thesis of the fourth congress and Roy’s report basically represented the fundamental difference between an outlook projected by Lenin in the second congress, which aimed at directly fusing the national and class question, and one characterized by ultra leftism, which rather unilaterally divorced these two aspects, the premise being that capitalism and industrialization had

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<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 549-559.

<sup>128</sup> Overstreet and Windmiller, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

sufficiently developed the colonies like India and that revolution under exclusive leadership of the proletariat was on the anvil in the advance colonies of the East'.<sup>130</sup> This could be considered as a rejection of ultra leftism which was the predominant trend among the leading communist parties of Europe. To him, there were very few delegates who appreciated Lenin's standpoint.

The enlarged plenum of the executive committee of communist international which met in June 1923, while rejecting Roy's formulations on Indian bourgeoisie it declared that "The Indian bourgeoisie was a revolutionary factor, because its interests were objectively in conflict with imperialism. The struggle for national liberation was a revolutionary movement. To lead this movement the political party of the workers and peasants must act in cooperation with, and give fullest support to, the bourgeois parties in so far as they struggle against imperialism in some way or other. After the 4<sup>th</sup> congress, the Eastern question came in to the forefront of the Comintern. After the congress the department of the East was strengthened, in the resolution of the fourth congress stated that a special attention had to be given to the activities of the Eastern department and the head of this department was belong to the presidium. G. Safarov the presidium of ECCI had given him the charge of organizing Middle Eastern and the far Eastern sections of the Comintern. Earlier in the work of this department there was hardly any definite plan and distribution of work and, as a result for the first time a unified all embracing structure was created with corresponding delimitation of functions. On May 4, 1923, Karl Radek was given the charge of this department and G. Voitinsky was made his deputy. This department covered countries like Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Tunis, Algeria and Persia; the Middle East section handled Japan,

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<sup>130</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, pp. 89-90.

Korea, China and Magnolia. While each section had its own commissions on the basis of either country or region, the Executive Committee of Communist International (ECCI) and the Eastern department rallied in their work on a number of regional bureaus and secretariats. And a systematic study of situation in different countries and the activities of the communist parties, within the Eastern department and sections their established both temporary and permanent commissions.<sup>131</sup>

Before the fifth congress the Executive Committee of Communist International had issued a detailed report to discuss within the various branches of the Comintern. Their recommendations concerning India were limited to setting forth the task of Indian communist party as Restoration of a national liberation movement (abandoned by the big bourgeois) on a revolutionary basis; formation of a national people party which was to comprise the urban petite bourgeois, the pauperized intellectuals, the clerks, the rebellious peasantry and the advanced workers; establishment of a proletarian class party. It also asked the Indian communist party to bring the trade union movement under its influence. To the ECCI the communist in India must recognize its own class basis and must purge it all alien elements. But this recommendation did not say whether the national people's party should be formed within the congress or separate from it, nor did the ECCI report review the question as to the type of liaison the Comintern should establish such nationalist organization as the Indian National Congress. Just before the fifth congress the ECCI passed a resolution and it asked to expand "direct contact" with the "national movements for emancipation". By opposing this move Roy stated "I must first point out that in the resolution on the report of executive, there is clause which does not correspond with the thesis passed by the second congress. my amendment was rejected {evidently

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*



in the colonial commission} on the ground that it was not in accordance with these same thesis, but I want to prove that it is the resolution which does not correspond this thesis, and which is totally mistaken when it considered in the light of the events that have taken place since the second congress. The resolution says that in order to win the people of colonial and semi-colonial countries, there must be a further direct development of the direct contact of the executive with national movements for emancipation. It is true that we must have a connection with these national movements, but seems to have been overlooked that these connection have not always been successful.<sup>132</sup> He differed with official Comintern position on two issues, as evident from his deliberation in the commission and the speech in the congress. He refused the lump all the colonies together but divided them in to three categories; most backward, semi-colonial and advanced. To him, instead of establishing direct contact with the nationalists, the Comintern should lend its support to the idea of organizing party of the peasants, whereby the vacillating middle class kept is leash. As regard the idea of organizing workers and peasants parties, people's party in India and the colonies, which called for mobilization of workers and peasants under the legal cover and a minimum programme, aiming at building up of alternative revolutionary leadership as distinct from the dominant leadership that vested in the hands of the nationalist forces, largely it was Roy's idea which had been projected in India, and it was endorsed by the Comintern before the Fifth congress. The congress appointed a commission (which included, among others, MN. Roy, Dmitry Manuilsky, J. Stalin, and Sen Katayama) to review the colonial question and prepare detailed recommendations.<sup>133</sup> The commission reviewed the colonialism as well as anti-colonial struggle. The commission viewed colonialism as a

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<sup>132</sup> Gene D. Oversteet and Windmiller, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-72.

homogeneous concept, cutting across social and geographical boundaries. While admitting that the Anti-imperialist struggle in the colonies had reached a critical phase, following the increasingly compromising position of nationalist bourgeoisie, it was pointed out that the direct link between the nationalist struggle in the colonies and the Comintern had to be forged, since the main Axis of anti-colonial struggle was constituted by bourgeois nationalism. The discussion on the colonial question at the Fifth congress was featured by another development, that was Roy's criticism of the attitude of the west European communist parties towards the struggle of colonial people, an issue over which he was actively supported by Ho Chi Minh (who was represented French Indo-China). Ho Chi Minh while Reminding the delegates that it was Lenin who told "the avant grade of the proletariat in the Marxist sense the proletariat not only comprised the working class of the developed imperialist and capitalist countries of Europe and of the America, but also hundreds of millions of working masses of colonial and semi-colonial peoples".<sup>134</sup> To him, it was not enough to work out long these and take pompous resolution, in order to bring them to the museum immediately after the congress, as we have done so far. We required diction which we can immediately put in to practice. He asked the European communist parties to heighten propaganda and publicity campaign in the colonies where communist parties already exist. He also asked them sent natives to Moscow for training. He asked them to make it a duty for the party members to take interest in colonial problems.<sup>135</sup>

In the mid 1920s the world communist movement was going through a period of transition. After the death of Lenin in 1924, the Soviet communist party had a power struggle and the communist party became under the

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<sup>134</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, pp. 105-109.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

leadership of Joseph Stalin. This period also saw a heated debate between the various leaders of Soviet communist party over the question of right path of the socialist development. The important debate in this regard was the debate over the question of the nature of socialist revolution. That the debate over permanent revolution and socialism in one country.<sup>136</sup>

While this debate was going on within the Soviet party an alternative model of revolutionary tactics was developing in china. This strategy was different from the strategy of Bolshevik party of Russia. While the Soviet party formulated its strategy on the basis of the alliance between the working class and laboring peasantry, the strategy of Chinese communist party laid its emphasis on militant action of the lower peasantry.

Efforts to form a Chinese communist party was started in early 1920 itself. In June 1920 Grigori Voitinsky was sent to China as Comintern delegate and established its headquarters in Shanghai. In July 1921 twelve Chinese communists including Mao Zedong, meeting in Shanghai under the leadership of Chen Tu-hsui, founded the Chinese communist party. The majority of this first meeting, which was attended on behalf of the Communist international by Maring (the Dutch Communist sneevliet), were unwilling to support Sun Yat Sen and the Kuomintang. At the same time a Chinese communist group was being organized in France: it include Chau En Lai and Li Li San. In May 1922, at the Chinese Communist Party congress attended by twenty delegates, the party decided to affiliate to the Comintern and to

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<sup>136</sup> See for details, Leone Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, Calcutta, Athwar Rahman, 1947. See also, E.H., Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, London, Macmillan and Company, 1958, p. 45. Also see, Jopeseoph Stalin, 'The Foundation of Leninism', in Joseph Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol-VI, Moscow Foreign Language Publishing House, 1953, pp. 71-96. Also see, Joseph Stalin, 'Problems of Leninism', in *ibid.*, p. 126. Also see, Nikolai Bukharin, 'The Estimation of Revolution: The Theory of Permanent Revolution', in *Communist Review*, Vol- V, No. 10, February, 1924.

establish a united front with Kuomintang. The Manifesto of second Chinese Communist party congress stated that 'the proletariats' urgent task is to act jointly with a democratic party to establish a united front of democratic revolution to struggle for the overthrow of military and for the organization of a real democratic government. A few weeks later, again persuaded by Maring, the central committee agreed though relentlessly that members should joint the Kuomintang as individuals. Maring argued that the Kuomintang was not a bourgeois party but a coalition of party of all classes. This was later defined as a coalition of four classes- Bourgeoisie, Petite bourgeoisie, peasantry and proletariat.<sup>137</sup>

After the death of Sun Yat Sen, the right wing in the Koumintang had decided to check the influence of the Russian political and military advisers. In October 1925, the Chinese Communist party secretary, Chen Tu-hsui warned the central committee to prepare for withdrawal from the Kuomintang, but his suggestions were rejected by the Comintern delegates. On 20<sup>th</sup> march 1926 Chiang Kai-Shek arrested soviet advisers and political commisars in the Kuomintang army. The Canton branch of Communist party proposed a counter attack and a break with the Kuomintang but this was rejected by the Chinese Communist Party headquarters at Shanghai, on the ground that their forces were not strong enough to defeat Chiang Kai-Shek. Russian and Chinese Communist Parties hesitated to supported Chiang Kai-shek's 'northern expedition' which was promised in return for the continued Kuomintang Communist party collaboration. Stalin and Bukharin also hesitated, concerned about the Soviet position in Manchuria and fearing foreign intervention. Other leaders took the view that in its military activities,

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<sup>137</sup> Executive Committee of Communist International (ECCI) Resolution on the Relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang, 12 January 1923, in Jene Degras ed., *The Communist international- 1919-48*, Vol-II, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1923-1928, pp. 5-6.

the Kuomintang acted as 'Armed Bandits and warlords. The expedition started from Canton in July 1926. Later the advance of the Kuomintang armies was said to demonstrate the success of the ECCI's China policy. Chen Tu-hsui did however propose to the ECCI that in future the Chinese Communist Party should co-operate with the Kuomintang from outside not in from inside that organization. However the suggestion was rejected. On 15<sup>th</sup> May the executive of the Kuomintang decided that the communists were henceforth be excluded from senior posts in the Kuomintang and were to refrain from criticizing Sun Yat Sen principle. Voitinsky, head of the Eastern department of the ECCI was sent to China for correcting the 'anti-Kuomintang' trend in the Chinese Communist party. In Pravda Bukharin opposed the view that Chinese Communist Party should withdraw from the Kuomintang; this would be to lose contact with the masses and to yield the banner of revolution to the politbureau of the Russian party and ECCI.<sup>138</sup>

This led to a differentiation in the national liberation movement in which certain sections of the Chinese large industrialists and commercial bourgeoisie broke away from the movement. The Kuomintang, the core of whose members acted in alliance with the Chinese communists is a revolutionary bloc of workers, peasant's intellectuals and the urban democracy. The revolutionary government established in Canton by the Kuomintang party had established contact with the broadest masses of workers, peasants, and urban democracy and has, by relying on those classes, annihilated the counter-revolutionary bands supported by the imperialists, and radically democratized the entire political life of the Kwantung province. Some section of the Chinese Big Bourgeoisie, who for a time attached themselves to the Kuomintang have in the last years left it. This has resulted

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<sup>138</sup> Extract from the resolution of the Sixth ECCI Plenum on the Chinese question, 13<sup>th</sup> March- 1926, Theses and resolution, VI, plenum, in *ibid*, pp. 275-277.

in the formation of a small group on the right wing of the Kuomintang, which comes out openly against a close alliance with the working masses and advocates the exclusion of communists from the Kuomintang and oppresses the revolutionary policy of Canton government. To Comintern, the political independence of the Chinese communists will be developed in the fight against two harmful deviations against right liquidationism, which fails to appreciate the independent class tasks of the Chinese proletariat and heads to a formless fusion with the national movement as a whole, against the ultra-left sentiments expressed in the attempt to skip the revolutionary democratic stage of the movement and to turn at once to the tasks of proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power, leaving entirely out of account the peasantry, which is the basic and decisive factor of the Chinese national liberation movement. The most important question of the Chinese national liberation movement is the peasant question. The victory of the revolutionary democratic tendency depends on the degree to which the 400 million Chinese peasants take part in the decisive revolutionary struggle together with the Chinese workers and under their leadership.<sup>139</sup>

At the fifteenth CPSU conference in October 1926, Bhukarin said that the central task in China was the fight against foreign imperialism, and therefore, the national revolutionary united front had to be maintained, that included sections of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie who did not collaborate with imperialism. He underlined the importance of the Chinese revolution as an example and attraction for Chinas' colonial neighbors and for India. The opposition in the CPSU was critical of Comintern policy in China. In this thesis for the fifteenth CPSU conference dated 19<sup>th</sup> September 1926, Trotsky wrote that the policy towards the Kuomintang was wholly opportunists. Now was the time for Chinese Communist party, fighting for

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 277-279.

proletarian hegemony in the struggle for national liberation. On the proposal that Chinese should withdraw from the Kuomintang. Stalin said; 'the withdrawal of the Chinese Communists from the Kuomintang at the present time would be a profound mistake. The whole course character and prospects of the Chinese revolution undoubtedly testify in favor of the Chinese communists remaining in the Kuomintang and intensifying their work in it'.<sup>140</sup> A number of press Articles about this time presented elaborate analysis of the class composition of the Kuomintang. The centre group led by Chiang Kai shek was said to be representing the bourgeoisie; the first people army, controlled by the centre had expelled all communist officers and political commissars. The left representing the petite bourgeoisie, working class, and peasant masses was led by Wang Ching- Wei. Until May 1926 this left wing had included the Chinese communist party but the commiserate now had their own separate fraction the big bourgeoisie wrote Tan Ping Shan, were trying to get control of the movement, reach agreement with the imperialists and establish a bourgeoisie dictatorship.<sup>141</sup>

Though Soviet Union and Comintern supported a long term revolution in China they were not ready to support an immediate armed appraisal. To CPSU, there was very reason to think that the mass movement in China would grow stronger and it should be encouraged to the maximum; the imperialist were also preoccupied with China and everything must be done to prevent anti-imperialist united front. To them, it was however essential, since the Chinese revolution could not with-hand united imperialist pressure. A respite also suited Russian interest, but it must be made absolutely clear that Chinese interests were not being sacrificed to Russia's the two coincided. Until china

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Extract from the Resolution of the seventh ECCI plenum on the Chinese situation, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1926, in *ibid*, pp. 336-338.

was unified, Russian would maintain loyal relations with all existing governments in China, central and provincial. They should make it clear to Chang Tso-lin that they recognized that good relations with Japan were necessary and that if he cultivated good relations with Moscow this would give him certain independence vis-à-vis Tokyo. Whatever concessions China was forced to make to Japan, they must make sure that these were not interpreted as Russian participation in shearing out of sphere of influence. The purpose of concession was to keep Japan from drawing closer to Britain, the chief and irreconcilable enemy of Chinese independence.<sup>142</sup> But this suggestion was overturned by the Chinese communist party. The 5<sup>th</sup> Chinese Communist party congress opened in Henkow at the end of April 1927. There were 94 voting delegates, and 30 with a consultative voice. A membership of 5000 was claimed. MN. Roy attended on behalf of the ECCI. He described the Kuomintang (i.e. Wuhan) as a revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants and petite bourgeoisie. The debate on Chen tu-hsui's political report lasted for four days; the resolution passed attacked Nanking, but were consiliatory towards the Wuhan government. The central committee refused to submit to the congress Mao Zedong's proposal for a land reform programme, since this would have antagonized the landowning generals and officers of the Wuhan forces, it was the communist party's task to broaden, not deepen, the revolution by supporting the Wuhan force's expedition against Chang Tso-lin. The political bureau elected at this congress included Chen tu-hsui, Chau En-lai and Li Li-san. In May, while the eighth plenum was meeting and asserting its faith in Wuhan, the Garrison at Chansha attacked the local communists and executed their leaders. Chen tu-hsui again proposed a complete break with the Kuomintang, but was overruled, and the Communist party continued to try to

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<sup>142</sup> Extract from a Manifesto of the ECCI against Intervention in China and the Soviet Union, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1926, in *ibid*, p. 307.



restrain the peasants in the area under Wuhan (a policy which Mao Zedong had disapproved). The Wuhan government though asked to intervene, nothing to check the severe repression by the troupes of local strikes and disturbances. It declared that the success of the revolution depended on their being treated allies and obtaining government protection. The communist minister for agriculture was sent out in January 27 to check present excesses. On 1<sup>st</sup> June Stalin sent a telegram to the Comintern delegates in China urging them to keep the agrarian revolution within the limits of necessary to preserve the alliance with the Kuomintang, while doing their best to get rid of the unreliable generals attached to Wuhan. In June the Wuhan Kuomintang conducted an open campaign against the Communist Party, charging it with responsibility for industrial and peasant disturbances. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party met on June and issued an appeal to workers' and peasants' organizations to accept Kuomintang leadership and control. At the same time a letter sent to the Kuomintang emphasised that the future of revolution dependent on its agrarian policy. The army consisted of peasants, who would welcome reform. The Kuomintang was at the cross road; it could triumph the peasants or surrender to reaction. At the end of the month Kuomintang forces raided and took over a number of trade union premises, and at the beginning of July the two communist members of the government resigned. On 15 July the Kuomintang political council expelled all communists from the Kuomintang, and in the next few days arrested and executed a number of them. The central committee of the Communist party then developed the Wuhan kuomintan a counter revolutionary organization.<sup>143</sup> In July Bukharin wrote after Wuhan surrender to Chiang Kai-shek its revolutionary role was now ended, and the ECCI had instructed the

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<sup>143</sup> Extract from an ECCI Resolution on the present stage of the Chinese revolution, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1927, in *ibid*, pp. 390-391.

communists to leave the government. They were not, however, to leave the Kuomintang; in its local and lower ranks communists influence could be decisive. It was more necessary to stay in the Kuomintang since the communist party would probably be made illegal, and this would give the party a channel of access to the masses. The Kumintang masses should be urged to turn out its leaders. The Central committee of the communist party was accused of sabotage ECCI decision on the independence of the communist party, the agrarian revolution, the arming of workers and peasantry etc. instructions had been given it day by day, but these had been ignored. It was in this situation Mao Zedong formulated his Hunan report.<sup>144</sup>

In his Hunan report Mao Zedong declared that “For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time in Chinese central, Southern and Northern provinces several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm like a hurricane a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation.”<sup>145</sup> In this report he envisaged the large scale peasant upsurge and their assault up on imperialist, war loads, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their grave. Mao divided the upheaval in Hunan in to two parts the first period consist of the period between January and June 1926 was the period of underground activity. During this period the peasants were trying to build up their own organization. Their membership was between 300000 – 400000. To him, it was during the second phase of the movement the peasant organizations were extensively built across China. Within four months the peasants attacked the patriarchal institutions of the ruling class on

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>145</sup> Mao Zedong, Hunan Report, in Utsa Patnaik, *op. cit.*, *Agrarian Question in Marx*, p. 249.

one hand and various customs of villages which were inimical to the peasantry. Here Chinese communist party formulated the revolutionary strategy which was appropriate for the specific characteristics of the Chinese society. To Mao the important feature of Chinese national revolution was the violent overthrow of one class by another with the help of peasant organization. Unlike USSR, where the urban proletariat played a leadership in the revolution in China the rural mass of the peasantry led the revolution. During the revolution of 1926 Mao classified the Chinese peasantry in to the upper the middle and the lower peasantry. To the Chinese Communist Party (CPC), unlike the upper and middle peasants the lower peasantry was the main force in the revolution. To Mao unlike other two categories of the Chinese peasantry the lower peasants have nothing to lose. Even though the revolution got its initial success its violent suppression by Kuomintang at the end of 1927 had a profound impact up on the future strategy of the communist international. Earlier the Chinese Communist Party had a united front with the Kuomintang. But the violent suppression of the revolution intensified the dispute within the CPSU and the Comintern. Trotsky and other opposition leaders accused Comintern of betraying the Chinese revolution. This defeat persuaded many communist parties for a rethinking their attitude towards the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries.<sup>146</sup> Stalin and Comintern were of the opinion that the CPC must maintain its alliance with the Kuomintang at any cost, as Kuomintang enjoyed the popular support. To the Comintern, within the Koumintang there were a “Right” (represented by Chiang Kai Shek) as well as a left wing. The Comintern characterized the Chinese apprising was bourgeois-democratic and not proletarian and political mobilization was the need of the hour. The preservation of the front with Kuomintang and organization of peasant struggle against the big landlords

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.251-262.

whereby the mass base of the CPC would expand, and the “Right” inside the Kuomintang could be isolated and defeated like a ‘squeezed lemon’.<sup>147</sup> After the suppression of the Chinese uprising Stalin took a position which was closer to MN Roy on the national and colonial question. Bukharin opposed Stalin’s argument of an immediate capitalist crisis instead he argued that the world was witnessing the relative stabilization of capitalism. Another important debate between Stalin and Bukharin was over the question of the attitude towards social democracy. To Stalin the social democracy was the main enemy of the working class. By contesting this, Bukharin made it clear that while the social democratic parties played a counter-revolutionary role it cannot be characterized as the main enemy of the working-class. It should be noted that the Comintern’s characterization of social democracy as social Fascism needs to be understood in the context of the role played by social democracy in the Post First World War Europe. The Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini started his political career as a social democrat. The same was the case of Adolf Hitler. Both of these leaders who started their political career as social democrats had ended up being Fascist.

Along with this, another important factor which determined the outcome of the sixth congress was the debate on colonialism. Commenting on the colonial question on the sixth congress Otto Wille Kuusinen stated; colonial work as a whole was one of the weakest side of Comintern activity; in most colonial and semi-colonial countries they did not have real communist parties. The ECCI and the West European parties were largely to be blamed for this. Vasiliev echoed the same complaint; the communist parties in the countries which had send troops to intervene in China had done nothing to establish contact with the troops; the ECCI had to undertake this work in China itself, which was extremely difficult. Most of the Communist parties in

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<sup>147</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 116.

the colonial countries were leaders with no ranks and file behind them. They had no trade union fractions and were ideologically very weak.<sup>148</sup> If the India Communist Party were properly organized it would have its fractions in the four provincial workers and peasants parties, which were about to amalgamate, and gain control of the united party. Sikandar (Shaukat Usmani) an Indian delegate said that the numerous Communist groups in India had still to be brought together into a single disciplined party. A plea for more help from Comintern and CPGB to organize Indian communist party was also made by another Indian delegate, Razur Sen Katayama criticized the CPGB for its 'criminal neglect' of Ireland and India, and the Dutch and American parties for their neglect of Indonesia, the Philippines and the Negroes.<sup>149</sup> The ECCI report praised the French Communist party campaign against the war in Morocco; it was the first time that members of the armed forces had been drawn into a mass movement. The ECCI report praised the French Communist party campaign against the war in Morocco; it was the first time that members of the armed forces had been drawn into a mass movement. In the discussion it emerged that there was good deal of transition between communist parties of the metropolitan countries and those in the colonies. To Kuusinen, the CPGB must advise and train the Indian party but the two should not be one, as this would arouse Indian mistrust. It was wrong for the Tunisian and Algerian parties to be sections of the French party. They had to be completely independent; this would eliminate any ground for suspicion and mistrust.<sup>150</sup> One of the first tasks of the new ECCI would be to build up the parties in the colonies. The report on Indo-China was given by a delegate

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<sup>148</sup> 'Extract From the Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries Adopted by The Sixth Congress', in Jane Degras, Ed., *op. cit.*, p. 526.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 526-527.

appearing as a representative of Indochina had a strong and concentrated proletariat; and a revolutionary mass organisation would have to be created to take the lead; the Comintern must give its attention for founding a Communist Party and trade unions in Indochina as well as peasant organizations. Padi Animin, who represented Indonesia, asked for greater activity from the Dutch party. He observed; “during the rebellion it had done what it could, whereas the Comintern and other parties doing nothing; this was a sad experience”.<sup>151</sup>

Vasiliev said, in Latin America there was great sympathy for communism and Soviet Union, these feelings had to be given an organizational frame. The Comintern must give all possible help in establishing communist parties. Shargi from Persia objected to the passage in the thesis on Persia; Reza shah represented reaction, not nationalism and progress.<sup>152</sup>

Katiama reported that the Japanese party had been ‘handicapped’ by legalism, liquidation and ultra left sectarianism, but it had now become the rallying centre for the revolutionary masses. In the Far East, Korea occupied roughly the same place as Poland in Europe; the factional struggle there had prevented the emergence of a real party (a Korean communist party had been founded in 1925 and admitted provisionally to the Comintern by the presidium in March 1926).<sup>153</sup>

In the debate China received comparatively little attention. The chief point in the dispute was whether the colonies were ‘decolonized’ ie., whether the metropolitan country was promoting or retarding the industrialization of its colonies; India serves as the focus of this discussion. With the exception of

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

Murphy, the members of the British delegation believed that Britain industrialized India to take advantage of cheap labour there. Bukharin in his opening speech came out against the decolonization theory; To him, the Indians themselves were divided. Roy did not attend this conference. But he had given his argument through a letter. To him, the decolonization was proceeding, and contained the seeds of the dissolution of British Empire. He is said to have advanced the decolonization theory at the end of 1927. To Roy the bourgeoisie were not only withdrawing from the national revolution, but were moving towards an agreement with the imperialists to crush it. Saumyendranath Tagore (who was participated in this congress as Narayan) claims that when, in April 1927, he went as a representative of the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party to Moscow, he and Bukharin agreed that some kind of decolonization was proceeding in India. 'If it were true', Kuusinen said, 'that British imperialism had really turned to the industrialization of India, the Comintern have to revise its entire conception of the nature of imperialist colonial policy'. Shaukat Usmani agreed with Kuusinen and added that this 'nonsensical' theory could only have been thought up by those who had lost direct contact with India. Investment was not industrialization. Britain, he said, had learned from the Russian revolution and was determined to destroy industry in India and thrust the proletariat back into the villages; it had found its agent in Gandhi. The Comintern should work up an anti-British movement in Persia and Afghanistan. Bennett (Petrovsky), the ECCI representative in Britain, said the word decolonization was used merely to emphasize the progress of industrialization, and Rothstein of the CPGB argued that the thesis tended to underestimate the degree of industrialization, while at the same time speaking of the proletariat acting independently. If the thesis were correct, the proletariat in India would be getting weaker; the draft referred to deviations in imperialist policy to meet the needs of finance-capital, but finance-capital was part of imperialism, and to explain its

operations as a deviation from imperialism was 'nonsensical'. Murphy attacked Bennett and Rothstein; To him, the logical conclusion of their theory would take them into the Second International. Martynov of the CPSU argued that while capital export developed the colonies, imperialism as such hampered their development-the process was dialectical. Remmele said those who believed in decolonization were revising Lenin, and Wolfe a delegate from USA said that both tendencies were in operation, but decolonization was the weaker of the two; the contradiction was a feature of imperialism. Arnot of the CPGB denied that the British delegation upheld the decolonization theory, but the theory embodied in the draft theses was wrong; it led to a misleading selection of data and hence to a false interpretation. Imperialism by its own contradictions fostered in the colonies the industry that was going to compete with it, thus transferring domestic contradictions to the world scene. Rothstein, in a statement on behalf of the British delegation majority, took the same line; it was fundamentally erroneous to describe as 'rural continents' and 'agrarian hinterlands' countries where large numbers of industrial workers organized strikes. 'All the charges made against the Communist parties of the metropolis which unfortunately are becoming more and more a kind of automatic reaction against those who dare to criticize any theses put forward in the name of the ECCI that they are 'social-democrats', Amsterdammers have no effect on them. To him, the charge that the British delegation, which had submitted alternative theses, had advanced the theory of decolonization was an attempt to conceal the Non-Leninist character of the theory of agrarianization. If these polemical methods were retained, they would stifle healthy discussion; communists should be encouraged to give their opinions openly and fearlessly; sticking labels on them would merely crush independent thought, and Comintern discussions would lose their value. Lozovsky, who contended that changes in the form of exploitation did not imply changes in the imperialist-colonial relationship, said that if



decolonization followed automatically on industrial development there would be no basis for the national-revolutionary movement. He thought the attempt to classify colonies in categories was misleading, and the delegate from Ecuador pointed out that the classification in the thesis did not correspond with that adopted in the programme. He thought the theses overemphasized the agrarian character of Latin America.<sup>154</sup>

It was during the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> congress the communist party of Great Britain became an important factor in determining the position of Indian communist party on the National and colonial question. In his pamphlet “Modern India” Rajani Palme Dutt maintained that the liberation struggle in India would be led by the proletariat and not by the bourgeoisie which had betrayed the nation. However the sixth enlarged plenum of the ECCI while acknowledging that industrialization was assuming importance in the east, recognized the “desertion of the national-liberation movement by some sections of the native industrial and trading big bourgeoisie of India, and in part of Egypt and china” and “the social importance of the Indian workers, who are beginning to play an important role in Indian life, but did not endorse the idea of a bourgeois nationalism in countries like India had lost its meaning altogether. Despite the compromise between the upper strata of the native bourgeoisie and imperialism, national liberation still remains the burning political question. To the commission, the recognition of the proletariat as predominant factor in the struggle against imperialism should not lead to an underestimation of the revolutionary role of the social classes that stand between the big bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It further stated these intermediary classes constitute an overwhelming majority of the population of India and was victims of imperialist exploitation. It maintains a revolutionary nationalist party on the basis of oppressed class

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 527-528.

(middle class, intellectuals, petty-bourgeois, and peasantry) will play an important role in the history of India.

The important aspect of the Comintern strategy towards India was its stress on agrarian revolution. This aspect was visible in a manifesto of the Executive committee of communist international on India which they published in 1929. It declared the agrarian revolution is the pivot of Indian revolution. It believed that the Indian peasants were slowly becoming convinced that with all the great sacrifice they have made they have been betrayed, defeated and thrown in to the blackest slavery because they trusted the politicians and leaders of the national bourgeoisie.<sup>155</sup> To it, the revolutionary events in India were maturing at such a rapid pace that it would be wrong to have any kind agreement with the bourgeoisie, who were trying to throttle the labour movement. While writing to the conference of the workers and peasants party in December 1928 the ECCI stated the proletariat struggle demands the creation of an independent class party of the proletariat, the uniting and raising of isolated actions of peasants to the highest political level, and the formation of a revolutionary block of workers and peasants party, but on the basis of cooperation in deeds between the mass organizations of the proletariat on the one hand and peasant leagues and committees on the other for the overthrow of the imperialist and the destruction of the political and economic basis of colonial exploitation and slavery. To it the main obstacle for this was the influence of opportunist bourgeois nationalism. For example the experience of the movement in Bardoli showed how great the danger is still that not only bourgeoisie, but even the users who buy out the peasant lands, find themselves able to subordinate the movement of the peasants and to utilize it for their own ends. To Comintern, the Indian toilers

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<sup>155</sup> 'Extract from an ECCI Manifesto on The Revolutionary Movement in India', in *ibid*, pp. 20-21.

in their hard struggle are nearing the fulfillment of their great historic task. The proletariat now organizing its forces can rely on the support of the peasantry, of the poor of the town and of the oppressed and exploited of India for whom there was no salvation except as the result of the triumphant revolution.<sup>156</sup> Based on this policy in 1930 Stalin characterized Indian national bourgeoisie including Gandhi as a class which relied on police bayonets for flooding the country with the blood of the people. Another resolution on India, passed in 1930 the Comintern assessed the proletariat in India as an independent revolutionary force and that it has already started the struggle for hegemony.

It was in this context the sixth congress of the Comintern was convened in 1928. The congress declared that the partial stabilization of capitalism was coming to an end that a period of exudation of all economy and political counter reactions of capitalist system. To the congress the class interest against imperialism the bourgeois of the colonies also upheld national interest and that the views about the anti-national poster of the entire national bourgeoisie were incorrect.<sup>157</sup> The important feature of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress was its changing strategy on the national and the colonial question. This new strategic shift was evolved out of a debate on colonial question within the sixth congress which had mentioned above. This strategy consist of two components, the important one was the concern expressed by communist leaders like Sen Katayama that many communist parties in the leading countries were showing little interest in the colonial question. The other was the discussion and the debate on the question of the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries. This congress declared that “in the first preparatory

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<sup>156</sup> Extract from a letter from ECCI to the All-india conference of workers and peasants parties, Meerut trial, 2 December, 1928, in *ibid.*,p. 558.

<sup>157</sup> A.B., Reznikov, *op. cit.*, ‘*The Strategy and Tactics...*’,p. 187-189.

period of the of the revolutionary movement of these countries, when the organization of the proletariat and the influence of the communist party is still weak, but that of the bourgeois parties on the other hand is much stronger, when the latter occupy the leading position in the national movement because in the interests of the demands of national bourgeoisie for power they still temporarily demonstrate their opposition (no matter how vacillating and reformist) against the imperialist- feudal power bloc, and when the masses of the proletarian follow along behind them”.<sup>158</sup> The congress added in India and Egypt it would be an ultra-left mistake to start the communist party agitation by identifying the national reformists (swarajists, wafdists and other) with ruling counter-revolutionary block of imperialist and feudal lords.<sup>159</sup>

This formulation made a drastic change in the Comintern’s attitude towards the Indian question. Presenting his argument in the 6<sup>th</sup> congress Otto Kuusinen argued that the main social support of the British bourgeoisie in India is to all intents and purpose a class which has come into being through the measures of British Imperialism. To him, this renters live themselves in the cities. Commenting on Indian bourgeoisie he pointed out that only because of the pressure from below the Indian bourgeoisie shows its oppositional tendency. To him, this people were only making a noise that they were only indulging in moonshine politics. To him, with the help of the British imperialist, the Indian capitalist endeavor to get rid of their superabundance of capital. To him, the Indian bourgeoisie was not revolutionary but was characterized as national reformist.<sup>160</sup> To Kuusinen the communist party of India had to play a leading role in this struggle is to

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<sup>158</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 129-130.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Otto Kuusinen, ‘The Revolutionary Movement in The Colonies’, in G.Adhikari, *op. cit.*, *DocumentedHistory...*, pp. 473-489.

disperse any illusion in regard to decolonization through imperialism, to expose and combat any illusions of this before the eyes of the masses. In this manner it will be able to do justice to its present task.<sup>161</sup> Kuusinen while maintaining the distinction between the national reformist and revolutionaries warned against the ultra leftism. The draft made it clear that the sixth congress still viewed the colonial question as directive of Lenin's colonial thesis, which had been adopted at the second congress and, despite changes in the situation; there was no question of challenging its validity.<sup>162</sup> Participating in the debate MN Roy pointed out that owing to the decay of capitalism in the metropolis, imperialism is obliged to find means and methods of exploiting India more intensively. To him, instead of considering imperialism as something unchangeable state- a Marxist should examine it dialectically. To him, the Britain's ability to export capital depends primarily on the condition of her industries at home.<sup>163</sup>

Supporting Kuusinen in the congress Clemens Dutt maintained that "the world shaking events of the Chinese revolution have afforded a practical demonstration of the correctness of this thesis and enable us through an analysis of these experiences to extend, to amplify and to make more concrete the conclusion's already obtained. To her, both India and China would play a dominant role in determining the role of world imperialism. To Dutt, what happened in china has given a great impetus to the movement for national emancipation in India, an impetus which was still growing and has not yet reached its climax. To Dutt, the new revolutionary masses will lead to the possibility of the establishment of a revolutionary government of the workers

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.

<sup>162</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*,p. 129.

<sup>163</sup> M.N., Roy, On The Indian Question in The Sixth World Congress, in Adhikari, *op. cit.*, *DocumentedHistory...*, pp. 630-34.

and peasants. To Dutt, these possibilities bring more than ever to the forefront of the question, which rose in Chinese revolution.<sup>164</sup> This discussion shows that unlike the general perception Comintern did not transformed in to monolithic institution after the death of Lenin. The developments in the USSR had made a significant impact in the functioning of the Comintern. But it did not end the culture of serious discussion within the International. It did not end the creative discussion within the organization it allowed the differing voices within the international. This could be visible in the discussion of colonial question and the discussion on Chinese situation. Though the Chinese uprising was conducted against the direction of the international CPC was continued as a member of the international. Likewise, different arguments were raised within the International regarding the colonial question at the 6<sup>th</sup> congress. But those who took position against the official Comintern line were not been targeted. These shows the serious discussions were not discouraged in the international even after the emergence of new political situation in USSR.

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<sup>164</sup> Clemens Dutt, 'India's Part in The World Revolution', in *ibid.*, pp. 492-493.

## **Chapter II**

# **UNITED FRONT AND EMERGENCE OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN KERALA (1920-1939)**

### **Comintern and the Early Phase of the Communist Movement in India**

The idea of socialism and the socialist consciousness began to sprout among the intellectuals of India by the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As stated by P.C. Joshi and K. Damodaran, the socialist ideas of intellectuals of this period could not be said to be scientific, they were influenced by Utopian socialist like Robert Owen and Charles Fourier, Christian socialist like FD Maurice and Charles Kingsley, Fabian socialist like Barnad Shaw, liberal socialist like HG. Wells, Anarchist like Kropotkin.<sup>1</sup> In 1912 two biographies of Karl Marx were published, one by Lala Hardayal and another by Ramakrishna Pillai. But these two biographies did not go much detailed in to the political philosophy of Marxism. Lala Hardayal published a small pamphlet entitled; *Marx a modern Rishi* (in *Modern Review*). To him, the pain and sacrifices of Marx was more important. On the other hand Ramakrishna Pillai was a little bit sympathetic towards Marx's idea of socialism. In October 1916, one year before the Russian revolution, Amabalal Patel wrote an article on Karl Marx in the Gujarati magazine *Narayan and Sathya*. It was after the Russian Revolution, Marx's ideas became more popular in India. The working class was still an embryonic stage and socialism not yet proletarian or Marxian. But gradually Karl Marx and his ideas became popular among the progressive intellectuals.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P.C., Joshi, K. Damodaran, Ed., *Marx Comes to India*, Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

To them, the first mention of Karl Marx in India was in an article reproduced from English journal in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in 1903.

The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 had got the attention of the Indian press immediately after the revolution itself. For example, the leading nationalist daily, *Dainik Basumati*, published from Calcutta, wrote on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1917; the downfall of Tsardom has usured in the age of destruction of alien bureaucracy in India too. A nationalist English daily from Calcutta, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, while carrying all such report, failed to make any editorial comment on the revolution until the middle of December 1917. For the first time, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1917 *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in its editorial titled 'repudiation of national debt' commented , Russia has not only treated the treaties of its previous governments with foreign states as mere 'scraps of the paper', but repudiated its national debt by the end of 1918, however, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* had formed a firm opinion about the Russian revolution, and what ever may have been its basis, it was a favorable one, characterizing the revolution as the 'Russian Volcano'.<sup>3</sup> On January 8, 1919, it came out with a long editorial titled 'Bolsheviks' which not only tried to put the Russian revolution in a historical perspective, but also sought to give some what sympathetic account of what it considered was the programme of Bolshevik government. By 1919, news about the Russian revolution, the Bolsheviks and Lenin had become more easily available in India. Indian news papers started giving far greater prominence to revolutionary Russia. Towards the end of the year the radical nationalist leader Bipin Chandra Pal was praising Bolshevism. In a speech at collage square Calcutta, he said; ' there has grown up all over the world a new power, the power of people, determined to rescue their legitimate rights of the people to live freely and

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<sup>3</sup> Harkishan Singh Surjeet *et al.*, *History of Communist Movement India: The Formative Years 1920-1933*, Delhi, CPIM Publication, 2005, p. 29.



happily without being exploited and victimized by the wealthier as so called higher classes. This is Bolshevism. In Bengal, the October revolution inspired the imprisoned revolutionaries.<sup>4</sup> Bengali poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, was influenced by the October revolution since the time of his service in the army at Karachi in 1918. During 1919, Nazrul wrote a short story 'Byathar Dan', in which the main characters crosses the border into Soviet Russia. He says; 'I have joined the Red Army. The Red Army sure that their great, noble ideals is gaining ground in the minds of men all over the glob and I too, am one of the great organization'.<sup>5</sup> Premchand, the Hindi novelist, also felt the impact of the Russian revolution. In a letter to a friend sometime during 1918-1919, he declared that 'I am almost convinced of Bolshevik principle'.<sup>6</sup> In *Maharashtra Kesari*, published by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, sympathized with the Russian revolution and published many articles on it during 1919-20. On 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1919, Lala Lajpat Raisaid; 'I have had no time to study socialism and I have not the courage to become a Bolshevik. Whether Bolshevism is right or wrong, whether it is intellectually correct or false, it seems to me the only course by which the common people can give their end'.<sup>7</sup>

It was along with the second congress of the Communist International, efforts were made to establish the soviet style communist parties in different parts of the world. As a part of this the Communist Party of India in exile was formed in 1921 at Tashkent. G. Adhikari identified four revolutionary trends and groups which were responsible for the formation of this party. To him, the four trends could be identified as; individuals and groups in their search for a new path for the struggle for independence turned in to communists

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

under the impact of the Bolshevik revolution. The first trend was the Indian national revolutionaries who operated from abroad in the period of the First World War and thereafter from Germany, USA, Turkey and Afghanistan, who earlier functioned through the Berlin committee and the provisional government of independent India. They include men like Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutta, Maulvi Barkatullah, and Abaninath Mukarji. Another trend was the national revolutionaries from the Pan-Islamic caliphate movement, who went abroad in the war period (1914-16) and those from the Hijaret movement. They include Muhammad Ali Sapassi, Rahmath Ali Khan, Firozudheen Manzoor, Abdul Majeeth and Shaukath Usmani. Other group was the Ghadar party organized among the Sikh and Panjabi emigrant labor (USA). They include Rattan Singh and Santhosh Singh. Other important group was of the national revolutionaries in India were from the left wing of the national congress, the terrorist organization and parties, the caliphate movement, who had linked with Ghadar party, Individuals and group from the trend when disillusioned with Gandhi's ideology of non violence resistance after the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement in 1922.<sup>8</sup> The communist party in exile has been organized in accordance with the principle of Comintern. The first meeting of the party adopted a resolution establishing the condition of three month's probation period (as candidate members) for those who wished to join the party. They decide to draft a programme which was suited for the Indian condition.<sup>9</sup>As mentioned earlier, the Communist party of India founded at Tashkant on 17 October 1920 consists of the following members; MN Roy, Evelyn Trent Roy, AN Mukharji, Rosa Fitingof, Mohd Ali (Ahmed Hasan), Mohammed Shefiq (Siddiqi), Acharya (M. Prativadi Bhayankar). It adopted a resolution

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<sup>8</sup> G.Adhikari, Ed.,*The Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol.I, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1971, pp. 230-33.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

establishing the condition of three months probation period (as candidate members), for those persons who wished to join the party. Shafiq was 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. M Acharya was Chairman and MN Roy was secretary.<sup>10</sup> The following three persons are admitted to the party as candidate members; Abdul Qadir Sehrai, Mazood Ali Shah Kazi, Akber Shah (salim), after that a resolution to elect an executive committee of three members of the party was passed. MN Roy, Mohammed shafiq and Acharya were elected as executive. Shafiq was elected as the secretary and Acharya as the chairman of the executive committee. It was decided that the party be registered in Turkistan and Acharya was entry sted with this task.<sup>11</sup>As a part of this in 1920 May Mohammed shefiq published an Urdu journal called 'Zamindar' which was sympathetic to the communist movement. Mohammed Shafiq left Peshawar as one of the early Muhajir under the influence of the Anti-Rowlatt act agitation of those days in may 1919. He met Maulana Obeidullah, who had come to Kabul earlier in 1915 together with Mohammed Ali Sappassi, Rahmat Ali Zakaria and others, who were part of the provisional government of free India of Mahendra Prathap. In November 1919, Mahendra Prathap, Abdul Rab and Acharya arrived in Kabul from Soviet Russia. From them Shafiq came to know that the government of Russia had a sympathetic interest with the recent developments in the Indian independence movement and that the Muhajirs would get all help if they went to Russia.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 1920', cited in *ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>11</sup> 'Minutes of the meeting of the communist party of India dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 1920 at Tashkent', cited in *ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

The formation of CPI was closely connected with the political and military school which functioned in Tashkent between 1920-21. This was done to train the Indian 'Muhajirs' who crossed to the central Asia. To MN Roy, as a result of the political education and general impact of the socialist revolution in Russia, a section of the originally Pan-Islamic and patriotic youth 'Muhajir' turned in to communism and began to demand the formation of the CPI. Roy had some reservation regarding the establishment of the Communist party even though he cooperated with it. Instead he was more interested in the revolutionary school rather than forming a communist party. He thought this trained revolutionaries will march through Afghanistan with the permission of Afghan Amir. As per his plan this revolutionaries will join with Anti-British frontier tribes and to create liberated area in the North West India during the period of noncooperation movement. This plan was averted when Russia and Britain signed the trade pact in 1921 agreement. After this, Britain asked Russia to expel Indian revolutionaries from central Asia. As a result USSR closed the Induski Kaurs (The Indian Military School) in Tashkent. To Adikari, the plan of forming the liberation army became untenable due to the non cooperative attitude of the Afghan government.<sup>13</sup>

Rejecting this position Virendranath Chattopadhyaya presented his thesis, in dissent he said the first necessary step was to overthrow the British government in India, only after which communism could introduce not only in India but in England also. To him, the International should undertake this task. He also suggested it is important for the International to exploit to the utmost extent every available revolutionary tendency in and outside India. He however accepted a decision at the end, since the Soviet government refused to afford help under any other condition. The arguments of Chattopadhyaya was somewhat accepted by Lenin, in a letter to Chattopadhyaya he pointed

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

out that the primary objective of the international should be the over throw of British imperialism. The members of the Berlin group like Bhupendranath Datt and AJK Luhani opposed the affiliation of the CPI to the international instead they proposed the setting up of a revolutionary Board which becomes an agency for revolutionary movement. All the members of the Communist International, whether Russian or non Russian were against imperialism and sympathized with the struggle of colonial people for freedom. The question was how the liberation of the colonial people is to be brought about, and what sort of the regime should be replaced in the colonial rule. The Indian revolutionaries never thought of this question, and could not answer them.<sup>14</sup>

In late 1921 as per the direction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress of the international the Indian communists tried to engage with the Indian National Congress. It was done through the effort of Hasrat Mohani. The thirty sixth session of the Indian National Congress held at Ahmadabad, Mohani presented a resolution on complete independence. To this Document, without complete independence the solution of Punjab question is not possible. The cruelties at present perpetrated on the Moplahs will serve an illustration. The government in this case, has been doing this by creating a false impression (on the public mind). If this was possible (in one part of India it is possible in the whole of India). The question of the Punjab can only be settled when the possibility of its repetition was removed, and this was possible only when India was completely independent. To this document, the colonial form of self government would not solve the Khalifat question but it would on the other hand, go against the Khalifat for this reason that it will strengthen British imperialism. To the documents, Gandhi's claim that 'we shall be able to solve

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 230-60.

the Punjab and Khilafat problem is incapable of realization so long as India is not completely independent.<sup>15</sup>

The British government was closely watching this situation. They tried to intercept the activities of the Indian revolutionaries who were in USSR. Likewise they charged different conspiracy cases like Peshawar and Kanpur and Meerut conspiracy case to check the rise communist movement in India. The important one was the Peshawar conspiracy case. Acting on clues which they obtained from the statements of the early Muhajir returnees, the first batch reached Peshawar on 3 June 1921, after the refusal of Turkish authorities to enter Turkish territory from Russia. The British police kept watch for the return of those who had gone to Tashkant and Moscow, and began to arresting them from the middle of 1922 that is how the first of the 'communist conspiracy case' at Peshawar was started in which some 12-13 revolutionaries received sentence of rigorous imprisonment. The judgment in the first case, in which Mohammed Akber together with his father Hafizullah Khan and Servant Bahadur were involved, was pronounced on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1922. The charge was involvement in a conspiracy hatched in Tashkant, Kabul and Samarkand to overthrow the British government. Akbar and Bahadur were sentenced to three years and one year rigorous imprisonment respectively, under section 121-A of IPC; while Hafizullah Khan was acquitted and released.<sup>16</sup>In the second Peshawar conspiracy case, the session's court charged Mohammed Akbar along with Mohammed Hassan of Baluchistan and Gulam mehbub of Peshawar on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1923. Mohammed

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<sup>15</sup> Documents of Ahmedabad session of Indian National Congress, In P.C. Joshi, K. Damodaran ed., A Documented History of the Communist Movement in India, 1917-1922, Vol-I, New Delhi, Sunrise Publication, 2007, pp. 274-275.

<sup>16</sup> Harkishan Singh Surjeet *et al.*, *op. cit.*, *History of Communist Movement in India...*, p.62.

Akbar was sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment.<sup>17</sup> The third Peshawar conspiracy case, involving Akbar Shah and seven others, namely, Rafiq Ahmad, Firoze ud Din Manzoor, Abdul Majid, Habib Ahmed, Sulthan Muhammed, Abdul Qader and Fida Ali, was otherwise Known as the Moscow Tashkent Conspiracy case. The case began before the inquiring magistrate of Peshawar on March 7, 1923. In the mid 1922 the government of India's intelligence Department obtained information that some 16 of the 26 Muhajirs who were in the Tashkent school, had gone to Moscow to training at the University for the Toilers of the East.<sup>18</sup> The confidential Home department political files of the government of 1922-23, contain an article on this university as well as a list of the 22 Muhajir trained in Tashkent and Moscow. British intelligence had reconnoitered the possible entry routes of Indian revolutionaries, crossing to and from soviet Russia, both on the Pamir-Chitral border and on the Persian border.<sup>19</sup>

During 1920 and 1921, while Comintern policy for the colonial countries were being discussed, the political scene in India was taking on an increasingly radical hue. The trade union movement which had been developed in early twenties, culminated in the formation of AITUC in July 1920. Developments in the Soviet Union had created a considerable interest among Indian nationalist. Marxist literature was secretly circulated across India. It was during this period congress party launched the noncooperation movement which resulted in a massive political upsurge.

While this development was taking place in USSR there were some attempts to understand and interpret Leninism in the specific context of India. In 1920-21 there were about half a dozen pamphlets on Lenin which were

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63-64.

published from different parts of India. Important among them was Gandhi versus Lenin which was written by SA. Dange (who later became an important leader of Indian communist party) in this work he try to make a comparison between Gandhi and Lenin. The important aspect of this work was that Dange was not ready to accept the attitude of MN Roy and others towards Indian national movement. He considered that the complete realization of the theories of Lenin and Gandhi was impossible in the practical life. To him, Gandhism was suffers from too much and unwarranted faith in natural goodness of men while Bolshevism suffered from too much neglect of human interest in sentiments. He rejected the prevailing notion that nonviolence was the only possible means of struggle in India. To Dange Gandhi's plan was directly inspired by Tolstoy's plan of nonviolence and non participation.<sup>20</sup> He added Gandhism contain two aspects, one related to the general evils common to all human society and treat of the solution of problem affecting all. Another aspect treats of the special evil of despotism and suggested means to do away with it. To Dange, Gandhism relies on individual purification, individual consciousness and conviction and action. Gandhism always lays stress upon the necessity of allowing everyone to act according to his conscience. At the same time Bolshevism does not believe in the inherent goodness of human nature but advocating rather maximum of coercion or control (through as a passing phase) to teach men his duty towards the common good of the whole. To him, the common aim of Gandhi and Lenin was to destroy social evil of the day, especially the misery of poor and to subvert despotism. While Gandhi attacked the modern industrial civilization, Lenin stressed the importance of seizure and control of the means of production, land etc.<sup>21</sup> To him, Gandhian remedy was to destroy the spirit

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<sup>20</sup> S.A., Dange, *Gandhi vs Lenin*, in *ibid.*, p.285.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



of modern civilization and mechanism. Lenin's remedy was to keep modern industrial development but make work for common good.<sup>22</sup> To Gandhi religion and non violence alone had the capacity to destroy the tyranny. To Lenin tyranny will not moved by religion, nonviolence and such other human motives.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike Roy, Dange wanted an Indian revolution that was not an armed blow. It would be more radical and would create a revolutionary change. He stated, if the movement of the spinning and weaving succeed; it will make India richer by sixty corresponding year. Dange believed the labor party of England professing sympathy for India not from philanthropic motive or from an inherent liking for liberty of other nation. It was sympathy generating quite selfish motive. He emphasized the labor interests of India and Britain was mutually opposed. Independent India would mean full development of our industries in all branches and an efficient organized labor. He advocated the noncooperation of Indian people with the British to overthrow the British colonial government in India. He asked whether the native army work if the English government lashed the terror upon the natives when they refuse to pay taxes. Unlike Roy Dange did not deny the importance of Indian National Congress in the national revolution. To him, the congress must evolve its own ministries of education, law and order; the congress should become the sovereign power of the nation. Along with this the education of the peasantry had to be done with the work of organizing labor and educating it.<sup>24</sup> In the beginning of August 1922 SA Dange published a journal called THE SOCIALIST. Started as a weekly and it continued to publish regularly till the end of December 1922 after which it becomes a monthly. It continued to appear as a monthly up to his arrest in the Kanpur "Bolshevik conspiracy

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 287-290.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290-300.

case". To him, the Tashkent party and the ECCI tried to build contacts independently and through him the Communist group in Calcutta led by Muzaffer Ahemed and group in Madras led by Singaravelu Chettiyar. They tried to send back to India some of the Indian revolutionaries who had been under the training in the university for the toilers of the east to work along with communists.<sup>25</sup>

After the withdrawal of the non cooperation movement in 1922 youth in India were largely disillusioned with congress leadership and many were attracted to socialism. This act of congress initiated a debate about Gandhi's leadership and about his techniques of winning independence from the British. These debates helped to create an intellectual climate which was conducive for the spread of new theories and new ideas.<sup>26</sup> As a result, various communist sympathizers emerged in different parts of India. In Madras, a small organization had formed around Singaravelu chettiyar, SA Dange was the leader of the Bombay group, and Muzaffar Ahmed was in Calcutta. The leader in Lahore was Gulam Husain.

During this period the important task of Roy and Communist International was to build an organization which would distribute the material and form a communist party. In August 1922 Roy wrote to the CPGB asking them to send two European communist leaders to India, one to Calcutta another to Bombay. As a result, Charles Ashleigh was send by CPGB. Their plan was to send him to Bombay and Calcutta for establishing contact with Dange and Muzaffer Ahmad. He also planned to send an Indian delegation to the Forth congress of the Comintern. When his plan of action was intercepted by British government they immediately arrested and decided to deport him

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, PP. 503-505.

<sup>26</sup> Gene D Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism India*, California, University of California Press, 1959, p. 38.

when Ashleigh reached Bombay. During the delay in deportation he was able to contact Dange and other leftists in Bombay. Besides this some Muhajirs whom Roy had helped to train in Tashkent and Moscow had been arrested on their way back to India by the British police with the help of Afghan Amir, and many of them confessed that they had worked with communists only as a means of alive and getting back to India, In Lahore Gulam Hussain started an Urdu paper called Inquilab. During this period Comintern wanted to create a space for the communist propaganda within the Indian National Congress. This was evident in a series of articles in Advance guard (the name was changed to Vanguard, in October, 1922, in the hope of circumventing police interception) during the summer and fall of 1922. It included those Indians who had already accepted communist ideology were to form an opposition block within the congress and try to capture the leadership. Besides this, plan also intended to propagandize the congress man with liberal social views.<sup>27</sup> In a letter to SA Dange dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1922, Roy revealed his plan, and the part the CPI was to play. The opposition bloc should be a legal mass party embracing all truly revolutionary elements; it should have a non offensive name that would not raise the communist body, but its political direction should be in the hand of “Communist and Socialist who alone can be the custodians of the interest of toiling masses”. At the same time an illegal Communist party should continue to exist side by side with this legal organization.<sup>28</sup>

Immediately after the withdrawal of the noncooperation movement Roy stated, “the liberal bourgeoisie, which stand the head of national movement, will not play the revolutionary role which European bourgeoisie played in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. He further stated that the bourgeoisie in India

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.42-46.

become a revolutionary factor, only if the imperialist rulers bolt and bar its economic development.<sup>29</sup> By criticizing the Indian National Congress he further emphasized that the more the British government makes concession to the Indian bourgeoisie, the more ambitious the bourgeoisie becomes.<sup>30</sup> To Roy, the bourgeoisie knows quite well that it is necessary to make compromise with imperial capital, till the time come when it will be in a position to openly contend for the right monopoly of exploitation with the foreigner.<sup>31</sup> To Roy, the propertied middle class, which eventually dominated in England as a result of the reform bill and the failure of the Chartist movement did not occupy an identical socio-political position in India today. To Roy, it has been demonstrated on various occasions during the last three years, that the mass movement cannot always be kept within the limit set according to the convenience of the bourgeoisie.<sup>32</sup> To him, there were signs of the large scale participation of workers and peasants, who were steadily emerging from the first confusion of the social upheaval. The inevitable consequence of these tendencies was the eventual divorce of the mass movement from bourgeoisie leadership. To him, the bourgeois nationalism will end in the compromise with imperial supremacy, and the liberation of India will be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants, consciously organized and fighting on the grounds of class struggle.<sup>33</sup>

Three months after the withdrawal of the non cooperation movement, in an editorial in Vanguard, Roy maintained that the Indian movement, instead of helping the masses to develop economic and social consciousness,

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<sup>29</sup> G. Adhikari, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-410.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

their ignorance has been relied upon for intensifying the political struggle. It further stated, instead of putting itself at the head of the spontaneous current of energy, the national congress has greatly dissipated its leadership by acting contrary to it. It added that the movements were not created the by leaders, instead leaders were created by the movement. The paper opined that leaders of the noncooperation movement had so far failed to appreciate the real magnitude of the forces; they are called upon the marshal of the arena of the national struggle. To vanguard, this leaders failed to understand the forces which infuse fighting spirit in the hitherto inert masses. Instead of leading the rebellious masses in accordance with their immediate demands, these leaders sought to impose on them their own will and idiosyncrasies.<sup>34</sup>

Commenting on East Indian railway strike the same paper stated that this strike had demonstrated the power of mass action besides it showed how deplorably the mass energy is dissipated when an action of working class is directed or misdirected.<sup>35</sup>

The interesting feature of the Comintern document at that time was its attitude towards Gandhi and his form of struggle. The best example of this was the May 15<sup>th</sup> edition of Vanguard. In this they stated “As a philosopher, Gandhi is neither original nor unique. He merely reiterates in an age peculiarly out of tune with his teaching, the ancient doctrine of Hinduism whose ramifications are spread through the world and which are spread at various times to inspire the prophets and saints of other hands”.<sup>36</sup> Like Tolstoy, who was himself fed upon Hindu philosophy and whose place in the revolutionary movement of Russia is peculiarly similar to the role of Gandhi.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> M.N., Roy, ‘The Vanguard’, in Adhikari, *op. cit.*, *DocumentedHistory...*, pp. 433-434.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

In the mean time the same article of Vanguard stated that “Mahathma in jail is more powerful than Mahathma free”.Not alone for the constant impetus it gives to the Indian nationalism by working upon the sympathetic indignation, but because in jail his qualities sainthood can radiate at their fullest and best uncongested by the exercise of those more worldly faculties of political leadership in which Gandhi was not conspicuously successful.<sup>37</sup>

The same vanguard which wrote on India on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1922 stated “in India the struggle for national liberation overshadowed all the other struggle; therefore, all efforts should be bent first to secure the freedom of the nation” it further stated since the freedom will give unrestricted scope for the development of social revolutionary forces making for more fundamental aspects of the struggle. The national war would be waged side by side with the class war. This journal further stated in the first stage of the class struggle; trade union played an important role. But such unions are formed as the organized expression of working class demands and not as the constitutional or charitable associations.<sup>38</sup> Commenting on noncooperation movement, it stated that this movement was actuated by lower middle class ideals. This paper stated no revolutionary principle making neither for a social readjustment nor even for radical situation was to be found in it. Prior to the fourth congress Roy stated “it has decided to have a conference here as early as possible. In this conference the representatives from various colonial countries who were in agreement with the international were to be invited”.<sup>39</sup> While explaining the condition for the congress Roy stated that the

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 438-39.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 486-87.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

communist has to utilize the break in the situation created by the dead lock in the congress party.

The editorial in vanguard dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 1923, made an assessment of the Indian National Congress. In this it stated “with all its desire to enlist the support of the masses, and with all its virtuous scheme of uplifting the downtrodden, the congress as a body will remain a bourgeois political organ. It will never be able to lead the workers and peasants in the revolutionary struggle for national freedom... therefore the organization of party of the workers and peasants has become an indispensable necessity. The communist of India is called upon by history to play this role”.<sup>40</sup> It further stated that only under the banner of communist party that the masses can be organize and lead in the national struggle as the first stage of a great revolutionary movement for liberation. It stated that the communist would fight as a part of national congress; by fearless criticism, vigorous agitation and constant propaganda. To this editorial the communist had to cooperate with every social element which was objectively antagonistic to the imperialist domination and asked the communists to stand shoulder to shoulder with every political party so long as it carries on the struggle against foreign domination.<sup>41</sup> In the words of Overstreet and Windmiller, this article showed a real shift in the position of Comintern and MN Roy from their earlier stand which they had taken few months ago. After the Gaya congress Roy had two basic objectives he wants the Indian communists to meet and form an all India organization. He also wanted to bring a small delegation of Indian communist to Europe for a conference. In February 1923, Shingaravelu Chettiar of madras issued a manifesto in preparation for the All-India conference.

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Overstreet and Windmiller, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

When the fifth plenum was convened, it faced two important questions concerning India. The first was the question of the attitude of the Comintern towards the Indian National Congress. The other important concern was the type of “direct contact” that should be maintained with the ECCI. The chairman of the colonial commission was Dorsey the American delegate. To him, in India the movement was now in a process of transition, finding new form and tactics to correspond with real basic revolutionary national movement in India. The old Gandhi movement of non violence and noncooperation has collapsed and was followed by the Swarajist party with its policy of parliamentary “Obsession” the party has come into the point of collapse and is now tending to decompose into a small centre group between the bourgeois party on the one side and revolutionary mass movement on the other. The masses of India were discontent with the Swarajist Programme of self government and they were demanding the separation from the British government. To the commission it was necessary for the Indian Communists to continue to work within the National Congress and in the Left Wing of the Swaraj Party. To the commission all Nationalist Organizations should be changed into a mass revolutionary party. Thereby create an All India anti imperialist bloc. In its resolution the commission directed their efforts towards securing leaderships, over the masses of the peasantry, to encourage the organization and amalgamation of trade unions, and to take over the leaderships of their entire struggle. The plenum approved the formation of a “mass revolutionary party” but it indicated that it should be made up of “all nationalist organizations”.<sup>42</sup>

While intervening in this debate, Stalin made it clear that the time has come to raise the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in liberation struggle in the colonies such as India, whose bourgeoisie was conciliatory

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.74.



(with British imperialism) and the victory whom (ie., over the conciliatory bourgeoisie) is main condition for liberation from imperialism. Because of this Comintern congress was not able to adopt a resolution on the colonial question.<sup>43</sup> In the mid twenties the communist sympathizers in India faced an important challenge that they did not have an organizational framework, inspite of some futile attempt made in 1925 under the leadership of Sathya Bhakt in Kanpur. It did not succeed. Even Sathya Bhakt who initiated this meeting had left the movement. His idea of a National communism was not accepted by other delegates in the Kanpur meeting. Similarly the British government took some steps which were aiming to curve the embryonic communist movement in India. They introduced different conspiracy cases like the Peshwar and Meerut Conspiracy cases. It created an unfavorable condition for an open functioning of the Indian Communist party. Likewise the importance of agrarian struggle was not seriously understood by Indian Communists though India witnessed series of agrarian agitations from early 1920s. It was in this situation the importance of an open mass party was come in to the forefront of the Indian Communists. In this situation they needed a legal mass organization to propagate their political ideas. The background of these developments was largely constituted by the Gaya congress of 1922, where efforts were made by S.A. Dange, M. Singaravelu and others, with the helps Roy provided from abroad, to moot the idea of forming a kind of a people's party or a party of workers and peasants with a radical programme within the congress, which would broadly act as the legal wing of the illegal CPI. These were in a way stepping stone towards the formation of workers' and peasants' parties later, which emerged in different parts of the country between 1926 and 1928. Its beginning was actually made in 1922 at the Gaya congress where Dange, Singaravelu Chettiyar, Abani Mukahrjee and doctor

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<sup>43</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p.109.

Manilal (a regular contributor to Dange's *Socialist* and leaders of the strike struggles of the Indian emigrants in Fiji) met and decide to bring out a kind of Manifesto, which was commonly Known as Manilal's Manifesto, which was drafted by Dr. Manilal and Abani Mukharjee. To this Manifesto, the idea of a Labor and peasant party of India was proposed and it advocated the abolition of standing army and police. It also proposed the arming of the masses and the organization of Militia, while dissociating itself from the Bolsheviks. Eventually this Document in a redrated with the title manifesto to the Hindustan labourers and Kisans for organizing a political party of their own was issued on 1<sup>st</sup> may 1923 under the name of labour and Kisan party of Hindustan, which was authorized by M. Singaravelu and MSP Velayudhan, both introducing themselves as Indian Communists. This manifesto characterized by certain features. It was an attempt to formulate a concrete economic and political programme for national independence; it urged the formation of a leagal left-wing mass party inside the congress. It emphasized the idea of forming worker's and peasants mass organizations in defense of their class demands. It is simultaneously important to note that the first May day celebration in India took place under the auspices of this party in Madras and the flag was unfurled for the first time India in 1923.<sup>44</sup>

It was in this context that the communist leaders of India were exploring the possibility of a legal mass organization which will capture the Indian National Congress. It was in the form of workers and peasant parties which formed between 1925 and 27 in different parts of India. The executive committee of the communist international (ECCI), in its message to the first conference of workers and peasants in India said that the communist

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<sup>44</sup> P.C., Joshi, K. Damodaran eds., *A Documented History of the Communist Movement 1917-1922*, Vol-II, New Dehi, Sunrise Publication, 2007, pp. 425-427.

international hailed the first working class party of India. It further said; as bourgeoisie lack the courage to head the struggle [for freedom] the working class must come forward an independent political force to take up the leadership. To the ECCI the workers and peasants were to cooperate with and participate in other political movements directed against imperialism, they were “henceforth to act through their class party”.<sup>45</sup> It was on the basis of these members of the communist party played an active role in the activities of workers and peasant parties in different parts of India.

In February 1926 the first conference of the Bengal Workers and Peasants’ Party (WPP) was held in Krishna Nagar, Nadia district of Bengal. It stated that its main objective was the complete independence of India based on the complete equality of women and men, through the use of violent and non- violent means. It sated “whereas it has been proved that (foreign) capitalism cannot be compelled to implement India’s national demand by the policy and practice of obstructionism in the Indian legislative assembly and in the provincial councils, and in so as there is no hope of this policy succeeding even when the legislative assembly, etc. are controlled by the members of the Swaraj party”.<sup>46</sup> The resolution further stated, it was not possible to bring about an improvement in the condition of the masses by flattering the bureaucracy; whereas the freedom of unarmed masses, who had been tied down by a thousand bounce with the help of native army, could be won by means of secretly collected weapons, and whereas it has been proved that the only effective way of winning freedom for an unarmed nation was the use of dynamic force of militant mass movement, which was many time more

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<sup>45</sup> Aditya Mukherjee, ‘The Workers and Peasants Parties 1926-30’, in Bipan Chandra Ed., *IndianLeft*, Delhi, Vikas, 1983, p.4.

<sup>46</sup> G. Adhikari, ‘The Workers and Peasants Party Emerges’, in Adikari, *Documents of the History of Communist Party of India*, Vol.II, New Delhi, People’s Publishing House, 1978, p.157.

powerful than bomb and pistols.<sup>47</sup> It further emphasized that India's emancipation was not possible unless the declassed educated youth joint the forces of the workers and peasants. To it the one and only way to achieve India's national demand was to organize those who from eighty per cent of the country's population. The Bengal WPP declared its resolve to fight for the interest of workers and peasants in their respective unions. It also decided to co-operate with all other parties for their achievements of their objectives. It demanded that All modern machine factories, mines, railways, telegrams, tram ways and steamers, etc., ie., all means of public utilities, should be worked not for profit but for the good of the country and will be converted into national property and be run by their respective employees through their organizations. It demanded for a law which compels the employers to provide housing for workers, determining their conditions of work (hours, etc.) To render them medical assistance, etc.<sup>48</sup>

While writing in 1927 Muzaffar Ahmad made it clear that a conflict was inevitable between those who, though they work and produce, cannot get food and those who, without working and producing, still have enough to eat and lay by. To him, the congress leaders were saying that there is no such struggle in India, and that it was imported from Europe, and there by managing things by means of bluff and make believe. To him, the condition of the All India Congress was yet more pathetic. He accused the congress affiliated AITUC of run by the middle class leadership; these leaders mostly have fastened themselves on the workmen like evil spirits, to subserve their own interest. Many of them like to mix more with the proprietors than with the workers. He contended that this leaders like more to break a strike than to bring about one to redress of the wants and grievances of workers. "When

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158-160.

they mix with the workers they could not be one of them. They remember they are superior, of an aristocratic class and merely seek to benefit the workers out of pity. Of the better men among these, somewhere philanthropists, and believed in peace. Very few had any idea of revolution possibly they have not even that".<sup>49</sup> By stating this he concluded that a real workers movement had not so far began in India as there was no conception of a radical change. Many of them did not know much of the present revolutionary trade unions; they were not able to build up labor leaders from among the laborers. By stating this reasons he stressed the relevance of a new party which he characterized as peasants and workers party which not only include the proletariat but also include the peasants and the lower middle class who had joined the national movement were largely dissatisfied with autocracy of the capitalist.<sup>50</sup>

Like Bengal, the WPP was also formed in Bombay during February 1927 by changing the name of congress labor party. It adopted a programme which concerned with immediate demands and grievances of workers and peasants. It selected Dhundiraj Thengdi being the president, S.S. Mirajker as its secretary, Jhabvala and S.V. Ghate as members of the executive committee and Pendse, Joglekar, Nimbkar and J.B. patel as group leaders in charge of congress, trade union, education and peasant's activities. Like the Bengal Workers and Peasant Party this party also accused the congress of ignoring the interest of the workers peasants and the middle class. They also accused the congress of supporting the interest of the imperialist and Indian monopolies. To the party the peasantry which constituted the bulk of the population, were exploited in three different means they were in the form of

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<sup>49</sup> Muzaffar Ahmad, 'New Party', in Adhikari, Vol.XI, Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1979, pp. 178-180.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

the excessive taxation, high rents, and through the exaction of usurious moneylenders, and in consequence of their illiteracy, and the dual character of their oppression, were incapable of taking the steps towards their emancipation from these evils. To the party like the peasantry the industrial workers were subjected to intense exploitation, in the absence adequate protective legislation, and the lack of means to enforce that which exists, has failed to organize effectively its own struggle, against these conditions, and has allowed its trade-union movement to fall largely under the leadership of middle class element which exploit it for their own communal, political or personal ends. To the party the subjection and exploitation of workers and peasants cannot be overcome until economic and political power had been taken from the rulers and transferred to the workers and peasants. This party was established and decided to work within the Indian National Congress to liberate the congress from the imperialists and the national bourgeoisie. To the party the attainment of the complete independence was a necessary precondition for attainment of its objectives and it decided to cooperate with all parties and organizations for this. To the party the swaraj meant the public ownership of all means of production distribution and exchange.<sup>51</sup>

Like other parts of India attempt was made to form a party of the workers and peasants in Lahore. Ghulam Hussain and Samsuddin Hassan issued a circular on April 27, 1923. It declared that a conference would be held in Lucknow on June 30, the name and programme of the party will provide later. Copies of the circular were sent to Singaravelu Chettiar-(Madras), SA Dange-(Bombay), Samboornanada in Banaras, Muzaffer Ahemad, Hamidullah Khan in Calcutta, R.S Nimkar in Pune, Dr Manilal in Gaya, S. Amarsingh (secretary Gurudwara Prabandak Committee, Amrithsar),

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<sup>51</sup> 'The Workers' and Peasants' Party', in *ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

Master Tarasingh, Bhai Pirara Singh and Sundar Singh of Akali Dal among of them.<sup>52</sup>

Besides organizing the workers and peasant party the other important strategy of the communist movement in India was to capture the leadership and control over the All India Trade Union congress which was established in 1920 from the right wing congress leadership. While writing on the question of Bombay lockout in his paper *The Masses of India* in 1926, MN Roy attacked the ineffectiveness of the AITUC leadership on the issue of Lockouts. He wrote “ as a matter of fact several mills have in the meanwhile been closed down. The Trade Union Congress did not say a word as to how the workers should meet the situation. “Hundred per cent organization” is the only remedy prescribed. But “Hundred per cent organization” is a far cry. What should be done to meet the imminent capitalist offensive? Obviously it should be to rally entire labor movement in support of the of Bombay workers in case their wage will again be attacked, even after the capitalist gain their point in the abolition of the excise duty”.<sup>53</sup> To him, the most effective check in any further attack on the wage of the Bombay workers should be the preparation for a general strike all over the country. To him, but such a revolutionary step could not be taken by a Trade Union Congress which is against even partial economic strike. To him, the correct tactics in connection with the Bombay lockout should be to lead the workers from defensive to offensive. His attack on the trade union congress was also due to its existence on the concept of trusteeship which pursues the workers to work for the factories without a mass agitation. The trade union congress stands on the

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<sup>52</sup> Harkishan Singh Surjeet *et al.*, *op. cit.*, *et al.*, *History of Communist Movement India...*,p. 65.

<sup>53</sup> M.N., Roy, ‘The Masses of India’, Vol.II, in *ibid.*, p. 61-64.

dominion status was also be in attacked by Roy.<sup>54</sup> While writing in International Press Correspondence (*Inprecor*) in February 1926 G.A.K Luhani also supported MN Roy on his stand on the trade union movement in India. To him, the class conscious British proletariat extending its hands to the workers of India was indeed an example of proletarian world unity for common fight against exploitation. He distinguished between the attitude of the British working class and the attitude of the Labor party in England. He characterized the labor policy of British labor party towards India was identical with the imperialist Labor policy. To him, the political party of Indian labor cannot be the type of party like the labor party in England. He maintained that Indian labor has to organize itself into mass party of workers and peasants- a party which while carrying on the day to day fight against the capitalist and the landlords should adapt itself as an instrument for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialist domination and class exploitation. The reformist illusion of “constitutional” advance should not have a place in its tactics.<sup>55</sup>

During this period the two important components of the communist strategy was the formation of the workers and peasant parties on the one hand and their effort to capture the All India Trade union congress from its right wing leadership. In 1927 USSR Central Trade Union send its fraternal greeting to the Trade union movements in India. In this they expressed their support to the rising trade union movement in India. To it, National and social emancipation were closely linked and possible to achieve only by establishing united front of all workers restoring international trade union unity. Close relationship between trade unions of USSR and India serves vital interest of

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> G.A.K Luhani, ‘Political Organization of Labor in India’, International Press Correspondence (*Inprecor*), 1926, Vol.VI, No. 12, pp. 67-72.



workers of both countries.<sup>56</sup> The important feature of communist movement of this period was the emphasis given on the establishment of the peasant and working class organization which will fight the British Imperialism and gain control over the compromise “national bourgeoisie” and the reformist trade unions.

This development led to the formation of Kirti Kisan Party in Punjab. In late 1920s there had an effort to develop an alternative movement which was based on socialism and communism. This was led by Hindustan Republican Association HRA (later renamed as Hindustan Socialist Republican Association). The late 1920s saw severe economic depression followed by intense labour upsurge. The Indian working class was increasingly coming under radical left influences leading to the formation of a number of labour unions with distinct communist leanings, Besides there were youth movement in 1928 and 1929, raising the demand for complete independence and radical social and economical changes. Disillusioned with ‘verbal radicalism’ of the congress the members of Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) which was rendered weak and powerless after Kakori conspiracy case, decided to rebuild the organization. Most of the experienced revolutionaries were behind the bars and the rest of them were underground to escape arrest. In these circumstances, the young members of the HRA led by Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Shiv Varma, Chandra Sekhar Azad, and Vijay Kumar Sinha undertook the task of reorganizing the party. a meeting of the important members was held in 1927 at Kanpur, primarily for this purpose. Bhagat Singh and VK Sinha made extensive tours to Punjab, Bihar to mobilize support. An important meeting for the formation of the central committee of HRA was held on September 8 and 9, 1928 at Ferozshah Kotla at Delhi. This was a crucial meeting which was attended by ten participants from UP, Bihar,

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

Punjab and Rajasthan. The meeting resulted in the adoption of revolutionary programme with an advanced revolutionary socialist outlook for their organization. Finally Bhagat Singh and his supporter succeeded in convincing their critics who agreed to rechristen the association by including socialism as one of the main goals. In this Bhagat Singh was assisted by Sukhdev, who had a sharp mind and had a good study of communism. The truth is that Sukhdev and VK Sinha were the chief thinkers and men lay down the principles of the party. Thus the name of the Hindustan republican association was finally changed to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. The HRA aimed at the establishment of a Federal republic of the united states of India, where the basic principle would be adult suffrage, while the HSRA, as indicated by its name, proclaimed the goal of establishing a socialist republic.<sup>57</sup> Much before this, Bhagat Singh and his Associates formed Noujawan Bharat Sabha in Lahore with a goal of establishing a socialist republic in India. Bhagat Singh was convinced that the salvation of India lay not merely in political independence but in economic freedom. The newly formed HSRA was divided into two departments the military and the organizational wings. The organization wing was to have type of members, the active workers and the sympathetic supporters. The active wing entrusted with the responsibility of collecting arms, and conducting the propaganda and organizational work for the party, the supporters and sympathizers of the party assigned the duty of contributing and collecting funds for the party, giving shelters to the active workers and propagating the ideals of the party. Chandra Sekhar Azad was, in Absentia, appointed as the commander of the military wing called the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. He could not attend the September meeting but gave his consent to all the suggestions of the Bhagat Singh. A

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<sup>57</sup> S. Irfan Habib, *To Make the Deaf Hear, Ideology and Programme of Bhagat Singh and His Comrades*, Delhi, Three Essays Collective, 2007, pp. 29-30.

central committee was formed with two members each from United Province, Bihar, Punjab and one from Rajasthan. Jhansi was to be the central office of the party. It was also decided that the soldiers of the HSRA will leave their homes, keep no contact with their families and devote full time and energy for the party work. All religious communalism and ritualism were banned.<sup>58</sup>

When Lala Lajpat Rai died due to the police atrocities during the Anti-Simon commission demonstration, the HSRA decided to kill Scott, the chief police executive, who was present on the spot. The revolutionaries had two things in mind; first they wanted to convert the popular movement in to a violent one, and secondly to show to the world that India has not taken the death of Lala Lajpat Rai silently. They also wanted to confirm by this action the existence of an active revolutionary party in India. A meeting of the revolutionaries was held on December 8 and 9 at Lahore to chalk out the plan of action. Apprehending threat of his life Scott took shelter in the police training school from where he seldom ventured out. Later the revolutionaries chose Saunders, his deputy as the target and his movements was watched for several days. December 17, 1928, was fixed for Saunder's murder and Rajguru, Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekar Azad were entrusted with the responsibility. A great sensation spread in Lahore at the murder of the Deputy Superintendent of police. The next day, red leaflets written in English were distributed by the HSRA men saying "Bureaucracy alerted. Lala Lajpad Rai's death is avenged by the murder of JP Saunders". They stated their objective in the leaflet saying; "we are sorry for shedding the blood of a man but it is necessary to shed blood on the altar of revolution, they aim at such a revolution which would end exploitation of man by man."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33

Bhagat Singh reached Calcutta during the congress session week where he came in contact with Bengal revolutionaries. Bhagat Singh met Trilokya Chakravarti, Praful Ganguli, Prof. Jyothi Gosh and other important leaders and renewed contacts with Jathindra Nath Das, who was a member of HRA in 1924-25. He requested Jathin Das to teach few of associates the art of Bomb making. Jathin Das readily agreed and so a factory was started at Agra. Two houses were hired, one at Nai-Ki-Mandi and another one at Hing-Ki-Mandi. They prepared some explosive which were used in the in the Assembly bomb case of 1929. The revolutionaries stayed at Agra for some time. They got an opportunity to read many books connected with the revolutionary movement. Bhagat Singh soon established a small library by collecting books from his friends and supporters. Though small, the library was rich in literature, mainly comprising books on economics. There were some books regarding the trade union movement, explosive and bomb making, and a few life sketches of Russian revolutionaries. The revolutionaries in Agra, whole studying this literature also had intense ideological debates within the groups. The HSRA planned to bomb Assembly hall if the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill were passed by the special power of the governor-General.<sup>60</sup>

The Naujawan Bharat Sabha organized a 'National week' in the end of March 1928 at Lahore. During this week Public meeting were held, the most important one being on March 28 where SA. Dange and Philip Spratt spoke on the meaning of Indian independence. In the same month, a poster was brought out by Kirti Kisan Sabha with the signatures of Bhagat Singh, and Sohan Singh Josh. In which it was decided to hold a Youth Conference in Jallianwalah Bagh on April 11-13, 1928. A few days before the conference, Bhagat Singh went to meet one of the signatories of the poster, Sohan Singh Josh at Amritsar in the Kirti Office. Sohen Singh Josh welcomed the

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

participation of Naujawan Bharat Sabha in the conference. The conference was held under the president-ship of Kidar Nath Sehgal, who was an associate of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha Lahore. It was decided in this conference that the Youth of Punjab should be organized in a central body called the Naujawan Bharat Sabha of Punjab, with headquarters at Amritsar instead of Lahore. With this decision, the policy of the Sabha was definitely enlarged, 'to work in association with Kirti group at Amritsar and thus to include devolution of the power by revolution or other methods to the peasants and workers. In this conference it was also decided that the sabha will have a provincial organization with a branch in each district, Tehsil, Thana and village and special emphasis was laid on work in the rural areas.<sup>61</sup>

Only a month after this decision, the Sabha tried to stir up an agrarian agitation over the failure of harvest, a meeting was organized at village Jahman in Lahore district on May 23, 1928 to discuss the failure of the crops. The meeting was addressed by prominent extremist leaders like Dr. Sathyapal, MA Majid and Nidar Nath Sehgal. This meeting was presented as a congress meeting but was actually inspired by the Naujawan Bharat Sabha. The Sabha collaborated with the congress party whenever it fought for the betterment of the peasants and workers.<sup>62</sup> As their earlier plan HSRA activists threw Bomb before the Central Legislative Assembly. Nobody was harmed in this but they served a notice there stating that it was done to make 'the deaf hear'. Though it was a short lived organization Hindustan Socialist Republic Association presented an alternative socio-economic programme for India which was based on Marxist principles. During the period between 1929 and 1930 the Jailed HSRA activists had maintained contact with those prisoners who were imprisoned under the Meerut conspiracy case. This interaction

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

inculcated many with the ideas of Marxism. Hanging of the HSRA leaders like Bhagat Singh and its response by congress had played a major role in determining the future course of politics in India.

As stated earlier the strategic shift in the Communist International due to the sixth congress had made a decisive impact upon India. MN Roy had played an important role in formulating the new line on colonial countries. While presenting a draft resolution on India in 6<sup>th</sup> congress MN Roy argued that the nationalist movement during the last five years has been greatly influence by the changing relation between imperialism and Indian bourgeoisie. Successive measures were taken to promote capitalist development in India have coincided with a steady decline in the political demand of bourgeois nationalism. To him, one stratum of the bourgeoisie followed another in to cooperation with imperialism on the basis of the hegemony of the imperialist in proportion has concession to native capitalism was made. To him, the bourgeois nationalist movement is split up in to half a dozen parties all which were against revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The resolution stated that the Indian national movement as representing the bourgeoisie and led the ideological spokesman of native capitalism, was committed to the programme of “Dominion status”. The desire of the Indian bourgeoisie was to make a partnership. To the resolution the Indian bourgeoisie did not under took anything, but a constitutional struggle against imperialism. Even though this was suppressed by imperialism, it maintained that the national bourgeoisie did not advocate a revolutionary struggle for nationalism. The main plank in the platform of the national congress was constitutional reform, fiscal autonomy and protection for the indigenous industries. In every critical movement they directly or indirectly rallied on the side of imperialism as against the danger of revolution. The congress pointed out that the abandoning of resented and ruinous policy of free trade in favor of the principle of protection has cleared

the ground for the collaboration between imperialism and the nationalist bourgeoisie.<sup>63</sup>

To G. Adikari the congress has accepted the programme of the communist international. Upon entering into the period of decisive class battle, the Comintern unfolds the militant banner of communism. To him, it uses this dialectical method to analyze the origin, development and doom of capitalism. It uses this method to reveal the struggle of the classes and the historic role the proletariat as the gravedigger of capitalism and the builder of socialism. According to this congress there were three type countries in regard to revolutionary development. According to this the first type includes (Germany, Britain, North America) etc. where, the direct transition to the proletariat dictatorship is possible as well as necessary, and also where, the complete confiscation of the whole big industry of the banks and the railways etc. To the congress the organizing of a considerable number of soviet estates in the rural districts will be a task of first category of colonies. To it the second type belong such countries of medium level of capitalist development (Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, and the Balkan countries. etc.) with considerable remnants of semi-feudal relations in agriculture, with a certain minimum of material prerequisite which were necessary, for socialist construction, with a not yet fully completed bourgeois democratic transformation. The third type belong the chief colonial countries (china, India etc.) where a certain development of industrialization exist, but in the majority of the cases it was inadequate for purposes of independent socialist construction. In this situation the dictatorship of the proletariat was possible only after a preparatory stage and only as a result of the growth of the bourgeois democratic into the socialist revolution. The most important feature

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<sup>63</sup> M.N., Roy, 'The Role of The Bourgeoisie in The Nationalist Movement', in Adikari, *op. cit.*, pp. 580-81.

of this congress resolution was its emphasis on the theory of socialism in one country. The congress stated the Comintern points to the peaceful planned building of socialism in the USSR, demonstrating to the oppressed mankind that it is possible and necessary to build socialism even in one country in which power has passed in to the hands of proletariat, and in which the dictatorship of the proletariat prevails. Even though the sixth congress stipulates a transitional period before the establishment of socialism it is interesting to note that it bluntly characterized the all social democratic parties in the colonies as the agent of imperialism.<sup>64</sup>

It was on this basis the Indian National Congress and its left-wing was characterized as national reformist. Here an effort was made to identify the national bourgeoisie in the colonies with various social democratic parties of the advanced capitalist countries. The important weakness of the sixth congress resolution was an unfair comparison between the colonial country like India and a semi-colonial country like China. As argued by Sashi Joshi the sixth congress had forbidden any connection with existing national movement. To her congress of the Comintern instructed the Indian communist that a single, illegal, independent and centralized party is the 1<sup>st</sup> task of Indian communists.<sup>65</sup> After this congress social democracy was characterized as social Fascism, especially the left wing of the social democracy. Comintern interpreted Fascism as the “paper tiger” and predicted the sudden fall of capitalism.<sup>66</sup> After the sixth congress the left-wing congress leaders of India like Javahar lal Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose were characterized as social Fascist and Nehru was expelled from the league against imperialism in

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 609-614.

<sup>65</sup> Sashi Joshi, *Struggle for Hegemony*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1992, p. 299.

<sup>66</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 140.



1929. As a part of the congress the communist party of India adopted a programme which ultimately separated it from the Indian National movement after 1929. During this period many leaders of Indian communist movement were arrested under the Meerut conspiracy case which aroused greater cares and disarray in the embryonic Indian communist party. On March 20, 1929, 31 communist leaders were arrested in different parts of India. Most of them were well known leaders in the trade union and working class movement. Of them, 13 were from Bombay, 10 from Bengal, 5 from United Province, 3 from Punjab and 3 were Englishmen. The arrested included eight members of the executive committee of the All India Workers Peasants' Party, their arrest was accompanied by thorough raids and house searches. Attempts were made to justify the case by denouncing all the arrested men as communists. The colonial administration was preparing to frame a 'conspiracy' case against communist organizers and their associates' months before they were arrested. For instance, in a telegram dated December 19, 1928, the British secretary of the state revealed to the Viceroy that the government was gathering information in connection with the 'proposed' conspiracy trial.<sup>67</sup> On March 20 1929, police arrested 31 leaders with the charges of conspiracy 'to deprive the Emperor over the sovereignty of British India under section 121-A of the Indian Penal code. They were; Muzaffer Ahmad (Calcutta), SA. Dange (Bombay), SV. Ghate (Bombay), KN. Joglekar (Bombay), G. Adhikari (Bombay), PC. Joshi (Alahabad), RS. Nimbker (Bombay), SS. Mirajkar (Dadar, Bombay), Shaukat Usmani (Bombay), MG. Desai (Bombay), Ayodha Prasad (Jhansi), KN. Sehgal (Lahore), Radharaman Mitra (Calcutta), SH. Jabwala (Bombay), DR. Tengdi (Poona), Gopan Chakrabarty (Dhaka), GR. Kadle (Bombay), Kishorlal Gosh (Calcutta), Arjun Atmaran (Bombay),

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<sup>67</sup> Harkishan Singh Surjeet *et al.*, *op. cit.*, *History of Communist Movement...*, p. 173.

Visvanat Mukharjee (Gorakhpur), LR. Kadam (Jhansi), Gauri Sankar (Meerut), Shamsul Huda (Calcutta), Daramvir Singh (Meerut), Philip Spratt (CPGB), BF. Bradley (CPGB). A few days later Amir Haidar Khan and Hugh Lester Huchinson included in this list.<sup>68</sup>

The sixth congress of the Comintern was an important watershed in the history of the communist movement in India. This congress gave a new direction to the communist movement especially in the colonial countries which were isolated from the broad national movement. In India after this congress the communist party and trade unions were by and large isolated from the civil disobedience movement from 1930-1934. It was during this period that a left wing leadership was emerging within the Indian National Congress. But this could not transform into a political movement. Like the Comintern the Indian Communist Party also characterise this left wing leaders as mere reformers and right deviationist. This situation averted a possibility of a constructive dialogue between the left wing Congress leaders and the Indian Communists, at least for some years. It was only after the Dutt-Bradly theses of 1936 the activities of the communist parties and trade unions were revived in India.

### **The Sixth Comintern Congress and Communist Movement in India**

The sixth congress of the Communist International, held in 1928 brought a significant shift in the policy of the Communist International. In this Congress the Comintern initiated a 'left extremist strategy' by adopting 'class versus class' approach. The important aspect of this congress was the discrediting of all social democratic movements by the Comintern and the characterization of it as 'Social Fascism'. This strategy had a deep impact upon the national and colonial question in different colonial countries

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

including India. This congress believed that the partial stabilization of capitalism was coming to an end that a period of exposition of real political and economic character of it. It noted that by upholding its class interest against imperialism the bourgeoisie of the colonies also uphold national interests and that the view about anti national poster of the entire national bourgeoisie were incorrect. To Reznikove, the sixth congress thesis characterized petite bourgeois parties as national revolutionary, but at the same time, it implied that they evolved in the direction of national reformism and had held the revolutionary character only in the initial stage. Accordingly the struggle against these parties for the hegemony over the peasantry was proclaimed as their priority. To the sixth congress, the left-wing of the national bourgeoisie was the chief danger for the future development of national liberation movement. To him, in many respects the period 1928-35 was a 'least opportunity' to many of communist movements in the east.<sup>69</sup>

This strategy of the Communist International impacted the communist movement in India like any other colonies. In this circumstance it is necessary to look the application of this strategy during the period between the sixth and seventh congress of the communist international. After this congress the social democracy had began to equate with Social Fascism. When the campaign against the right wing was stepped up; the left wing of the social democracy was denounced. As a result of this, the possibilities of Fascism were underestimated and it predicted the speedy collapse of world capitalism. To the 6<sup>th</sup> congress, the time for revolutionary seizure of power had arrived and the international proletariat is to be prepared for this situation for realizing this goal. Any attempt against this strategy was considered a

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<sup>69</sup> AB Reznikov, 'The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist International in The National and Colonial Question', in Ulinovsky Ed., *The Comintern and The East*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1979, pp. 187-196.

reformist deviation and an act of betrayal. For example, in Indonesia this approach led to the expulsion of Darsono, a front ranking leader of the Indonesian communist party. This was due to his stand for an understanding with the 'national reformists' in the struggle against Dutch rule, as there lacked a national bourgeoisie in Indonesia.<sup>70</sup> Till recently many historians viewed Indian situation after 1928 in the context of the relationship between Indian National Congress and the CPI. For example Sobhanlal Datta Gupta stated that, the position of the Comintern was conclusive that the entire colonial bourgeoisie was viewed as counterrevolutionary force. Likewise Jairus Banaji argued, in 1928, Comintern congress compared the characteristics of a class party with those of a mass movement. To him, the exceptional backwardness of the Indian communist party in its early formative phase was due to this under development of the consciousness of the working-class and it lacked a politically matured leadership in the period 1919-1930.<sup>71</sup> The important aspect of the Comintern strategy towards India was its stress on agrarian revolution. This aspect was visible in a manifesto of the Executive Committee of Communist International on India which they published in 1929. It declared the agrarian revolution is the pivot of Indian revolution. It believed that the Indian peasants were slowly becoming convinced that with all the great sacrifice they have made they have been betrayed, defeated and thrown in to the blackest slavery because they trusted the politicians and leaders of the national bourgeoisie.<sup>72</sup> To it, the

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<sup>70</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>71</sup> Jairus Banaji, 'The Comintern and Nationalism' in K.N., Panikker Ed., *Nationalism and Left Movement in India*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1980, pp. 232-233.

<sup>72</sup> 'Extract From an Executive Committee of Communist International (ECCI) Manifesto on The Revolutionary Movement in India', *Inprecor* Vol.VI, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1929, p. 649, cited in Jane Degras Ed, *The Communist International Documents*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, Vol.III, 1929-43, pp. 20-21.

revolutionary events in India were maturing at such a rapid pace that it would be wrong to have any kind of agreement with the bourgeoisie, who were trying to throttle the labour movement. While writing to the conference of the workers and peasants party in December 1928 the ECCI stated the proletariat struggle demands the creation of an independent class party of the proletariat, the uniting and raising of isolated actions of peasants to the highest political level, and the formation of a revolutionary block of workers and peasants party, but on the basis of cooperation in deeds between the mass organizations of the proletariat on the one hand and peasant leagues and committees on the other for the overthrow of the imperialist and the destruction of the political and economic basis of colonial exploitation and slavery. To it the main obstacle for this was the influence of opportunist bourgeois nationalism. For example the experience of the movement in Bardoli showed how great the danger is still that not only bourgeoisie, but even the users who buy out the peasant lands, find themselves able to subordinate the movement of the peasants and to utilize it for their own ends. To Comintern, 'the Indian toilers in their hard struggle are nearing the fulfilment of their great historic task. The proletariat now organizing its forces can rely on the support of the peasantry, of the poor of the town and of the oppressed and exploited of India for whom there was no salvation except as the result of the triumphant revolution'.<sup>73</sup> Based on this policy in 1930 Stalin characterized Indian national bourgeoisie including Gandhi as a class which relied on police bayonets for flooding the country with the blood of the people.<sup>74</sup> Another resolution on India, passed in 1930 the Comintern assessed the proletariat in India as an independent revolutionary force and that it has already started the struggle for hegemony.

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<sup>73</sup> 'Extract from a letter from ECCI to the All-India Conference of Workers and Peasants Parties, Meerut trial', 2 December, 1928, in *ibid.*, p.558.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

This Comintern strategy of peasant revolution was not well understood by the Indian communists. The Comintern documents itself stated that for a long time its only link with the Indian communists was through MN Roy.<sup>75</sup> MN. Roy was not in full agreement with the Comintern's strategy of an agrarian revolution in India. Instead he wanted to give more emphasis in organizing the trade unions. Leaders like Roy were not able to understand the role of agricultural revolution in the overall strategy of Indian revolution. Likewise the advanced working class was not a major force in India unlike the western industrialized countries. It was the attitude of the Indian communists rather than the Comintern's formulation which led to the disastrous consequence for the Indian communists for the next six year. The Comintern's idea of a peasant revolution was not properly understood by the Indian communists. The major impact of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress was the complete isolation of the embryonic Indian communist movement. It was during this period the prominent communist leaders of India were arrested in the Meerut conspiracy case. This added to the confusion. All these culminated in deep factionalism and reduced the independent role of the communist party as a leader of the Anti-imperialist struggle in India.

After the sixth congress the communist were asked to build an organized mass party which was free from all bourgeois influence', they were directed to withdraw from workers and peasants parties. There was a debate within the Comintern over the relationship between workers and peasants parties and the CPI. The Soviet Communist party was in favor of the withdrawal of the CPI members from different workers and peasant parties. At the same time CPGB was in favor of continuing support. At the same the Indian delegation has divided over this issue. But leaders like MN Roy argued for a mass legal party which is capable of organizing the workers and

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

peasants under its platform. At the end, the Comintern was decided to withdraw its support to the workers and peasants party. Even though the Comintern decided to withdraw its support to the workers and peasant parties communist leaders in India had continued with their preparations for an all India conference of workers and peasants parties which was held in Calcutta between 21 and 23 December 1928. To Jane Degras the decision taken by Comintern reached India a little bit later.<sup>76</sup> The Comintern characterized this organization as petite bourgeois outfits which interfered with workers and peasants movements. The idea of workers and peasants party was earlier formulated by MN Roy as legal mass organization to mobilize the workers and peasants under its leadership. The significance of this position lay in the fact that even in 1928 in the year of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress the communists in India were involved and connected with various Workers and Peasant parties. For example in Bengal the communist were so active within the workers and peasant parties even in the latter half of 1928. In September they issued a pamphlet entitled “Call to action” (which was said to be written by Philip sprat, a British communist deputed to India). This pamphlet stated, the workers and peasant parties were rising from a ground which consisted of the lower strata of the petite bourgeoisie, the unemployed, a section of nonco-operators and the remnant of the terrorist parties. It further stated, by the means of strikes, demonstrations, Harthal and the more laborious means of organizations and education, the class consciousness and solidarity of the masses could be raised to the level necessary for achieving the objective. It is also interesting to note that this pamphlet stated that the league against imperialism must be supported, and its propaganda for the alliance for revolutionary movement be assisted. Solidarity must be encouraged with the

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

Russian and Chinese revolution, particularly in the view of the danger of the war.<sup>77</sup>

Likewise, in Bombay both Muzaffer Ahemmad and Philip Spratt arranged instructional classes in order to expand the principle of Bombay WPP. As part of this C.G Shah delivered a series of lectures on Russian Revolution, imperialism, the class struggle etc. in Bengal also the Workers peasant's party did the same thing.<sup>78</sup> From this pamphlet it is clear that even in the middle of 1928 workers and peasants parties and the league against imperialism were used by communists in India as a platform of their political propaganda. They still considered the workers and peasant parties as the organization through which they can organize various social classes behind them. But the sixth congress denied this possibility to them. They were asked to keep away from the organizations like the workers and peasant party. This ultimately led to the political isolation of the communists from the broad politics of India. While calling for the establishment a centralized party, the Indian communists were asked to formulate their programme based on the slogans; general political strike, propaganda for an armed rebellion, soviets as organs of revolt, agrarian revolution, and the overthrow of imperialism.<sup>79</sup> The CPI's Draft programme of action was the reflection of this line. In October 1931, in a report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on India and in a letter from Eastern secretariat in August, 1932, on the occasion of the twelfth plenum of the ECCI, severe criticism against the "Left" wing in Indian congress continued. In launching this campaign the CPI was again reminded that the national congress, especially its "Left" wing led

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<sup>77</sup> Philip Spratt, 'Call to Action', in Subhod Roy, Ed., *Communism In India: Unpublished Documents- 1925-1934*, New Delhi, National Book Agency, 1976, p.54.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*



by Nehru and Bose, stood for the imperialist forces and strengthened the hands of British imperialism. This was evident in a letter of the ECCI on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1928. This letter stated that since the WPP's consisted predominantly of petite bourgeois elements, primarily intellectuals, this prevent the growth of an independent party of the working class, instead it suggested, the party structure would be strengthened by being associated with mass organization of the basic classes. Based on this letter the ECCI passed a resolution on the Indian question. In this the Indian communist were told that Gandhism had a counter revolutionary role, and the struggle against this is one of the main task of the Indian revolutionaries.<sup>80</sup> The Gandhi-Irvin pact and its endorsement at Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 and the decision of the congress to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> round table conference was considered by CPI as an important signs of betrayal of the anti-imperialist struggle by the congress.<sup>81</sup> As argued by Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, as far as CPI was concerned the effect of the new Comintern strategy was the organizational disorder and political isolation, as it happened in other countries too. Anyhow the 6<sup>th</sup> congress strategy created not small difficulties to the emerging Indian communist party. The British government skillfully utilized this emerging situation. The immediate effect of this move was the Meerut conspiracy case. Ever since 1920 the British Indian government was very much concerned with the so-called 'Bolshevik menace'. They considered Bolshevik ideas as the main danger to the British government in India. Inorder to counter this, British administration had taken number of measures. They created a separate department for dealing with the problem of Bolshevik menace and they also framed different conspiracy cases against communists during this period like the Lahore and Peshawar cases.

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<sup>80</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, pp. 139-142.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

It was in the Meerut conspiracy case which tried to create an impression of communist threat to the British government. The government argued that there was a communist conspiracy to overthrow the British rule in India. To them, this conspiracy was centered on Meerut. To the government, there was a branch of the workers and peasant party at Meerut. The place has been visited by British communist leaders like Philip Spratt and other important members who involved in the conspiracy.<sup>82</sup> As a result of this case all prominent communist leaders India were arrested and subjected to trial. Besides Indian communist leaders some British communists like Philip Spratt, Hutchinson and Bradley were arrested and tried in this case. Besides this the communist party was officially banned in 1930 and this was lifted only in 1942. In a reply to a question of Labor member J. Maxton, regarding the Banning of CPI, Sir S. Hoare the then secretary of the state said that the communist party was declared illegal on the ground that one of its objectives is the interference with the administration of law and order there by constituting a threat to the public peace. To the government, no other similar organization hitherto has been declared unlawful.<sup>83</sup> Based on this different provincial governments also took various measures in order to regulate the communist activities in their respective provinces. For example the government of Punjab banned organizations like The Anti-Imperialist League, the Punjab provincial Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha, the Punjab Kirthi-Kisan Party, the Amritsar District Kisan Sabha and The Punjab Kisan League as

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<sup>82</sup> 'Meerut Communist Conspiracy Trial- Home, Political, 1929', F.10, IV, cited in Subodh Roy *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>83</sup> 'Question and Answer in The Legislative Assembly; The Declaration of The CPI as an Unlawful Association and The Reason for Communist Ban, Sir S.Hoare's Reply in The House of Commons', London, July 1930, Home-Political, 1934, F.22/31, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 175-76.

illegal under the criminal law amendment act 1908.<sup>84</sup> Similarly the Bombay provincial government also took some measures to control the communist activities, for this they banned The Young Workers' League Bombay, the "Lal Bavta", Girni Kamgar Union Bombay, The Kamgar Vangmaya Prasarak Mandal Bombay, The Marxist league Bombay, The Bombay Provincial Workingclass Party, The G.I.P railway labor union Bombay, The All India Red Union Congress Bombay, The Mill Mazdoor Union Ahmadabad, The Bombay Girni Kamgar Union (Red flag) under the same act.<sup>85</sup> All of these measures had temporarily weakened the activities of communist movement in India at least up to 1936. Writing in 1934 M.G. Hallat, Intelligence Director made it clear that the communist propoganda has not yet made very much headway among the mill workers.<sup>86</sup> As a result of this it was isolated from the struggle of the masses. It is important to point out that while organizational weakness and political isolation were identified as two major problems that affected the CPI, during 1928-1936. It was only after the introduction of Dutt-Bradly thesis the communist movement in India could re-enter into the mainstream national movement.

The most important effect of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of the Comintern was its lack of engagement with the Indian National Congress. The Comintern's characterization of social democracy was used to denounce the movements like Indian National Congress. The analogy of the European social democracy

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<sup>84</sup> 'Letter From The Govt of Punjab to The Under Secretary of The State for India, No. 12467-34-9 (3)-S.B Dated; Simla E. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1934, Home Department, Fl no. 7/20/34- Political &K-W. 1934', Archives of Contemporary History, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), NewDelhi.

<sup>85</sup> 'Copy of The Letter From the Secretary to Govt of Bombay, Home Department to His Majesty's Under Secretary of The State for India, London No. S.D 2829, Dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1934', Archives of Contemporary History, JNU.

<sup>86</sup> 'Home-Political-1934,f.7/11&K.W.1,2&3, Proposed Legislation to Deal With Communism, Serial No.1/Letter From The Bombay Government, No.S.D 3132, Dated 31 June 1933', Subodh Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

was uncritically used to contest the organizations like Indian National Congress. This was visible in an article which published in *Inprecor* in 1934. This article stated that Nehru neither fights for independence nor for socialism as always claimed by him. It stated, “The truth of the matter is that Mr. Nehru disorganizes both the struggle for independence and the effort to build a communist party which would be able to organize and prepare a revolutionary camp to fight independence of the land and power, and clear the way to carry out the further battle for socialism”.<sup>87</sup> To International, Nehru’s policy was directed against the independence of the country and against socialism. They thought it was not accidental. This was an expression of the nature of the bourgeois nationalist reformist camp of which Mr. Nehru was one of the main left leaders.<sup>88</sup> The Comintern’s understanding in this period on India was that the bourgeoisie under the leadership of Gandhi was doing its best to exploit such slavish mentality and covering it up with phrases about ideals of humanity. Comintern criticized Nehru for recommending the idea of non-violence and passive resistance as the main dynamic forms of the struggle. He accepts Non-violence in theory and practice. This was sufficient for international to state that Nehru was a reformist and does not stand for independence.<sup>89</sup> This led to the expulsion of leaders like Nehru from the league against imperialism. This demolished a bridge between the anti imperialist national movement and the international communist movement at least for a temporary period of time. Besides they were kept aloof from the mainstream trade union movement because of this ‘class verses class strategy’. Thus, from 1928 to 1935 the communist movement in India was characterized by its organizational disarray and political isolation from the

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<sup>87</sup> ‘Whither Nehru’, International Press Correspondence (*Inprecor*), Vol-XIV, No-17, 1934, in Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

mainstream movement. Because of this strategy they failed to lead the anti imperialist struggle in its crucial period of time.

About this period there emerged a complex relationship between the Communist Party of India (CPI) and communist party of Great Britain (CPGB). On the one hand the CPGB's position on the workers and peasants' parties were rejected. On the other hand its position on the left-wing of the congress was accepted by the CPI. For example, writing in 1934 CPGB leader Philip Spratt argued that imperialism has taken a brutal and drastic attitude against the working class movement not only India but many countries of Europe and the colonies. Based on the sixth congress line he maintained that the Indian government had taken their advantage from this attitude and had declared all working class organization illegal and had arrested the labour leaders on false charge. By defending the CPI stands after the 6<sup>th</sup> congress he argued that the trouble of CPI was made more acute by the presence of reactionary labor organization such as the Roysts, AITUC and Bengal Labour Party. At a public lecture held in Jhansi on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1934 Spratt denounced capitalism and advocated its speedy demise in India. He described Fascism was capitalism's first gesture against the working class antagonism.<sup>90</sup> Commenting on the establishment of congress socialist party Spratt argued that the Congress Socialist Party should not be a party within the congress but should be established as an independent organization which will work outside the congress under the leadership of the working class.<sup>91</sup> Similarly Rajani Palme Dutt another leader of CPGB made more harsh criticism on the congress socialist party. Criticizing on the Bombay CSP programme in 1934 he argued "since the congress is the party of Indian bourgeoisie, this means that the proposed "socialist" programme and organization is to be

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<sup>90</sup> Note on Phillip Spratt, Dated 1.12.1934, cited in Subodh Roy, Ed., *op. cit.*, *Communism in India...*, p. 182.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

subordinated to the political leadership of the bourgeoisie. The result is the complete contradiction from any socialist point of view.<sup>92</sup> To him, the heart of socialism is the class struggle, the organization of independent political party of working class was separate from all other parties to fight for the overthrow of bourgeoisie, both imperialist bourgeoisie and the Indian bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat in India in alliance with poor peasants. But as far as the CSP was concerned, there was no word in the socialist programme. There was no word of dictatorship of the proletariat. There was no suggestion even the necessity of an independent political party of the working class. Criticizing the CSP programme Dutt continued, this programme in fact a gross and caricatured version of the line of “Economism” which was criticized by Lenin (the theory that in the period up to the bourgeois democratic revolution the task of socialist and working class organization lie in the economic sphere, while the political leadership of the fight against autocracy must rest within the bourgeoisie) there is nothing of the line of socialism. But it was the familiar line of class-cooperation of bourgeois politics in the working class.<sup>93</sup> To Dutt, the national bourgeoisie which led the congress campaign, alarmed at the overwhelming forces of the mass movement and menace to its own interest revealed by even this incomplete and largely strangled fight, calls off the whole campaign and moves to closer co-operation with British government. To him, the formation of the CSP should be situated in this context. To Dutt, it was a contrast between two opposing political lines, the line of revolutionary mass struggle and all class domination, and the line of capitulation to an alliance with imperialism against the mass struggle. While rejecting the idea of CSP, Dutt argued that the urgent task of socialists in India is to build an independent

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<sup>92</sup> Rajani Palme Dutt, ‘Congress Socialism: A Contradiction in Term, A Critic of The programme of Bombay Congress, Socialist Groups, 1934’, F. 18, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi. pp. 118-119.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p.120.

political party of the working class, in opposition to the British government, and in opposition to the bourgeois leadership of the national congress. The problem of Dutt's argument was that he made a parallel between the Congress Socialist party and the Kuomintang in China. That is why he underestimated the role of the leftwing congress leaders. Because of this attitude that CPI was unable to collaborate with the Congress Socialist Party till the Dutt-Bradley these.<sup>94</sup> To Ben Bradley, the congress socialists were the tamed agency of Indian bourgeoisie. This position directly influenced the CPI. In an appeal addressed to comrades, socialists, and revolutionary youths distributed at the all India conference of the CSP in Bombay in October 1934 the provisional central committee of the CPI reiterated its view that "the aim of national congress was to side track and week the revolutionary energy of a nation that was ahead of seething with revolt "a mass revolt that is threatening their very existence. In 1934, the Imrecor, in an editorial note on the draft political thesis of CPI, wrote that the treacherous bourgeoisie led by Gandhi, terrified at the prospect of national revolution is flinging itself into the arms of imperialism and appeal to stop this mass struggle. It wrote the 'left national reformist' (the congress socialist party, etc.) are striving to reconcile socialism and capitalism, and under the cover of confused Phases about the socialist states, support of the authority and leadership of Gandhi and his agitation of non violence.<sup>95</sup>

### **Imperialist United Front and Dutt-Bradley Thesis**

The situation created by the 6<sup>th</sup> congress generated a creative introspection within the communist movement in India. This was expressed by some communists in India. For example a confidential letter in 1929, send

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119-123.

<sup>95</sup> 'Central Committee of the CPI Comrades, Socialist and Revolutionary Youths', in PC. Joshi and K. Damodaran Eds., *Documented History of the Communist Movement in India*, Vol.XI, Archives of Contemporary History JNU.

to Comintern by the Meerut prisoners, highlighted the problem arising out of the Comintern's practice of sending Europeans as well as Indian emissaries to India without proper instructions and lack of proper understanding on Indian situation. They pointed out that the idea of building up a revolutionary movement in India without material and technical assistance had to be altered. Besides this, a secret report sent by G. Adhikari, on behalf of the underground leadership of the CPI to the Comintern in 1932 reflected the then existing situation in the Indian communist party after the 6<sup>th</sup> congress. While seeking the guidance from the Comintern he suggested the change of its method of activity in India. To him, "the existing cadres and groups have fallen in to a wrath and cannot either extricate themselves or go unitedly forward. It is only if the Communist International leads as the supreme leader and moves on the lines we have ventured, we think matters can be set right, and local initiative and response will be forthcoming in proper measure and in the right direction and a Communist Party will be built which will earnestly and competently carry out the instructions of Communist International"<sup>96</sup> In this letter Adhikari put forward some suggestion to Comintern. To him, the international had to issue an open letter to the entire party membership and the members of the seceding groups. The open letter should be translated in to different Indian languages. To him, the International should review the work of the CPI from 1928 onwards. To Adhikari, this reorganization should be carried out in such a way as to be satisfactory as possible to the two groups, while minimizing friction.

In its draft political thesis of the CPI (1934) it was admitted that the communist had failed to realize the full significance of civil disobedience movement. In the same year a pamphlet was issued under signed by 52 signatories from Bombay to call a conference of all 'genuine' Anti-

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<sup>96</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, pp. 142-143.



imperialists to launch the Anti-imperialist united front. After discussing the revolutionary potential of various classes in Indian society, the conference raised the question of the organizational nature of the united national front. The first corrective came in the form of an open letter to Indian communist party by the three communist parties, Committees of the Communist parties of China, Britain, and Germany. After repeating the themes contained in the platform of action, the open letter expressed dissatisfaction with the general picture of communist movement in India.<sup>97</sup> According to these 'communist parties the biggest mistake committed by the Indian communists consisted in the fact that they stood away from the mass movement of the people against British imperialism. In spite of the fact that it was emphasized that the document of the communist movement had spoken about this mistaken policy, no change has yet been taken place and self isolation from the struggle for independence still exist.<sup>98</sup> One year after these three parties send their letter to Indian communist party, the central committee of the communist party of China wrote another letter. The letter suggested the CPI to apply the tactics of united front to build the hegemony of the working class in the national movement. This letter once again criticized the CPI for confusing the role of the party with the trade unions and asked them to take initiative to build the unity of proletariat by joining hands with the national reformist trade union organization.<sup>99</sup>

Likewise, most of the European communist parties were in complete disarray. The emergence of Fascist powers in different European countries created new problem for European communist parties and their existence

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<sup>97</sup> Bhagwan Singh Josh, 'Nationalism Third International and Indian Communist: Communist Party and the United Front 1934-1939', in Bipan Chandra, Ed., *Indian Left, Critical Appraisal*, Delhi, Vikas Publication, 1983, pp. 166-168.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-173.

itself were in danger.<sup>100</sup> These circumstances which emerged after the First World War created a situation which was conducive for the rise of Fascism in different parts of Europe. Countries like Germany had been deprived of their early power and positions through the Treaty of Versailles. Countries like Italy, though earlier it was part of the victorious alliance, did not get the expected benefit from the victory. This kind of situation created a condition for the rise of ultra nationalist forces in these countries. The Great Depression of the 1930s created a situation which intensified the rise of Fascism in different European countries. Both the communists and social democratic parties of the different European countries were unable to resist the onslaught of these forces. This created a debate within the Communist International.

By assessing the rise of Fascism in Germany Auto Kuusinen stated as a movement, Fascism's class composition was very mixed; but the class character of Fascism was shown in its policy, which was the policy of big bourgeoisie. The emergence of Fascism demanded a new kind of strategy from the international to counter its advance in April 1933 the ECCI while characterizing the social democracies as social Fascism demanded the united front of all classes and organizations of Germany to overthrow the Nazi-government.<sup>101</sup> In December 1933 the ECCI had organized its 13<sup>th</sup> plenum. The important matter of that plenum was the threat posed by Fascism and response against it. There took place a series of debate over the Anti-Fascist Strategy and the attitude towards social democracy. To Rammele, there were differences between Fascism and social Fascism, but they were not difference of principle; the two still twins. To him, social Fascism was a force dangerously great force in the struggle against the united front, against the communist

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<sup>100</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p.169.

<sup>101</sup> 'Resolution of The ECCI Presidium on The Situation in Germany, Rundschau Vol.II, 1-April-1933', In Jane Degras Ed., *The Communist International, Documents*, Vol.III, 1929-43, p. 255.

parties and against the USSR. To him, the success in the struggle against Fascism as well as war requires of all Comintern sections intensified activity in detaching the workers from the influence of the social democratic parties. To Bela Kun, since the victory of Fascism in Germany the contradiction between communism and social democracy has not become less; its gulf became wider and deeper. To him, the aim of united front tactics was to overcome the split in the working class by demonstrating to the masses that there were two camps in the class struggle; one to defend capitalism which social democracy belonged and the other to overthrow capitalism which was led by the communist parties. To Martinov, the only understanding of Leninist theory would enable the parties to avoid opportunist errors. Immediately after Hitler came to power, the social democrats talked of the united front with the communists, of the conclusion of a "Non aggression pact" with them. In reply to these maneuvers, The ECCI with a view to defending these lying maneuvers instructed the communist parties to conclude fighting agreements with the social democratic parties regarding the united front of struggle. To Vasiliev, the chief enemy is the bourgeoisie, Fascism in power but in order to overthrow Fascism the chief blow must be directed against the social democratic party. Togliatti thought there were aspects of Fascist ideology to which greater attention should be paid, particularly the strengthening of the state apparatus, the emphasis on nationalism, and its anti capitalists demagogy, design to win a mass basis. Manuilsky enumerated four main tasks for the communist parties; to do everything to prevent war against Russia, the French, German and Polish parties must do their utmost to prevent war between France and Germany and the establishment of Fascist dictatorship had to be prevented in those countries where the bourgeoisie had begun to give Fascist form to the state apparatus and to overthrow Fascist

dictatorship where they already existed.<sup>102</sup> This discussion showed that even during the period of Fascist occupation the Comintern viewed social democracy as responsible of the rise of Fascism. At the same time it allowed many European communist parties to enter into temporary agreements with the social democratic parties and advocate the strategy of united front.

It was in this context that the Communist International changed its strategy. This was done after the 7<sup>th</sup> congress when the international adopted the strategy of united popular front. Even before the 7<sup>th</sup> congress the signs of a strategic shift were visible from the early months of 1935. This new strategy was closely associated with Georgi Dimitrov, a Bulgarian Marxist. To Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, “the new material on Dimitrov now enables one to argue that, for him, it was not at all an easy task to formulate this new strategy, since it evoked opposition from within Comintern and the soviet communist party.

About this period the Comintern was in deep crisis by the sectarian outlook of the sixth congress towards social democracy. Dimitrov’s different approach on Social Democracy can be visible in a letter dated 1 July, 1934 to Stalin. In this, Dimitrov expressed doubt whether it was correct to characterize Social Democracy indiscriminately as Social Fascism, since such an understanding blocked the way to social democratic workers. He doubted whether it was correct to consider all left social democratic groups as the major threat. He also doubted whether it was correct to regard all leading cadres of the social democratic parties and of reformist trade union “indiscriminately as conscious traitors” of the working class.<sup>103</sup> Dimitrov

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<sup>102</sup> ‘Extracts From the Theses of The Thirteenth ECCI Plenum on Fascism, The War Danger and the Tasks of Communist Parties, December, 1934’, In *ibid*, p. 286.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*.

contended that it was even possible that in course of the struggle, quite a few of the leading factionaries of social democratic parties and reformist trade unions would “choose the path of revolution along with social democratic workers” and it was in the interest of the communists that it was necessary to facilitate this transition and accelerate the transition of quite a few leading factionaries of social democratic parties and reformist trade unions to the side of communists.<sup>104</sup> It was in this context we should understand the strategic shift after the 7<sup>th</sup> congress. His position on social democracy was not identical with the position of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of the Comintern. To Dimitrov, the International made serious mistake by underestimating the influence of social democracy on the workers and it also mistakenly characterize the social democrats as an undifferentiated mass of reactionaries.<sup>105</sup> On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1934, in the session of the commission on the point of the agenda during the preparation of the 7<sup>th</sup> congress Dimitrov stated, owing to the attack of the Fascism and under the pressure of workers and it was possible to transform a section of social democratic workers in to communists. To him, this process will be depended upon the tactics of the communists towards different social democracy. In the session of the commission on the 2<sup>nd</sup> point of the agenda of the 7<sup>th</sup> congress categorically stated that it was a mistake to believe that the world crisis of capitalism was the last crisis of the bourgeoisie which would necessarily close with the victory of the proletarian revolution. It is in this context that Dimitrov again raised the issue of social democracy and pointed out that a distinction had to be made between social democratic party and social democratic position, for a while there was a distinct possibility of a shift away from social democratic positions towards communism within the

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.173.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

party, the social democratic party would certainly remain and it was imperative to fight the ideology and practice of social democracy.<sup>106</sup>

By addressing the 7<sup>th</sup> congress Dimitrov pointed out the imperialist countries are trying to solve the problems of market by enslaving the weak nations, by intensifying colonial oppression and repartitioning the world anew by means of war; for this they need Fascism. They were striving to forestall the growth of the revolution by smashing the revolutionary movements of the workers and peasants and by undertaking a military attack against Soviet Union. For this they need Fascism. To him, unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale was the mighty weapons which render the working class capable not only of defense but also of successful counter attack against Fascism, against the class enemy.<sup>107</sup> To him, a powerful united front of the proletariat would exert tremendous influence on all other strata of the working class people, on the peasantry, the urban petite bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia. A united front would influence the wavering with faith in the strength of the working class. To Dimitrov, every steps of the proletariat of the imperialist countries on the road to unity of action in the direction of supporting the struggle for the liberation of the colonial peoples means transforming the colonies and the semi-colonies in to the most important reserves of the world proletariat.<sup>108</sup> To him, the communist international should not put any conditions for unity of action except one, that an elementary condition accepts all workers. The unity of action is directed against Fascism, against the offensive of capital, against the threat of the war,

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.174-175.

<sup>107</sup> Georgi Dimitrov, 'Fascist Offensive and the Task of The Communist International in the Struggle of The Working Class Against Fascism, Speech Delivered, August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1935', cited in Georgi Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol.II, Sofia, Sofia Press, 1972.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

against the class enemy. This approach of Dimitrov had influenced the final Comintern resolution at its 7<sup>th</sup> congress on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1935. While emphasizing the growth of the threat of Fascism in all capitalist countries, the 7<sup>th</sup> congress warned against the underestimation of the danger of Fascism. This congress endorsed Dimitrov's idea of Anti-Fascist united front. The only condition put forward by the 7<sup>th</sup> congress was a united action, nationally and internationally, was that it should be directed against Fascism, the capitalist offensive, war and the class enemy. This congress warned against the dangerous illusion about an automatic collapse of the Fascist dictatorship and points out that only the united revolutionary struggle of the working class at the head of all toilers will bring about the overthrow of the Fascist dictatorship.

Due to the imminent threat of Fascism, the 7<sup>th</sup> congress declares that in the present historic stage, it is the main and imminent task of the international labor movement to establish the united front of the working class for a successful struggle against the offensive of capital, against the reactionary measures of bourgeoisie, against Fascism.<sup>109</sup> To the congress, the joint armed struggle of social democrats and communist workers of Austria and Spain not only set a historic example but also demonstrated that the successful struggle against Fascism. The congress thought the aspiration of some social democratic workers for a united front with communists reflects their growing class consciousness.

This congress made a shift in the policy of various communist parties towards their social democratic counter parts, though publicly did not reject 6<sup>th</sup> congress. This congress made a qualitative shift in the policy of the

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<sup>109</sup> 'Fascism; Working Class Unity and the Task of The Comintern, Extract From the Resolution of The 7<sup>th</sup> Comintern, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1935', Archives of Contemporary History JNU.

international. It provided a chance to re-engage with various social democratic movements. This congress declared that Communists were prepared to carry their united front policy as far as taking part in a united front or popular front government, on an anti-Fascist platform, when the masses were in revolt against Fascism though not yet ready for a revolution under communist leadership. Such a government would take over the control of production, disband the police, establish a workers' militia, and give full freedom for communist party activities.<sup>110</sup>

This changing strategy made a profound impact upon the strategy in the colonial countries. Like Europe, Comintern was in favor of giving more autonomy to the communist parties in the colonies and it also favored for more flexible condition there. To him, the task in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was to form broad anti-imperialist united front. For him in India the communist party while maintaining their political and organizational independence, must carry on effective work inside the organization which takes part in the Indian National Congress facilitating the process of crystallization of a national revolutionary wing among them for the process of further developing the national liberation movement of the Indian people against British imperialism.<sup>111</sup>

To Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, For the European communist parties it was a welcome break with disastrous line of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress. But in the colonial countries the response to this new strategy was quite different, creating serious difficulties to work out the new line in practice for more than one reason. First, in the colonies, in the absence of the phenomenon of Fascism, forging a united front implied building up alliance between communist and

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Georgi Dimitrov, *op. cit.*, *Selected Works...*,



nationalist forces in the struggle against imperialism.<sup>112</sup> For example, Khalid Bakdash, who represented the Arab delegates on behalf of Syrian communist party in the 7<sup>th</sup> congress pointed out, the national reformist bourgeoisie in Syria has concentrated its efforts on demand for a constitutional democratic regime, which would assure them more or less large participatory power a certain freedom of action for national capital. To him, in this goal they had diverted the Anti-imperialist movement towards parliamentarianism and the conclusion of treaty between France and Syria.<sup>113</sup> At the same time he pointed out that the Arab communist should not refuse to back the anti imperialist demands advanced by the bourgeoisie, whatever its nature. On that basis, in Syria, the communist party must envisage the possibility of agreement or alliance between the various national reformist petite-bourgeois parties and the national bloc, the party of grand bourgeois of the liberal land owners and especially its left ally, the Hanano group, and similarly with the National Action League, the party of major intellectuals and of the landowners of the small industrialists. While the 7<sup>th</sup> congress signaled a change of line, in no document of Comintern it was stated that the strategy of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress had been a mistake except the criticism on CPI over in ‘sectarianism’ in the 6<sup>th</sup> congress.<sup>114</sup>

The influential voice on the colonial question in this 7<sup>th</sup> congress was Wang Ming a delegate from China. He was a strong advocate of united front strategy because of the Japanese aggression on China. To him, the communist leaders in India suffered for a long time from ‘Left’ sectarian errors. He adds after the 6<sup>th</sup> congress Indian communist leaders did not participate in all the

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<sup>112</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p 179.

<sup>113</sup> Khalid Bakdash, Speech delivered at the 7<sup>th</sup> congress of Comintern, August 9 1935, quoted, in *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

mass organizations affiliated to it. Criticizing the Indian communists he said, it did not possess sufficient forces independently to organize a really powerful and mass imperialist movement. There for he opined that the Indian communist until very recently were to a considerable extent isolated from the masses of people, thereby from the mass anti-imperialist struggle. He asked the Indian communists to strive with all their power and all the means at their disposal for the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front of the broad masses of the people within and without the national congress. To Wang Ming, the communist in India should try to achieve the masses against the slavish constitution, for immediate liberation of all political prisoners, for the abolition of extra ordinary laws and decrees, against the reduction of wage, the lengthening of the working day and discharge of workers against the burden some taxes and high land lends, against confiscation of the peasant lands, for the establishment of the democratic liberties.<sup>115</sup> Wang Ming stated, in those countries where the communist were for a long time unable to create an Anti-imperialist front, the communist parties were become strong mass parties. Without the active participation of the communists in the general people and the national struggle against imperialist oppression it was conceivable that communist groups or the young, numerically small party can be transformed into a real mass party. And without this the hegemony of the proletariat and soviet power in their country is not to be thought of. Wang Ming stated unequivocally that imperialism is a principal and basic enemy of the colonial people and if communist are unable to come out against imperialism in the front ranks of the people, how the people can recognize the

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<sup>115</sup> Wang Ming, 'Report presented at 7<sup>th</sup> congress of the Comintern, 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1935', cited in P.C., Joshi and K. Damodaran, Ed., *Documented History of the Communist Movement in India*, Archives of Contemporary History (ACH), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi.

party vanguards and its leaders.<sup>116</sup>

The position of Dimitrov and Wang Ming made a deep impact on Comintern on Indian question. By endorsing Wang Ming the congress declared that the communists in India had been guilty of sectarian errors, there by failed to 'participate in all the mass demonstrations organized by the National Congress and its affiliated organizations'.<sup>117</sup> Since the communist were not strong enough to organize a mass anti-imperialist movement of their own, this had led to their isolation. This congress asked Indian communist to support all anti-imperialist activities, including those led by the national reformists, and also asked to work within the Congress organizations.<sup>118</sup>

Even five months before the adoption of the resolution this strategic shift was visible. In February 1935 the Executive Committee of the Communist International wrote a letter to the CPI which explained the future task of CPI. The letter stated the task of the CPI was to win over the masses to the side of the revolution through the tactics of the united front. The ECCI approved the participation by the CPI in the joint observation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee report-protest day and also of the agreement between the Red Trade Union Congress and the All India Congress Socialist Party to abstain from mutual attacks. The ECCI asked to the Indian communist when the communist make an agreement on the united front and honestly carryout the undertaking to abstain from mutual attacks, they must come forward boldly with determined criticism if the agreement on the united front is disrupted and sabotaged.<sup>119</sup> The ECCI was critical of the CPI's

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<sup>116</sup> Bhagwan Singh Josh, *op. cit.*, *Nationalism...*, p. 178.

<sup>117</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> Congress Resolution, *op. cit.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> 'Letter from the ECCI to CPI, Contains detailed, instructions on the United Front, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1935', Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

attitude to the congress which was reflected in an appeal to launch an anti-imperialist league. It pointed out that refusal to work inside the national congress was not correct. To the ECCI, communist must utilize every legal possibilities within the ranks of the national congress in order to extent their influence to broader masses and to rally round themselves all those revolutionary elements in the Anti-imperialist movements. To ECCI, the national congress still exists as a mass organization and the communist could not neglect such a powerful body. Reflecting the various moves for trade union unity in India, the ECCI letter considered it advisable to send a delegation from the class of trade unions and the red trade union congress which were being held in Calcutta to make practical proposal for the bringing about trade union unity from top to bottom. To Comintern, the trade union democracy instead the unified trade union should be utilized by the communists for the widest possible development of Trade union activity.<sup>120</sup> Around 1935 the Comintern asked the Indian Communist Party to change its earlier sectarian policy after the 6<sup>th</sup> congress. Now they were asked to cooperate and work with and within the congress. The 7<sup>th</sup> congress resolution gave a new push to this agenda. This gave the Indian communist an opportunity to re-enter in to the national movement.

Though the Comintern adopted the strategy of united front in 1935 and its practical implementation in India was happened through Communist Party of Great Britain in 1936. The most immediate task faced by the CPI after the 7<sup>th</sup> congress was its organizational revamp. In India the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> congress was very difficult during this period as the communist party was banned in 1934. To Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, the main stumbling block remained the question of reconciling the position of the sixth with the seventh congress. Soon after the seventh congress, the CPI leadership, referring to

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

new orientation, observed that the decision of the seventh congress did in no way undo the work of the sixth, but carried it forward by basing itself on the decisions of the sixth congress and thus formulated a new tactical line for the changed situation.<sup>121</sup> As argued by Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, in practice, found it difficult to translate the theory of united front into action. To him, there were two rival and mutually exclusive points of view which virtually affected the fundamental principle of the policy of united front. One groups of CPI leaders like PC. Joshi aimed at clarifying the class struggle within the existing organization of these masses of Indian National Congress, the trade unions, youth organizations, etc. entering these organizations by exposing their bourgeois and reformist leadership in the eyes of the masses with the object of transforming them into organizations genuinely representative of the class interest of the masses that compose them.<sup>122</sup> And through the consolidation of this organization to develop a genuine revolutionary Anti-imperialist people front as the first and immediate objective of the Indian revolutionary movement. The other section adopts precisely the same tactics but with a divergent objective. While it proclaimed the necessity of united front, it maintains a hard and fast doctrinaire attitude towards these organization which it consider bourgeois or reformist. To the leaders like Ranadive, the Indian National Congress does not represented the class interest of the people in the past and in the future. It has always betrayed the masses in the past and it will do in the future. To them, any alternative understanding would grow the illusion of the masses and in effect plays into the hands of the bourgeoisie. To them, therefore the object of united front strategy is to “win over” the rank files from existing organizations for rescuing them from bourgeoisie. Besides this they advocated the formation of rival organization to conduct a genuine

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<sup>121</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

Anti-imperialist struggle.<sup>123</sup> This confusion was resolved when two CPGB leaders Ben Bradley and Rajani Palme Dutt drafted a new programme for CPI in accordance with the seventh congress.

On 29<sup>th</sup> February 1936 two CPGB leaders published an article in International Press Correspondence related to India. Their pamphlet became a guideline for Indian communists for the implementation of the united front strategy. To Dutt and Bradley, since the abandonment of mass civil disobedience movement there sees confusion in the forces and no powerful movement of resistance to British imperialism, which rules with more triumphant reaction than ever. In order to remove this confusion both Bradley and Dutt Advocated the unity of all people who were engaged in anti imperialist struggle. To them, the unity with right wing and compromising liberals is not possible, on the contrary with those liberal elements who took an irreconcilable stand against British imperialism. To them, the so-called 'unity' with the friends of British achieved by surrendering the struggle against imperialism, could only weaken the united front against imperialism not to strengthen it.<sup>124</sup>

This pamphlet reflects the real change of Comintern strategy towards the national bourgeoisie and the national congress. To them, the National Congress has undoubtedly achieved a gigantic task in uniting wide forces of Indian people for national struggle and remains the principle existing mass organization many diverse elements seeking national liberation. Nothing should be allowed to derail the national unity that has been achieved through national congress. This document declared that the National Congress can

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.185-186.

<sup>124</sup> Rajani Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley, 'The Anti-Imperialist People's Front Towards Trade Union Unity in India', in *Inprecor*, Vol.XVI, No.11, February 29, 1936, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

play a great part in the work of realizing the Anti-imperialist people's front. To the document, it is even possible that the National Congress, by further transformation of its organization and programme may become the form of realization of Anti-imperialist people's front.<sup>125</sup>

Commenting on Indian National Congress the thesis pointed out that the mass organization of workers and peasants the trade unions and peasants unions and all similar collective mass organizations, constituting the most important forces of the national struggle, are at present outside the national congress. Only when all these forces are combined, the mass organizations of the workers and peasants together with the national congress, whether in a united front agreement or in a collective affiliation of these organizations to the congress, will have achieved a broad united front, capable of developing a real Anti-imperialist front and drawing behind it the overwhelming majority of the population, the workers, the peasants, and the middle class in a single army of national struggle. To Dutt and Bradley, in this bloc the working class can increasingly realize its role of vanguard to lead to victory the Indian revolution. By changing the sixth congress strategy this thesis declared, the first aim of the united front strategy was to establish a united front of national congress with all the existing mass organization of the trade unions, peasant unions, youth association for other Anti-imperialist mass organizations, in a broad Anti- imperialist people's front on the basis of struggle against imperialism and its constitution and for organizing the struggle the struggle of the masses for their immediate demands. For this they wanted to amend the constitution of the national congress in such a way as to permit of the collective affiliation, with delegate's representation of the trade union, peasants' union and youth delegations etc. this collective affiliation should be carried out not only an all India scale but equally the provinces and on a

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

district and local scale the whole way through, thus bringing the National congress direct and continuous association with the masses. By asking the Indian Communists to affiliate with the Indian National Congress the Dutt-Bradley thesis maintained that this affiliation is important not only for the immediate existing mass organizations, but for the whole net work of the trade unions and peasant unions gradually embracing wider sections of the masses which congress should devote its most active efforts to assist in building up as the strongest pillars of the national struggle.<sup>126</sup> The important feature of the Dutt-Bradley thesis was its u-tern in the question of its attitude towards the left wing congress. The thesis declared that “in order to realize the Anti-imperialist, people’s front and to carry through this, it is urgently necessary to change the constitution, organization, policy and work of the National congress. It is essential that all left-wing elements in the congress should fight in the union on a common platform for these vital needs. Both Dutt and Bradley changed their attitude towards the congress socialist party which was characterized by Dutt as the organization of Indian bourgeoisie to prevent the workers leadership in the national struggle.<sup>127</sup> This thesis declared the Congress Socialists, Trade unionists, Communists and Left Congressmen should all be able to unite on the essentials of a minimum programme of anti-imperialist struggle for complete independence, of organization of the masses and development of the mass struggle, and of the fight for the changes in the congress constitution, policy, organization and leadership to forward these aims. The congress socialist party can play an important part in this as the grouping of all the radical elements in the existing congress. It is of the greatest importance that every effort should be made to clarify questions of programme and tactics in the congress socialist party. They stated the task of

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Rajani Palme Dutt, *op. cit.*, ‘Congress Socialism.....’



consolidation of the left-wing forces renders more necessary and responsible than ever the role and the activity of the communists in this process, since they have the most responsible role to play in ensuring the political clarity on the fight, in pressing forward the drive to unity in action, and guiding the aims of the movement towards the goal of political and social liberation.<sup>128</sup> To Dutt and Bradley, the immediate task of the Indian working class is to establish a united trade union movement. Acceptance of the struggle and internal trade union democracy were the corner stone of the Trade union unity during the period of united front. To them, in order to achieve the trade union unity both the Red trade and reformist trade union should be merged. To them, this should be immediately applied the GIP Railway, the press workers, the textile workers of all centers together. To them, the next step would be the transformation of the amalgamated trade unions into powerful mass organization. This would constitute the major task in the struggle for elimination of the split in the trade union movement.<sup>129</sup> To them, for this every amalgamated union should declare a 'recruitment month' and make the recruiting of new members. On the question of the coming election the Dutt-Bradley thesis pointed out that it is essential to maintain the unity of national front against imperialist and their allies and there should be no splitting of vote on the benefit of the reactionary right wing elements outside the congress that stands for the co-operation with imperialism. To them, the best means to realize this requires the most earnest consideration of all supports of national struggle. To them, the Anti-imperialist bloc, constituted on its programme of complete independence, no co-operation with imperialism and active struggle for the demand of the masses, should seek agreement with the existing leadership of the congress to run its candidates directly on this programme in

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<sup>128</sup> Dutt-Bradley Thesis, *op. cit.*

<sup>129</sup> Rajani Palme Dutt, 'Towards Trade Union Unity in India' *Inprecor*, Vol.XVI, No. 12, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1936, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

a certain number of seats as recognized candidates of the united national front. In other constituencies they advocated its co-operation with congress candidates who run on the official programme. To the thesis, every front requires to be made to prevent a splitting of the national front in the elections, at the same time they stated the unity should not be utilize to stifle the left forces of the Anti-imperialist Bloc.<sup>130</sup> To them, in order to concentrate on the struggle against the slave constitution imposed by British government, the communists cannot rest satisfied with negative programs of rejection of the constitution and refusal of co-operation but must formulate our slogans. They believe corresponding to the existing stages of the movement the time is now fit favorable to launch as their central slogan the demand for the convening of the constituent assembly based upon a universal suffrage and direct and secret ballot.

Soon after the Dutt-Bradley thesis CPI in a central committee resolution re-enforced the united front strategy in India. To it the question of united national front in India is the most vital issue upon which the success of the future struggle will depend. The key need remain the unity of the all anti imperialist forces in the common struggle.

### **Emergence of Socialist Consciousness in Kerala**

The emergence of communist movement in Kerala is inseparably linked with the anti-imperialist and anti- landlord movements in British Malabar and the struggle for responsible government in Travancore-Cochi as well as the movements for social reforms. There were clear and reciprocal interactions among all these movements. The important feature of communist movement in Kerala was that the communist movement was closely

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<sup>130</sup> Rajani Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley, *op. cit.*, The Anti-Imperialist...

connected in the movement for social reform, temple entry and movement against the caste oppression.

Though the Kerala unit of the CPI was secretly formed only in 1937, the impacts of socialist ideas were visible in Kerala in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century itself. Its presence was felt even before the October revolution of 1917. The Kerala intellectuals like Dr Palpu, GP. Pillai, and K Ramakrishna Pillai, had appreciated the Russian revolution of 1905.<sup>131</sup> Five years before the October revolution, a Malayalam biography of Karl Marx was published by *Swadeshabhimani* K.Ramakrishna Pillai. Though he himself was not a socialist his work was mainly concentrated upon the suffering faced by Marx in his life time. Commenting on Marx's ideas he argued "Machines today have lessened the burden of human labor. They have increased productivity, accumulation of wealth has increased, and so was the poverty of the laborer. To him, Marx wanted to find out the course of this contradiction and remedy for this evil".<sup>132</sup> To Ramakrishna Pillai, Marx devoted his life for lessening the sorrow of humanity. To him, Marx understood the need to create equality in the world by destroying the gulf between the rich and poor. To him, with this view in mind Marx first pioneered and popularized the ideas of socialism and communism in the west. Those ideas that gave inspiration to Marx in his life have now been acclaimed by the whole world. To Ramakrishna Pillai, one of the important theories of Marx was that all human activities, such as the development and decay of the political institutions, religious matters and literary pursuits are mostly depended on economic activities. Because of these ideas the capitalist became angry as never before. But at the same time it attracted the minds of many people and gradually spread throughout the

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<sup>131</sup> N.E., Balaram, *Kerala Communist Prasthanam Adyakalanganil (Mal)*, Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhat Book House, 1990, P.35.

<sup>132</sup> K. Ramakrishna Pillai, '*Karl Marx*', KP. Mohanan, Trans., in P.C., Joshi, K. Damodaran, *op. cit., Marx Comes to India...* p. 109.

world. To him, Marx has given ample theoretical explanations of the fact that the evils created by money such as poverty have even caused the decline of moral values.<sup>133</sup>

Besides this, K Ramakrishna Pillai also wrote a series of articles on socialism in 1912 itself. While writing in 'Atmaposhini' on the rise of socialism he argued, after the industrial revolution "the wage labour became general and common along with the increase of capital. These workers were not capable of leading an independent life, instead they were forced to depend upon the factory work as wished by the capitalist. Gradually they became numerically large. During this period the greatness received by capital has increased. All these led to the formation of two sections in the society ie, a majority of coolie workers and a minority of capitalists (who earned out of the works of these laborers)". To Ramakrishna Pillai, it was against this system the idea of socialism emerged.<sup>134</sup> In another context he stated, the rise of socialism in Europe was closely connected with two important factors ie; One was the industrial revolution and the other was the civil libertarian movements across Europe which were emerged after the French revolution. To him, with the industrial revolution even the children below the age of five were employed in factories about twelve hours a day. Many of them were compelled to beg for their livelihood. Even the children could not be protected by their parents. During that period the towns and cities where these laborers lived were not well planned and were unhygienic.<sup>135</sup> To him, these workers did not have any political right. During this period a question was raised by the people that whether they would be the servants of machines or

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-115.

<sup>134</sup> K. Ramakrishna Pillai, 'Socialism', (Mal), *Atmaposhini*, Vol. IV, No.2, 1088, Edavam, (May- June, 1912).

<sup>135</sup> K. Ramakrishna Pillai, 'Socialism' (Mal), *Atmaposhini*, Vol.IV, No.3, 1088, Mithunam, (June-July, 1912).

the machine would subserve to men. A question was also asked how to live with freedom and dignity during the period of mechanization.<sup>136</sup>

Ramakrishna Pillai located socialism in the context of industrial revolution and the rise of libertarian movement after the French revolution. He was aware about the circumstances which led to the rise of socialism in Europe. He was more sympathetic to the workers and was supportive of their cause. But he cannot be considered as a Socialist in the real sense of the term.

During this period several Journals in Kerala published articles on Russian Revolution for example in 1917 a journal called *Pauran*, published from Travancore had articles on Russian revolution. It stated the “Russian revolution was the most important event in the history of modern Era and declared the victory of the masses over the corrupt and biased dictators and landlords”.<sup>137</sup> Similarly the *Sahodaran* (which was run by social reformer K Ayyappan) had published various articles and comments on the Bolshevik revolution and problems of working class. In November 1919 an article published in this journal entitled *Koolivela* stated “the condition of wage labourers has considerably improved in western countries. But in India their good days are yet to come”.<sup>138</sup> It further stated, there were two types of coolie works, old and new (ordinary and factory type). Both of these cases the capitalist were not interested in welfare and happiness of the workers. It added, the capitalist were concentrating only on profit. The author also wanted to change the existing situation that is the owners were regarded as

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in P. Sivadasan, ‘The Dawn of Marxism and Politicization of The Masses in Kerala- 1912-1920’, in *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. XXXIII, 2006, PP. 143-144.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Koolivela’ (Mal), in *Sahodaran*, Vol. I, No. 9, 1095, Vrishchikam, November-December, 1919.

men and the workers as machine.<sup>139</sup> While highlighting the grievances of the workers it did not advocate any mass action of the workers. Instead this article called for the mutual love and respect between capitalist and workers. It demanded the reduction of working time, one day leave in a week and asked to end over time working. It asked the capitalist to take some measures to improve the physical and mental condition of the workers. This article also demanded the formation of workers unions otherwise the coolie workers will continue to be considered as machines. According to it, this union should direct the workers in to “Good path” and should develop the habit of savings.<sup>140</sup> In an another context he pointed out that many intellectuals in the world were thinking about the existing exploitation of the workers and the possibility of restricting or abolishing the existing gap between Rich and Poor. The concept of socialism was the result of this enquiry. According To him, the primary demand of the socialist was the collectivization of ownership and absence of private property in the form of land or any other. Commenting on Bolshevism this article points out it was the next stage of the socialist idea. To them there shall not be any property other than government owned. There shall not be any distinction between Rich and Poor.<sup>141</sup> According to this article, Bolshevism has some lessons to the Kerala society. The important message of the Bolshevism was that people should get equal access to education and other amenities from the government. Under Bolshevism the people should work and earn each according to their ability and government is supposed to give every amenity to the public. According to Sahodaran as Bolshevism in Russia was a reaction against the political dictatorship, in

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.

<sup>141</sup> Bolshevism (Mal), Sahodharan, Vol. II, No. 10, Kumbham, February-March, 1920, p.6.

Kerala it has a warning to the existing caste exploitation.<sup>142</sup>

In 1919 he stated, the efforts of Russia was a model for the people of Kerala for their struggle against hunger and poverty. In his poem 'Ezhava Ulbodhanam' he argued that the destruction of servitude in Russia was the result of the endless suffering and sacrifice of the youngsters of that country. Therefore he asked the youth of his communities to do sacrifice like those of Russians. By addressing the coir workers in 1924 he asked the workers to fight for their right without fearing the boots and guns of the police like the Russian people had overthrown the monarchy.<sup>143</sup>

It was during the great depression that many malayaali intellectuals were inclined toward USSR. To them during the depression many capitalist powers were affected but Soviet Union was in the process of implementing its First Five Year plan and survived the depression. During this period the whole economy of Kerala was shattered. Besides these, agrarian products had lost their value, increase of debt, unemployment, eviction, starvation, increase in tax had worsened. Because of the debt and rent arrears the peasants had lost their land. The price of rubber and pepper were fallen due to this. Due to the depression many malayalees who were settled in foreign countries were began to return home from countries like Malaya, Singapore, Cylone and Burma. Some were influenced by anti-imperialist stand of Soviet Union; while others were influenced by its equality of opportunity. Some were even influenced by its economic reform and progress.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>143</sup> T.M., Tomas Isaac, *Alappuzhayude Samarapatha* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2016, pp. 36-37.

<sup>144</sup> N.E., Balaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist...*, pp. 36-38.

The great depression and the attitude of the congress leadership gave the space for the spread of new ideas among the youth of Kerala. They faced twin reality. On the one hand Soviet Union had survived the economic depression between 1929 and 1932, while on the other many congress men of younger generation became more and more suspicious of the Gandhian leadership especially after the withdrawal of non cooperation movement. This is evident in various Malayalam Journals and the proliferation of articles which dealt with Socialism during this period.

In 1930, during a conference of All Kerala Ezhava movement in Kollam Ramanadhan (a member of self respect movement) made a speech glorifying the Russian revolution.<sup>145</sup> In the same year P. Kesadev wrote two volumed works *Agniyum Sphulingavum*, which was a short biography of the two leaders of Russian revolution Lenin and Trotsky. Writing this work he argued that this was necessary to remove the stereotypical and bloody image of Lenin as created by the imperialist propagandist. In this work he compares soviets with Indian village assemblies. To him, it was the Bolsheviks who practicalised socialism in Russia. To Dev, there were two types of revolutions; the first one was against the Tzarist dictatorship and other one was for the liberation of poor. To him, Lenin's biography was important as his struggle for the liberation of workers and peasants. By rejecting the notion of 'bloody Lenin' Kesadev argued Lenin was a man of peace and his principles will end all conflicts of the world. To him, even before becoming a man of revolution Lenin was a man of peace, he became a revolutionary to establish it.<sup>146</sup> In its second volume he gives a short biography of Leone Trotsky, another participant of Russian revolution. There he discusses various differences which aroused between Trotsky and Lenin during the period

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 39.

<sup>146</sup> P. Kesadev, *Agniyum Sphulingavum* (Mal), Paravoor, Swarajya Grandavali, 25-06-1930, pp. 18-26.



Russian revolution. Furthermore he was unaware of the inner party struggle within the soviet party after the death of Lenin. About this period the inner party struggle within the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) had reached a point where Leone Trotsky was expelled from the CPSU and he was deported from the Soviet Union. Kesavdev was supportive of the Russian revolution and the Bolshevik party even though he was conceptually unaducated in this regard. To him, the importance of Russian revolution was that Lenin led this revolution in order to establish the world peace against war and imperialism. In this pamphlet he asked all other countries to accept the soviet peace proposal which will make more peace and security in the world.

Writing in 1932 Kesavadev argued that India's unrest cannot be resolved only by getting political independence. In Russia their unrest was resolved through three revolutions after the dethronement of Tsar Empire. The Indian situation will not be different. To him, the First World War was the result of the struggle for market that is the struggle for the preservation of the existing market and capturing the new ones by the imperialist powers.<sup>147</sup> To him, it was the capitalist who rule the world today. They were trying to make profit by exploiting the people, besides this they were trying to capture other countries, trying to enslave them and create new rule to protect their interest. The world unrest will not end without the end of capitalism. Likewise the economic structure which created these traders also needs to be changed. Today's individual freedom legitimized plunder and exploitation and also legitimized aggression and concentration of wealth. To him, the world should understand the fact that the man is a social animal. The economic system should be formed not on the basis of individuals but on social base. To him, production and distribution should be done not for the benefit of individual but the society as a whole.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> P. Kesadev, 'Innathe Asswasthyam, Athinte Karanangal Enthanu' (Mal), *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, May 16, 1932.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

Similarly KP Kesavamenon viewed Russian revolution in a different perspective. He viewed it as a reaction against the miss rule of Tsar. He wrote no event in the history is drastic as Russian revolution while considering the size of that country, its population and the change brought about by the revolution.<sup>149</sup>

During this period articles pertaining to theoretical aspects of communism were began to be appeared in different Malayalam journals. For example, an article titled 'Communism' by Kannanthodathu velayudha Menon in 1932 stated "the basic principle of communism was each according to his will and each according to his ability and it is an idea against exploitation."<sup>150</sup> He believed, like any other reformists in the world communists were subjected to severe repressions in different countries. To him, communism was visible in early days itself. He even considered Montesquieu and Rousseau as communists. To him, communists were neither Bolsheviks nor adopted the Gandian path of nonviolence.<sup>151</sup> To him, the soviet system is a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. This article reflects the basic feature of the socialist consciousness at that time. While expressing sympathetic position towards socialism many of them did not possess ideological clarity on Socialism and Communism.

In early thirties the capitalism received severe criticism from the new educated intelligentsia of Kerala. The capitalist crisis of 1920 and thirty and the soviet advance during the depression had given fertile ground for this criticism. Writing in 1932 Kesadev stated there were two types of economics,

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<sup>149</sup> K.P., Kesava Menon, 'Russia Samrajyathinte Adhappathanam: Tsar Chakravarthimarude Nishtura Krthyangal' (Mal), *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 19 July, 1932.

<sup>150</sup> Kannathe Duttu Velayudhan, 'Communism' (Mal), *Mathrubumi Weekly*, 1932-Sept-19.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

one is of the capitalist economic system and other one is the working class. The existing economic system was based on the capitalist economic system. To him, in this economic system some people became rich and some poor. To Kesadev the essential factors of the capitalist economy are; Richness and Poverty, Luxury and starvation, Servitude and Slavery, Lethargy and hard work.<sup>152</sup> On the other hand the workers' economic system was entirely different from capitalist system and its fundamental principle was socialism, this labour economy advocates that all the property of the world is a collective property and no one can exclusively occupy it. Instead of creating some rich and many poor, the socialist system envisaged to destroy Richness and poverty. To achieve this, the existing economic order should be transformed and restructured. The agriculture land, banks and factories should be collective property.<sup>153</sup> This kind of articles shows that the great depression of 1930 had developed a new critical attitude towards the capitalist system and a new admiration towards the socialist economy. Many among the youth had believed that this new socialist system could be a panacea for all problems which India faced at that time.

In this period Russian literature became more and more popular in Kerala. Novelist like Maxim Gorky and his novels like 'Mother' became widely read and circulated in Kerala. Various reviews of the Russian novels had begun to appear in Malayalam journals. Example was a review on Gorky by Kesadev in 1933. To Kesadev the important aspect was that Gorky did not oppose the individuals but the injustice. As he believed the individual can only be corrected by transforming the system.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> P.Kesadev, 'Daridryanivaranam: Muthalimarudeyum Thozhilalimarudeyum Sambatthika Shasthram' (Mal), *Mathrubumi Weekly*, 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1932.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> P. Kesadev, 'Maxim Gorky' (Mal), *Mathrubumi Weekly*, 16<sup>th</sup> Jan, 1933.

After 1934 a more serious kind of socialist consciousness was began to develop in Kerala with the rise of the left wing group within the congress. A series of studies on Russian revolution has been published during this period. The important among them was a work entitled '1917' written by EMS Namboothirippad. For this he mainly used three volumes of Leone Trotsky's 'History of Russian Revolution'. It is important to note that when he was writing this work Trotsky was expelled from the Soviet communist party. To EMS Namboothirippad, no prior revolution had been taken place in Russia before 1917 unlike France (in the form of 1848 revolution and 1871 Paris commune). The importance of this work lies in his conviction at that time that the important component of a revolution is not the revolutionary party, but the various sections of the masses. He classified the Russian population in to four categories; they are the rich people, factory workers, the peasants and the soldiers.<sup>155</sup>

### **The Emergence of Communist Movement and the Application of United Front in Kerala**

The emergence of communist movement in Kerala presents a peculiarity in the history of international communist movement. Unlike other parts of India there did not exist any organized communist party in Kerala before 1937. At the same time, majority of the later communists were active in civil disobedience movement 1930-32. In Kerala the cadres of the later communist party were chiefly drawn from middle class nationalists as well as from working class and peasantry. Within years many of them were disillusioned with the compromising attitude of the Gandhi and international congress in the civil disobedience movement. Commenting on the Congress led national movement, AK Gopalan stated, he became skeptical of the ability

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<sup>155</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, '1917' (Mal), in P. Govindapillai Ed., *EMS Sanchika* Vol.II, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1998, pp. 291-341.

of educated class leaders of Congress to lead a struggle at these critical moments; when the enemy's onslaught became fierce. To him, many of his jailmates did not like the 'Gandhi-Irvin pact'. They feared that such a pact would hold back the flow of people surging forward to join the struggle in their anxiety for freedom. They felt that to discourage people in this manner would fall in to the prey to the British officials. They believed that a concessional treaty would sap the strength of the agitation.<sup>156</sup> To him, "when civil disobedience was suspended in 1934, young people who were imprisoned and had otherwise took part in the national movement lost their faith in the policies and programs followed by the Indian National Congress".<sup>157</sup>

P Kesadev also had somewhat similar experience during this period. In 1930 he believed that only through Russian path of revolution, the problems of the ordinary Indian people can be resolved. Therefore he came to admire Bhagat Singh and gives much emphasis for saving his life. During that period he was skeptical of the protest in Travancore. He suspected that these protesters had selfish motive. He believed, without destroying the thrown of the Travancore king the advisory council and Diwanship can not be eliminated.<sup>158</sup>

Recollecting this period KA Keraleeyan stated, in early 1930 they were seriously attracted towards Indian National Congress as it was a liberation movement. In their civil disobedience camp various study classes and political discussions were carried on. In these classes they came in to

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<sup>156</sup> A.K Gopalan, *In the Cause of The People*, NewDelhi, Orient Longman, 1976, p. 51.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> P. Kesadev, *Ethirppu* (Mal), Kottayam, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society, 1960, pp. 12-19.

acquaintance with the history of the world revolutions like the British revolution, American war of independence, French revolution and Irish liberation movement; and lessons regarding world figures like Joseph Massini, Joseph Garibaldi, and George Washington etc. All these lessons were in connection with national liberation movements. During those time ideas like socialism were not there even in their imagination. To him, their attitude towards politics had undergone a drastic change when they were imprisoned after the Civil Disobedience Movement. He said, in prison they had serious discussion regarding constructive programs including liquor prohibition, boycott of foreign cloths, propagation of khadi, cottage industries, abolition of untouchability, emancipation of 'Harijans' etc. in this discussion they criticized the activities of Indian National Congress and its slogans like (*thaklee fira fira ke lenge swaraj lenge*). They thought that the white should not be replaced with the 'elite black' instead with the black downtrodden. They also discussed seriously new ideas like socialism, communism etc.<sup>159</sup> To Keraleeyan, in prison they could interact with Thirlokmath Chakravarthi, Senguptha, Kamalanad Thivari, Jayadev kapoor etc. They gave them various publications. Among them the sedition committee report was the most important one. That have influenced all of them and led them to take pledge for revolting for the nation. It could make all the people patriots. To him, all of the prisoners were dissatisfied with congress decision to withdraw from the civil disobedience movement as per the Gandhi-Irvin pact.<sup>160</sup>

To EMS Namboothirippad, the political developments during the late 1920's like the Meerut conspiracy case had made a profound impact up on the

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<sup>159</sup> K.A., Keraleeyan, 'Communist Partiyilekk Njan Nadannethiya Vazhi' (Mal), in *Indian Communist Party: Sixtieth Anniversary- Special Edition*, Thiruvananthapuram, Janayugam, 1985, pp. 78-79.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.

political activists like him. To him, Trotsky's *History of Russian Revolution* was the only pamphlet about socialism which was available in prison during the early 1930s.<sup>161</sup> To Nambooripad, the imprisonment after the Civil disobedience movement gave him an opportunity to interact with revolutionaries like Kamalnath Thivari, which gave him new ideas about Socialism.<sup>162</sup>

Recollecting his prison life during the Civil Disobedience Movement NC Shekar stated that Kannur central jail contained those political prisoners who were regarded as terrorist. They were brought from different parts of India. Prisoners from different revolutionary group like Gaddar party; Hindustan Socialist Army, Anusheelan Samithi etc. were there in the Central Jail. Prominent among them were Motto Singh (a Punjabi revolutionary), Sharachandra Bose, Bava Singh Kher.<sup>163</sup> NC Shekar who was sentenced for rigorous imprisonment for participating the railway strike in south India 1928 along with some leaders of AITUC. To him, his experience with these prisoners gave an inspiration to study about revolutionary movements. To Shekar, the interaction with Marxist from Ervada prison gave him a new vision about Indian Independence. From this they felt the workers and peasants were outside the movement for national independence. To him, one prisoner of Kannur Central Jail, named Vedantham convinced him that it was possible to restructure the society based on the soviet model. To Shekar, he had not even seen any communist literature till that date. To him, the important books which attracted were, The '*Revolt of the Angels*' and

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<sup>161</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Oru Indian Communistinte Ormakkurippu* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, p.37.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> N.C., Shekhar, *Agniveethikal* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhath Book House, 1987, pp. 86-91.

'*Making of Fascism*'.<sup>164</sup> It was at the Salem jail P. Krishna Pillai had made contact with Badukeswar Dutt, a Punjabi revolutionary. In prison he made a connection with *Anuseelan Samithy*, a revolutionary movement in Bengal. The contact with various revolutionary groups had completely changed his political outlook. He became more suspicious about the class character of the Indian National Congress. He became acquainted with different books like the Hindi translation of Prince Krotkin's '*Conquest of Bread*' and Emil Luis's '*What is Communism*'. He was also able to read Lenin's April Thesis through the revolutionaries. To Krishna Pillai, he was also disturbed by the news of hanging of Bhagat Singh in March 1931.<sup>165</sup>

When we discuss the emergence of communist movement in Kerala the influence of Bhagat Singh and his 'Martyrdom' cannot be ignored. When Bhagat Singh was hanged in 1931 various demonstrations were took place in Kerala. For example in Thiruvananthapuram Communist League (one of the earliest form of communist organization in Kerala) not only passed resolutions against it but also organized demonstration.<sup>166</sup> Bhagat Singh and his Hindusthan socialist republic association made a profound impact upon the younger generation of congress activists at that time. In this period efforts were made to form terrorist organizations in Kerala from this influence.<sup>167</sup> For example Krishna Pillai started a branch of Anusheelan samithi in Kerala. Likewise KA Keraleeyan and his colleagues formed very secret organization called Bachelors Association. This was to dedicate them to full time political activity as there were no full time political activists. They thought marriage would hinder political activities. Besides him the organization involve men

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pillai* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 101-104.

<sup>166</sup> N.C., Shekhar, *op. cit.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*



like EP Gopalan, KP Gopalan, AK Ramankutty, PV Kunjunni Nair, KPR Gopalan, MK Kelu. Later this organization was dissolved after getting a mass base to the political party in 1934-35.<sup>168</sup>

Most of the communist leaders of Kerala were the activists of the Indian National Congress and its left wing, till early forties when they openly declared the formation of the Kerala unit of Indian Communist party. Besides, most of them had actively participated in the civil disobedience movement of 1930-34.

Recollecting his early political career, AK Gopalan wrote; from 1928 itself he took interest in Khadi propagation and boycott of foreign cloths. He used to visit villages on Sunday for propagating Khadi and swadeshi goods. To Gopalan, there was a profound dissimilarity between other mass movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement. It was the Civil Disobedience Movement that brought the largest people in to the political field and this was a result of common programme and common activities throughout the length and breadth of the land. Besides the middle class, workers and peasants also participated in this movement at least on a small scale.<sup>169</sup> Likewise leaders like P Krishnapillai, EMS Namboothirippad, NC Shekar and others actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. As mentioned above, gradually many leaders became skeptical about the congress leadership especially after the Gandhi-Irvin Pact. Many leaders like AK Gopalan believed when Gandhi had negotiated with Irvin he did not raise the issue of the execution of Bhagat Singh and the members of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, though they thought that the top level congress leadership was compromising with the British imperialism.

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<sup>168</sup> K.A., Keraleeyan, *op. cit.*, 'Communist Partiyilekk...', in *Janayugam*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>169</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, *In The Cause...*, pp. 12-14.

Similarly various initiatives for social reform within the communities and the movement against casteism and demand for temple entry gave a new impetus to the emergence of left-wing consciousness in Kerala. Most of the communist leaders in Kerala had started their public life as social reformers. For example writing in *Yogakshemam*, EMS Namboothirippad maintained that he wanted to restructure his community like that of French society which had underwent a complete restructuring after 1789 revolution. This was the result of his reading on French revolution 1926-27.<sup>170</sup>

To AK Gopalan, he was attracted by the Vikom Satyagraha of 1924. He wanted to leave his work as teacher to become a satyagraha volunteer. He sent a secret letter which was accepted by the committee. But because of the objections of his relatives and friends he could not go and join the satyagraha. He continued participate in marriages of people belonging to Thiyya caste publicly ate from there, which was forbidden and punishable for people belonging to upper castes.<sup>171</sup> In 1931 he was active in the Guruvayur Satyagraha as a volunteer captain along with K Kelappan. During this time he believed that the popular indignation of springing from Kelappan's deaths would be strong enough to crack the bedrock of orthodoxy, which was already under severe pressure. To him, even after the temple entry many low cast would be unable to enter temples. He thought how can people without clothe for changing visit temple..?. Without economic freedom it would be impossible for the low caste to better themselves.<sup>172</sup> Like AK Gopalan Krishna Pillai was also as an important volunteer of the Guruvayur Satyagraha. He argued, besides doing propaganda in support of Guruvayur

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<sup>170</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Oru Indian Communistinte ...*, p. 37.

<sup>171</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, *In the Cause...*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

satyagraha efforts should be made to give access for the lower cast people to the public utilities.<sup>173</sup>

Cherukad Govinda Pishadi was also an active volunteer in the Guruvayur Satyagraha. Recollecting his early political career, Cherukad maintained that there emerged a progressive group within in the Pisharadi youth in his locality, Pulamathol. This was under the auspices of Akhila Kerala Pisharadi Samajam. Under this organization they began to publish a monthly called *Yuvachaitanyam*. They opposed various social evils like *kettukalyanam*.<sup>174</sup>

Most of the communist leaders were started their political career through various social reform movements. These movements had played a major role in their understanding on Kerala society, economy, and the land revenue system and so on. For example, leaders like EMS Namboothirippad viewed the existing Kerala system as Jathi, Janmi, and Naduvazhi system. This understanding was possible mainly because of his association with various social reform movements. It enabled them to understand the complexities of Kerala's Socio-political system.

Though there is not a formal existence of Communist Party in Kerala till 1937. There existed some organizations which can be characterized as communist from early 1930s. In 1931 there formed a communist league in Travancore. In the words of NC Shekar during the initial days of communist league they faced some difficulties to analyze workers problem in a Marxist perspective and organizing them. Leaders like NC Shekar and Ponnara Sreedhar were responsible for this organization. In August 1931 there formed a youth organization called Travancore Youth league. The communist youth

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<sup>173</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pillai...*, p. 69.

<sup>174</sup> Cherukad Govinda Pisharadi, *Jeevithapatha* (Mal), Thrissur, Current Books, 1974, pp. 142-143.

league passed a resolution against the British policy of dividing Indian people. It also demanded the participation of the people of princely states in the new political reforms. Reacting against British policy towards India the youth league stated neither the conservative nor the labour party had any fundamental difference over the question of protecting their imperialist interest.<sup>175</sup> This organization translated and distributed the testimonies of Meerut prisoners. Besides this, in early 1930s there emerged various youth organizations in different parts of Kerala. They include Youth Leagues which centered on Thiruvananthapuram in 1931, Youth League which centered on Thrissur and Iringalakkuda in 1933-34; Youth League which centered at Ponnani, Kozhikode and Vadakara in 1932.<sup>176</sup> The political contact between Travancore, Kochi and Malabar from 1930s played an important role in shaping CPI. Barrister AK Pillai had a decisive role in shaping socialist consciousness in the younger generation of nationalists, especially in Malabar.

It is interesting to note that a new kind of working class was conceptualized in Kerala from early 1930s itself. Unlike the western industrialized countries there did not exist an advanced industrial working class in Kerala. In the words of NC Shekar instead of the advanced working class there existed different groups of working class like, press and PWD workers etc.<sup>177</sup> Unlike the Soviet Union and Western Europe, new group of working class were conceptualized and mobilized in Kerala. It was Ponnara Sreedharan who took initiative to organize the press workers in Travancore.<sup>178</sup> Likewise unions were organized in different parts of Kerala. After the

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<sup>175</sup> N.C., Shekhar, *op. cit.*, *Agniveethikal* ....., pp. 146-149.

<sup>176</sup> N.E., Belaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist*..., pp. 134.

<sup>177</sup> N.C., Shekar, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

Alappuzha coir workers' struggle the workers of Alappuzha became more acquainted with Socialist and Marxist ideas. Besides, the workers could organize different backward stratas of working class including quarry workers, Municipal workers, Smiths, Rickshaw workers, toddy tappers and coir workers. In Kannur, there were five workers unions; they were Commonwealth Trade Union, Beedi Workers Union, Weavers Union and Municipal Workers Union. In Calicut there were other unions like, Thiruvannur Cotton Workers Union, Calicut Press Workers Union, Kallayi Wood Workers Union, Umbrella Workers Union, Soap Workers Union, Coir Workers Union, Sea Workers Union, Store Workers Union, Municipal Workers Union, Weavers Union and Malabar Workers Union which consisted of the 90 percent of workers in Kerala. In Thrissur, there were unions like Store Workers Union, Rickshaw Workers Union, General Factory Workers Union and Amballoor Factory workers Union. In Cochin there existed only Alathur Coir Workers Union. In Alappuzha the important workers union was Alappuzha Coir Workers Union.<sup>179</sup> This shows that the various groups who were outside the traditional working class concept were systematically mobilized in Kerala from early 1930s itself. Later these trade unions became an important base among which the communist party got its strength. Between 1932 and 1935 *Thozhilali* Paper tried to propagate the ideas of Karl Marx. M Manoharan wrote translation of *Capital* in many weeks in the journal, and K Ramadas wrote series of articles entitled Karl Marx and Socialist principle in *Thozhilali*. Besides this the Travancore Labour Association got a group of intellectuals who were capable of propagating Marx's principles.<sup>180</sup>

Likewise in Kochi an organization called Labor Brotherhood was

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>180</sup> N.E., Balaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist...*, p. 39.

formed under the auspices of leaders like KK Warriar. Commenting on the formation of this organization KK Warriar stated “in 1935, a poor labourer was died at Thrissur. The poor family could not bear the heavy amount for funeral expenses. The youth of that region collected the amount for the funeral. In order to check such incidents in future, they formed a *Chitty* Fund for meeting such expenses. About 200 labourers were united in this programme. This organization was formed as labor brotherhood”.<sup>181</sup> This labor brotherhood incorporated all kinds of workers. But it was decided to form separate trade unions for different category of workers. Based on this, different working class like Rickshaw workers, Motor workers, General Workers, Shop keepers had formed their own unions. When the congress socialist party was formed about twenty workers of the brotherhood joined in this. They took the agency of both ‘The National front’ and ‘The Congress Socialist’ weeklies. Even though, they tried to popularize the national front, they read both and wide discussions were carried on regarding their issues. Warriar states: though they were nationalists they were frustrated with the deeds and activities of the congress leaders and they showed more affinity towards the working class movement. The first important experiment of the labor brotherhood was the Alagappa Mill Strike at Thrissur. The workers of Alagappa Mill went to Amballur in the evening and organized movements there during the night by communicating village elders and other people. During the day time those without other works stayed back in the village and organized the people there through continuous and voluntary works. They won a partial victory in the agitation. By 1939 all the workers of the brotherhood merged with the Communist Party of India.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> K.K., Warriar, ‘Labour Brotherhoodloode Communist Partyilekku’ (Mal), in *Janayugam, op. cit.*, pp. 65.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67.

About 1934 there began to emerge a left wing group within the Indian National Congress. Many of them wanted to make it in to a mass organization comprising different sections of Indian society. They wanted to organize the sections like working class and peasants in to the national movement. For example, Jawaharlal Nehru stated “the link between National and Socialist movements was to be understood. Thus on the one hand, labor could hardly better its lot even in the smaller field of wages and hours of work and standards of living, so long as imperialism continued and capital had full freedom to exploit the weak and unorganized labour of colonial countries and pit it against the workers at home”.<sup>183</sup> To him, the nationalist movement under foreign domination may succeed in getting independence without the support of labor but will result in creating a new capitalist state, normally in independent India, but with little freedom for the workers.<sup>184</sup> When the congress socialist party was established in Patna in 1934 its unit was established in Kerala through a conference at Calicut. The major CSP leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Minumasani, MG Ranga and Acharya Narendra Dev wanted to make Congress more leftward. A feeling was aroused among them that there was something fundamentally wrong with the Gandhian struggle and they doubted the efficiency of the nonviolent, noncooperation as a weapon in the struggle for independence.<sup>185</sup>

In the words of AK Gopalan the failure of Civil Disobedience Movement and the absence of mass participation in spite of their poverty and hardship provoked many people within the congress to seriously rethink the

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<sup>183</sup> Sasi Joshi, ‘Jawaharlal Nehru and The Emergence of Left Wing in The Congress’, in *Indian left, op. cit.*, p 55.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56.

<sup>185</sup> K. Gopalankutty, “The Rise and Growth of The Communist Party in Malabar-1934-47”, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1978, p.51.

programme of truth and nonviolence. This point of view led to the formation of a group known as Congress Socialist Party inside the congress after 1934. They believed that one of the reasons for their failure of Civil Disobedience Movement was that it did not enjoy the organizational backing of a large section of peasants and workers.<sup>186</sup>

In 1935 EMS Namboothirippad (then leader of congress socialist party) wrote a pamphlet entitled *Swarajaym Enthinu?* In this he argued that Swaraj means the rule of the Indians in which it can take its independent approach towards its industries in contradiction with existing British policy. Commenting on British rule he pointed out that under the British Rule Indians did not have the ability to frame independent economic policy and was dictated by British interest. To him, in India there existed a perfect picture of the clash between the official firing and the cry of the people. To him, Swaraj in India was the liberation from British economic exploitation. He adds in 1931 congress draw a vague picture of Swaraj at Karachi, it should be reformed and completed. To him, the British government was not interested in giving the benefit of modern scientific and intellectual development to the Indian people. In order to achieve this there should be a government which is not interested in economic exploitation and that should be the aim of Swaraj.<sup>187</sup> This article can be considered as a reflection of the then emerging youth of Kerala on Independence. To men like Namboothirippad the concept of Swaraj did not mean mere political independence. On the contrary it was a broad socio-economic emancipation of the Indian masses. According to this article, independence was the liberation from not mere political domination but from the entire British economic policy which served the interest of

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<sup>186</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, *In The Cause...*, p. 53.

<sup>187</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Swarajyam Enthinu' (Mal), in P. Govinda Pillai, Ed., *EMS Sanchika- 2*, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, pp. 42-52.



British imperialism, so they wanted to project an alternative political strategy while staying within the Indian National Congress (INC).

To EMS Namboothirippad, The Congress Socialist Party in Kerala was in a way the growth and continuation of the communist league.<sup>188</sup> During this period there aroused a dispute within the communist party over the question of its participation in the Indian National Congress. But it was after the direction of Communist International following the 7<sup>th</sup> Comintern Congress that communists entered in to the Indian National Congress. The Congress Socialist Party stated their aim as to pursue congress to adopt Socialism. On the contrary the communists believed it was not possible to change the basic class character of the congress as it was a bourgeois party. They want to develop congress in to an anti imperialist organization.<sup>189</sup>

The Meerut thesis of the CSP declared that it is their aim to unite all socialist forces in India based on Marxims and Leninism. This aroused a clash between various CSP leaders like Ram Manohar Lohiya and Minu Masani on the one side and other Socialists leaders on the other. The Kerala unit of the CSP was the first to be formed in accordance with the Meerut thesis. It is interesting to note that it was the Kerala unit of the CSP which was transformed in to the Communist party in 1940. This was in a sharp contradiction with the official position of the Indian communist party and Comintern towards the Congress Socialist party. The CPGB leaders like Rajani Palme Dutt were highly critical of the CSP. In the words of Rajani Palme Dutt the formation of this organization was an attempt by the congress to divert the masses of India from mobilizing on the class basis.<sup>190</sup> Besides

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<sup>188</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Communist Party Keralatthil* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 23-25.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Rajani Palme Dutt, *op. cit.*, 'Congress Socialism....',

organizing the working class and the peasants the Left Wing Congress of Kerala asked the Indian National Congress to give more support to the agitation in the princely states which the congress leadership was reluctant to undertake.

As a part of its agitation the left wing congress leaders of Kerala started a weekly called *Prabhatham* in 1935 under the leadership of EMS Namboothirippad. An article in this weekly made a comparison between the condition of Calicut workers and the workers of pre-revolutionary Russia. In this article the author said they did not want a Russian type revolution at the same time they had expected this kind of revolution in view of the prevailing circumstances existed in Calicut.<sup>191</sup> About 1938 the copies of this weekly were circulated in places in Travancore like Alappuzha, Koothattuakualm, and Punaloor. Besides this the circulars of CSP had also been circulated in Travancore and Kochi.

The important feature of this period was that the CSP leaders of Kerala had an extensive interaction with various Socialist and Communist leaders of India. The CSP leaders like EMS Namboothirippad had interacted with various Indian communist leaders like P Sundarayya, Amir Hidar Khan, SP Ghatte, Batlivala and others. In the words of EMS Namboothirippad, it was P Sundarayya who created a link between the CSP members of Kerala and the communist party.<sup>192</sup> To him, between 1935 and 39 there existed a cold war between the Kerala CSP and its national leadership. The interaction with the other communist leaders played a major role in the transformation of the Kerala unit of Congress Socialist Party into Communist party. For example SV Ghate was present when the Kerala unit of Communist party was secretly

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<sup>191</sup> K. Gopalankutty, *op. cit.*, *The Rise and Growth...*, p. 56.

<sup>192</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralathil*, p. 26.

formed at Calicut in 1937. It was the interaction with the other communist leaders of India which accelerated the process of the formation of the Kerala unit of CPI. With this interaction the leaders were acquainted with the Marxist literature.

The important problem which the left-wing congress faced in 1930s was the question of its attitude towards various caste and community organizations. They had to formulate a strategy towards the complex nature of various caste based organizations and they also had to assess the progressive and disruptive character of this organization. Writing on this issue in 1936 EMS Namboothirippad asked to resign all CSP members from community organization in which they had the membership and thereby avoid dual membership. By doing this the CSP did not allow its members to work in community organizations.<sup>193</sup> At the same time he criticized some political groups and left leaders for their blind criticism of caste and community movements. To him, these leaders either fully support or fully oppose the community organization. But they were not ready to understand the objective and the social basis of these organizations.<sup>194</sup> A discussion was emerged in the CSP about the need for these organizations. After this the CSP concluded that they should try to destroy and eliminate the system of caste. Till that the CSP decided to accept these organizations as an existing reality. To CSP, instead of blindly opposing these organizations the efforts should be made to give aware about the contradictions between the leaders and the masses of these

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<sup>193</sup> EMS Namboothirippad, 'Socialist partiyum Samuthayika Sangadanakalum' (Mal), in *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, April- May 1936, Also cited in P. Govindapillai, *op. cit.*, *EMS Sanchika...*, Vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>194</sup> EMS Namboothirippad, 'Keralatthile Samudayika Samghadanakal Avayod Perumarendath Engine' (Mal), *Mathrubumi Weekly*, July 1936, cited in, *ibid.*, p. 86.

organizations. To CSP, each organization should be dealt based on their specific programmes.<sup>195</sup>

To CSP, it was not fair to oppress the voice of lower caste and non-Hindus in the name nationalism. To them, the struggle against social oppression should be considered as an integral part of the broad socio-economic struggle for the class empowerment of the lower castes. To Kerala CSP, the problem of the oppressed people could not be resolved only through reservations as the rise of capitalism will accelerate the process of their social deprivations. Besides this, a few people in the upper class also suffered oppression. Likewise a few rich were also emerged in the oppressed sections. Therefore the CSP demanded the lower class regardless of their caste position to be empowered.<sup>196</sup>

The changing attitude of the Comintern regarding the colonial question made deep impact in the activities of the Kerala unit of the Congress Socialist Party. As mentioned earlier the seventh congress had ended the 'sectarian attitude' of the International towards the liberation movement of the colonies. Its seventh congress of 1935 adopted this strategy of Anti-Fascist united front. Based on this strategy the Communist Party of Great Britain (which had a major role in determining the position of Indian communist party) formulated a new policy of India which is generally referred as the Duthh-Bradley thesis. To them, since the abandonment of mass civil disobedience movement there sees confusion in the forces and no powerful movement of resistance to British imperialism, which rules with more triumphant reaction than ever. Inorder to avoid this confusion both Bradley and Dutt advocated the unity of all people who were engaged in anti imperialist struggles. To them, the unity

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.86-88.

<sup>196</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit*, *Communist Party Keralatthil...*, pp. 40-41.

with right wing and compromising liberals is not possible, on the contrary with those liberal elements who took an irreconcilable stand against British imperialism. To them, the so-called ‘unity’ with the friends of British achieved by surrendering the struggle against imperialism, could only weaken the united front against imperialism not to strengthen it. To them, “the National Congress has undoubtedly achieved a gigantic task in uniting wide forces of Indian people for national struggle and remains the principle existing mass organization, many diverse elements seeking national liberation. Nothing should be allowed the degree of national unity that has been achieved through national congress and the proposal that are here put forward that are only indented to endeavor to find means and to assist and extend that unity to a still wider front. This document declared that the National Congress can play a foremost part in the work of realizing the Anti-imperialist people’s front. To the document, it is even possible that the National Congress, by further transformation of its organization and programme may become the form of realization of Anti-imperialist people’s front”.<sup>197</sup> The thesis pointed out that the mass organization of workers and peasants the trade unions and peasants unions and all similar collective mass organizations, constituting the most important forces of the national struggle, are at present outside the national congress. Only when all these forces are combined - the mass organizations of the workers and peasants together with the national congress, a united front agreement or in a collective affiliation of these organizations to the congress will be achieved, capable of developing a real anti-imperialist front. There by drawing behind it the overwhelming majority of the population, the workers, the peasants and the middle class in a single army of national struggle.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Dutt-Bradley, Thesis, *op. cit.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

In Kerala various working class groups were organized earlier in 1932 itself. Various *Karshaka Sanghams* and trade unions were formed in 1932, four years before the Dutt-Bradley thesis. Besides this, the difference between the Travancore-Cochin on the one hand and the Malabar on the other should also be considered when we analyze the strategy of united front in Kerala. In Malabar the agitations were necessitated by the existing land tenure system. The Dutt-Bradley thesis enabled the left wing congress in Kerala to work within the frame work of Indian National Congress. From 1934 itself the Left-Wing Congress in Kerala was functioning within the Congress and was able to capture the KPCC. It was in the background of this unprecedented agrarian crisis that the CSP was formed in May 1934. A meeting was held in Calicut for this purpose with K Kelappan in the chair and a committee of seven was appointed for propagating and to drawing up a programme. P Krishna Pillai was chosen as secretary and C K Govindan Nair as president.

In 1935, a Radical Conference was held at Calicut under the auspices of the CSP. The welcome address made by EMS Namboodiripad throwing light into the working of the minds of the CSP radicals at that time. He stated: "If we carefully examine the Congress, which we all cherish, we see two pictures emerging. The fifty-year-old Indian National Congress is not one but two. A Congress which begs for independence for the Indians and a Congress which struggles and fights for independence; a Congress of deputations and appeals and a Congress which spreads the message of swadeshi and boycott; a Congress which has accepted constitutional reforms and entered councils and a Congress which has conducted non-cooperation and gone to jail; a Congress which was afraid of civil disobedience and a Congress which immersed itself in it. In brief a Congress which compromises and Congress which struggles.

We mistakenly thought that both these are one".<sup>199</sup> This conference adopted a programme of work which was presented by Keraleeyan. The important aspects of the programme include, Fight for increase in wages and reduction in working hours along with propaganda among workers on the nature of capitalist state collaboration of right wing congress with the state and the state repression, to develop the movement of peasants based on demands for abolition of landlordism, removal of indebtedness, improvement of working conditions of agricultural laborers, removing ministerialists and other moderates thereby making Congress into a real people's movement, setting up of youth leagues and clubs and propagating through them the demands of full independence and the course of struggle to achieve it, to oppose imperialist inspired wars and making all efforts to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle to gain independence. It was with such an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist programme based on workers, peasants and youth that the CSP hoped to convert the Congress into a revolutionary movement.<sup>200</sup> The first effort of the CSP members was to organize the working class in the towns. Malabar was industrially backward, but it had various traditional industries and a sprinkling of small modern industrial formations. The tile workers of Calicut and Feroke, the beedi workers of Kannur and Talassery, and the weaving workers of Thavannur and Kannur were the earliest pioneers of the trade union movement. CSP members worked actively in organizing them under the red flag in 1934-35. Among the first strikes that took place in this period were the strikes at Tiruvannoor Malabar Spinning Mills and the Kallai Cotton Mills in December 1935. It was while conducting such activities that the importance of the peasantry was realized. A major factor that compelled the CSP to turn to the peasants was their experience of organizing the working class in towns.

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<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Prakash Karat, 'The Peasant Movement in Malabar-1934-40', in *Social Scientist*, Vol.V, No.2, September, 1976, pp. 30-44.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

By delivering his welcoming address in All Malabar Workers Conference, held in November 1937 Krishna Pillai stated that the development of capitalism was still backward in Malabar. Big factories with large investments by capitalists had not yet developed. In the industries employing 200 to 300 workers the capitalists were invariably landlords and the workers were not only wage laborers but linked to the land. They therefore suffered double oppression of the capitalist in the town and the landlord in the rural area. For this, Krishna Pillai set out two important tasks before the workers: the first one was building up the movement of the unemployed initiating joint movements of the workers and unemployed peasantry; propaganda and education was necessary to point out that both suffer from common oppression. Secondly, since many of the workers lived in the villages, they should help in organizing peasant unions, making the way clear to a joint movement of workers and peasants. In the words of Prakash Karat, the views of Krishna Pillai can be considered as the earliest formulation of the concept of workers peasant alliance.

It was the quest for an alternative political formation which led to the formation of Kerala unit of the Congress Socialist Party. The influence of Socialist ideas led them to perceive the class divisions and contradictions in society.<sup>201</sup>

Another important aspect of the united front strategy of the CSP was the formation of *Karshaka Sanghams* (peasant organizations). Various units of *Karshaka Sanghams* were formed in different parts of Malabar. In July 1935 a meeting was held in Kolacheri village under the leadership of Vishnu Bharatheeyan. They discussed various issues which were faced by the

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<sup>201</sup> K. Gopalan kuty, 'The Integration of Anti-Land Lord Movement With The Movement Against Imperialism- The Case of Malabar-1935-39', in Bipan Chandra, Ed., *op. cit.*, *Indian Left* pp. 202-206.



peasants including the atrocities by the Janmies. For achieving the rights of peasants they formed a peasant organization. It selected Vishnu Bharatheeyan as the president and K.A Keraleeyan as secretary.<sup>202</sup> Similarly, *Karshaka Sanghams* were formed in Karivalloor and in some parts of Kurumbranad taluk. At a special conference a Karivalloor Samyuktha Karshaka Sangham was organized in 1933 presided over by A K Gopalan. The unit covered Karivalloor, Vellur, Peralam and Kodakkaat. In Kurumbranad, M K Kelu and Gopala Kurup took the initiative for the Taluk conference which was presided over by EMS Namboodiripad. By 1936 in a number of Amsams in North Malabar meetings were held and peasant committees were elected to constitute *Karshaka Sanghams*. After this initial effort it was decided to hold taluk level conferences of peasants to consolidate the propaganda effort. In June 1936 the conference of All Kerala Congress Socialists was held at Talassery. It welcomed the move made at Lucknow to form an all-India Kisan Sabha and appealed to the public workers of Kerala to develop a strong agrarian movement. A ten-member executive committee of the CSP was formed with Namboodiripad as secretary. The rapid development of the peasant organizational effort in Chirakkal found expression in the Parrashinikadavu Peasants' Conference in November 1936. A K Pillai presided over this first taluk conference of the organized peasantry in Malabar. Processions of peasants and youth marched from Karivalloor, Bakkulam, Cherukunnu, Kalyasherri and other centers of peasant activity.<sup>203</sup>

As a continuation of this, in 1936, the All India Kisan Sabha was organized with the ultimate aim of complete freedom from economic exploitation and achievement of full economic and political power for

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<sup>202</sup> E.K., Nayanar, *Olivukala Smrithikal* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2015, p. 11.

<sup>203</sup> Prakash Karat, *op. cit.*, 'The Peasant Movement...'

peasants and workers and all other exploited classes. Subsequently the All Malabar Kisan sangam, an association of the peasantry was organized with a network of units at taluk and village level. After this, as a part of the activities of the *Karshaka Sangham* its members were begun to travel the countryside of Malabar for forming the peasant organizations. The demands of this organization were based on issues like high rent, high land tax and debt. For example, in Valluvanad taluk, in protest against the imposition of tax on tobacco, the taluk peasants' committee resolved to conduct a series of meetings and conferences in the villages. Such meetings were held widely all over the taluk and on such occasions the CSP workers got the opportunity to expound on the nature of agrarian problems and spread anti-imperialist propaganda. Writing on Kodakkad Karshaka Sangham in 1938 KA Keraliyan stated that by the emergence of this Sangam the tenants got new class consciousness and they began to fight against the existing land tenure system in Malabar. They tried to suppress the *Karshaka Sangham*. So keraliyan asked the members of the Sangam to be aware of this and ready for an upsurge.<sup>204</sup> Another example, in meetings at Kodamunda and Cherukara villages during this campaign, resolutions were passed calling for exemption of tax on poor peasants and introduction of a graded tax. Another resolution called for debt relief and a moratorium on the debts of poor peasants. Also there was a resolution appealing to peasants to reject all dress and behavior which were servile and feudal and for setting up of a *Karshaka Sangham*.<sup>205</sup>

The important technique of the organization was procession to the houses of the landlords. The important feature of this agitation was that the peasants were enrolled in the Congress and the *Karshaka Sangham*

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<sup>204</sup> K.A., Keraliyan, 'Kodakkatte Krishikkar' (Mal), in *Prabhatham*, August, 1938, p. 11.

<sup>205</sup> Prakash Karat, *op. cit.* 'The Peasant Movement...'

simultaneously.<sup>206</sup> The important feature of the peasant activities in this region was that they did not attend if a meeting is organized under congress auspices; they attended only those meeting if it was organized under the auspices of Karshaka Sangham. To the leaders of the Karshaka Sangham along with British rule capitalism should also be destroyed. For this purpose they asked all members of the Sangam to join the congress. They asked its followers to abuse police and to bring even those who were afraid of police will come to their fold. To them, it was enough if ten class conscious peasants had raised their immediate demands that will invite the opposition of Janmies. If the Janmies opposed their demand their cause will be strengthened and would attract more followers. As a part of their strategy joint meetings of the congress and Karshaka Sanghams were organized. In the meetings of Karshaka Sanghams, speaker asked to rally round the congress and strengthened the Anti-imperialist movement. Peasants were used to attend large number of meetings organized by the village committees. The leaders of congress socialist party used to travel the interior often forming village committees and Karshaka Sanghams units. The congress members were asked to extend help and cooperation to peasant movements. In these meetings they passed resolutions condemning British imperialism. In this the British government was characterized as a staunch supporter of feudal elements. Likewise, the feudal landlords were characterized as the “Pillars supporting imperialism” it was stated that in order to abolish feudal landlords it was necessary to abolish the British imperialism.<sup>207</sup> In 1936, propaganda was initiated in all the taluks of Malabar for the setting up of regional units of Karshaka Sanghams. CSP propaganda processions toured the taluks for hundreds of meetings covering on an average 10 to 15 miles a day on foot. In

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<sup>206</sup> K. Gopalan Kutty, *op. cit.*, ‘The Integration of Anti-Land ...’, pp. 202-206.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207.

Valluvanad, the Taluk Karshaka Sangham took a decision to set up its units at the village level. A propaganda team toured all parts of the taluk under the leadership of EP Gopalan and PV Kunhunni Nair. In the words of EMS Namboothirippad, the response of the peasantry was very encouraging. To him, in a space of two weeks since the decision in February, 20, 1936 public meetings attended by peasants had been held. In Kottayarn taluk of North Malabar also the CSP conducted a propaganda procession. Keraleeyan, AK Gopalan, Moyyarath Sankaran and Krishna Pillai were participated in its activities. The issues they discussed include non-acceptance of the constitution, agrarian question, peasant movement and non-acceptance of ministry by the Congress. As a part of this movement a Congress volunteer procession toured Kurumbranad taluk starting from Mahe. This procession consisted of seven persons and it was accompanied by A K Gopalan. During this procession they raised slogans like "Death to imperialism", "Death to landlordism, and death to capitalism".<sup>208</sup> In chirakkal scores of village level meetings were addressed by A K Gopalan, Chandroth Kunhiraman and Vishnu Bharateeyan on subjects such as "Plight of Peasants""Government and Peasants" and "Congress and Socialism". Resolutions were passed demanding immediate reduction of land revenue and signatures were collected for petitions. It was by taking up this problem that many Left-wing Congress acquired their first-hand experience of peasant problems. The years 1935 and 1936 an intensive work at the village level in the form of propaganda, conducted by small procession (touring squads on feet) village meetings and local conferences. The processions became the most popular method of disseminating propaganda and mobilizing the peasantry. For instance in Chirakkal taluk in October 1935 a Congress propaganda team toured the taluk. They held a series of meetings on topics relating to national and

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<sup>208</sup> Prakash Karat, *op. cit.* 'The Peasant Movement...

international issues with the constant theme of peasant problems and how to solve them.

In a series of meetings in 1936 K A. Keraleeyan stated that 80 percent of the revenue extracted from India was taken to Britain and remaining 20 percent was used for military purpose. The government taxes everything except air. He composed songs for propagating the ideas of *Karshaka Sangham*. For example “the land where we were born, this land where we have sown gold, this land is governed by the whites for the last Two hundred years. Twenty thousand to the viceroy we gave as his bata, then lakhs for travelling allowance and there is the governor sahib”.<sup>209</sup> When sections of the workers struck in work in Kannur, peasants from neighboring villages came in batches bringing vegetables with them. In the words of KA Keraleeyan “the peasants marching shoulder to shoulder with workers sang; companies are closing one by one, life is coming to stand still but the sarkar sahibs are unmoved”.<sup>210</sup>

Another important aspect of the peasant movement was the large scale participation of the aided school teachers. The aided primary school teachers union took the initiative in forming Karsha sanghams. In the teachers meeting resolutions were passed urging the Madras Governor to sign the debt relief Act 1938. In the All Malabar Kisan Sangam at chevayur P. Ramunni, the president of the teachers union assured the peasants that the teachers would wholeheartedly support the struggle of the workers and peasants. Commenting the role of the teachers in this movement TNC Nambiar pointed out that when all sections of the Indian people were fighting against British,

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<sup>209</sup> quoted in, K. Gopalan Kutty, *op. cit.*, ‘The Integration of Anti-Land Lord Movement...’, p. 207.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

the teachers of this country cannot be separated from this movement.<sup>211</sup> It was in 1934 the regular teachers union began to be operated in Malabar. In that year an aided teachers union was formed in Kalaysseri. This was followed by teacher meeting in Karivalloor. Units of Teachers Union were formed in Kottayam, Kurubranad, Valluvanad Taluks. It was decided to form a teachers association for the whole of Malabar and a conference was convened at Thalassery in February, 1935. An Adhoc committee with TNC Nambiar as president was formed. The earliest demand raised by the Teachers was for security of tenure and regular payment of Salary. In the second annual conference of the union in 1936 they demanded, the raising of the Aided school teachers pay on par with that of the local board Teachers. Fixity of tenure to all those who had completed years of training and 25 percentage of representation for teachers in the district educational council were demanded. The important demands were; the introduction of service register in which the contract appointing the teachers with the date of appointment and salary were entered, the sanction of the district educational council and the government for all disciplinary action took against teachers the extension of provident fund and leave benefits to aided school teachers and the abolition of the system of private management and the take over of primary education by the government. In the beginning, the methods and techniques of agitation were confined to convening meetings, passing resolutions, organizing Jathas, submitting memorandum and observing special days. A direct action in the form of strike was formulated for the first time in 1936. But many members opposed the idea as the unions were not well developed. So it was decided to strengthen the union before embarking on a strike. In the third annual conference of the Malabar School Teachers Union in 1937, a resolution was

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<sup>211</sup> T.N.C., Nambiar, 'Teachers Union, Oru Samrajyavirudha Prasthanam' (Mal), *Prabhatham*, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1938.

passed, authorizing the Taluk units of the union to strike work if it was found necessary. In 1939, a resolution was passed by the union condemning the police brutality on the students in Travancore. The student's federation in Malabar extended their support to the teacher's movement.<sup>212</sup> About the beginning of the Second World War the Teachers union became more and more leftward. As a part of this in the rural areas of Malabar the teachers worked hand in hand with the peasants, the teachers were functioned as the disseminators of ideas. All this in turn strengthened the Anti-imperialist consciousness of the peasants and raised politics to a higher plan.<sup>213</sup> It was in these conferences where the plays like 'Pattabakki' of K Damodaran was performed. This play depicted the plights of ordinary and agricultural laborers and the poor peasants in the Janmy system. The important aspect of the peasant organizations was the intermingling of the political and cultural activities. Gradually this difference was seized to be exist.

Like the peasant movement there also emerged various working class movements in Kerala side by side with the peasant movement. The working class movement in Malabar as a whole started in January 1935. Some workers associations started before 1935 like the weaving workers union of Azheekodu, some company unions in Farook and Travancore Labour Association in Alappuzha were functioning. There were also strikes at the Common Wealth Company at Calicut and Kannur, the Sitaram mill at Trichur and the AD Cotton Mill of Kollam. But in the absence of proper revolutionary programme these strikes and unions did not grow in to a working class movement.<sup>214</sup> In these unions there were many types of workers like weavers,

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<sup>212</sup> K. Gopalankutty, 'Malabar', in P.J., Cheriyan, Ed, *Perspectives on Kelara History: The Second Millanium*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Gazatteers Department, 1999, pp. 562-565.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>214</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, *In The Cause...*, p .61.

soap workers and tailors. In the words of AK Gopalan, the workers of Kerala had special characteristic ie., a large section of them were from outcast communities. Not only economically but even socially they were oppressed. He continued to state that the congress and socialist movement had to face a major challenge during that period ie., many community leaders made vigorous campaigns, that in reality, the congress struggle for the maintenance of Hindu caste domination. To join such a struggle will ruin their future. These community leaders proclaimed that the future of the communities lays in the continuation of British rule. To AK Gopalan, the congress was unable to remove this distrust. Workers of these sections of society hates even the glance of a congress man. It was very difficult in these circumstances to organize them.<sup>215</sup> It was the formation of the congress socialist party which gave a new impetus to the working class movement in Kerala. In 1935 there organized an all Kerala workers conference under the leadership of P Kreshna Pillai. This conference was attended by the delegates from Malabar and the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin. From Malabar the representatives include VR Nayanar (the leader of Bharath Seva Sangam) and T Narayanan Nambiar. From Travancore the representative was R Sugathan and from Cochin was Deever.<sup>216</sup> When the trade unions had opened their offices about 75 percent of workers had joined in the unions. They started to visit the office in the morning and evening and read newspapers. Through this a small section of the workers had developed their class consciousness and union consciousness. They thought that they would not win their demands without organizational strength. During this period unions like the weaving workers union, Beedi workers union and rickshaw workers union were active throughout Kerala. Slogans like “Death to Landlordism, Death to Capitalism

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<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>216</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralathil..*, p.76.



and Death to imperialism and victory to Revolution” were heard everywhere.<sup>217</sup> In places like Kathiroom committees of unemployed were formed. New hymns were composed. The programme of Socialist was to bring home to the masses the declared aim of the congress, implement the decisions of the congress and to stress the revolutionary aspect of those decisions and to orient congress activities according to this programme.<sup>218</sup> The KPCC held a summer school at Mankada Pallippuram. The camp lasted for about a month. 100 students were given instructions. In these camps instructions were given in subjects like History, Economics, philosophy and politics.

It was in this context a students’ movement came in to prominence. A consciousness has been developing among the young students about their role in shaping the future structure of India and in understanding what is happening around them after the election. The student’s federation was formed in 1936 under the auspicious of Congress Socialists, this increase the participation of students in the Anti-imperialist struggle. The Trivandrum Students federation was formed by PT Punnus and others. The important feature of this period was that the Indian National Congress was not in favor of an active struggle in the princely states. This attitude of the congress led to the raise of militant trade unions in Travancore. In 1938, the working class for the first time came to the political platform while participating in the struggle for responsible government. Affirming their solidarity with this democratic movement, they declared a strike in October 1938. Trade unions all over Travancore joined the strike. Even the water transport system was paralyzed since the boat workers union too struck once TCFWC (Travancore Coir Factory Workers’ Union) came under the control of the communists. There

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-85.

was rapid increase in the union membership and activities. The membership of Coir Factory Workers' Union increased from 7400 in 1939 to 17000 in June 1942, the time of the Second World War.<sup>219</sup> In Cochin, students federation was led by men like C Jenardhanan, CL Varkey and Chithrabhanu Namboothirippad. In Malabar the leaders were Imbichi Bava and Kallottu Krishnan. As a part of this a Bala Seva Sangham was formed in Peelikkodu in 1936.<sup>220</sup> The CSP members asked the students organization to work with the illiterate rural masses and tried to arouse them a consciousness. Based on this the Palakkad session of the students union adopted resolution related to Anti-illiteracy programme. The CSP members were asked to read the article published in *Prabhatham* and also instructed to discuss it in public forums like reading rooms and clubs. All district secretaries were asked to convene Taluk level meetings and divide the members into different groups. The group secretaries were requested to send reports to the Taluk level. The participation of all group members should be ensured.<sup>221</sup>

The important part of the strategy was the rise of the library movement. The establishment of village reading rooms provided the people with access to the reading material and a sociality that facilitated the dissemination of the ideas of the CSP.

Along with the students the teacher's movement took on an anti-imperialist position and developed into a mass organization that took all teachers of Kerala under its leadership. Besides this the elementary school teachers played a big role in the consolidation of left-wing congress in Kerala.

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<sup>219</sup> P.J., Cheriayan, 'Radical Political Movements in The Twentieth Century', in P.J., Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, *Perspectives...* pp. 536-539.

<sup>220</sup> N.E., Balaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist...*, pp. 134-136.

<sup>221</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Party Membersinte Sradhakku, General Secretaryude Ariyippu' (Mal), in *Prabhatham*, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1938.

They not only organized themselves but organized peasants and students. The principal reason for this Travancore struggles winning was the role played by workers and students who constituted the main revolutionary forces in the struggle and their readiness to undergo sacrifices.<sup>222</sup>

Like Malabar the Travancore unit of CSP was formed in 1937 and elected PK Dutt as secretary, besides him other members of the party include PK Padmanabhan, Kunjan, PV Androos, VK Purushothaman, Kollam Joseph, KV Pathrose, Simon Ashan, PK Solomon, CO Mathew. This group worked among the workers of Ambalappuzha Cherthala.<sup>223</sup> Besides organizing them they were trained with the principle of the Congress Socialist Party. On sixth march 1938 the coir workers of Alappuzha decided to conduct a strike. 5 members committee constituted including VK purushothaman, PK Kunju, PN Krishnapillai and R Sugathan. The demands of the strike were; to restrict reduction of wage, the wage should be paid in cash, the wage to be once in a week, a factory act to be implemented to regulate the working hours.<sup>224</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> June 1938 a labor conference was held at Alisseri ground for the resolution for the strike was adopted and a committee was constituted under R Sugathen as secretary. On 24<sup>th</sup> July 1938 they were registered as Travancore Workers Union. The first stage of the struggle was to convene a meeting of individual factory workers of each factory separately. After that the joint meeting of workers of different factories constituted. In the next stage it was decided to talk to the workers of a locality. For the success of the struggle they introduced a secret method of communication. 101 member committee was formed with VK Purushothaman as president, CO Mathew as secretary and VK Simon as treasurer. On behalf of CSP its general secretary P Krishna

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<sup>222</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, *In The Cause...*, pp. 92-99.

<sup>223</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pillai...*, pp. 501-504.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

Pillai asked all mass organization of Travancore and India to rally around the Alappay coir workers strike. To him, this strike was waging for the establishment of the responsible government of Travancore. So it was the political and moral obligation of the Travancore people to support the workers by opposing the government's suppressive measures against this strike.<sup>225</sup> When this strike began in Alappuzha, support for this struggle was coming from different parts of Kerala. For example in Malabar, a Travancore Strike Support Committee was formed under the leadership of Muhammad Abdu Rahman. It was based on the decision of this committee AK Gopalan started a jatha from Malabar to Travancore. Likewise another Jatha was reached in Travancore under the leadership of Muhammad Yusuf.<sup>226</sup> During this period cadres from different parts of Kerala had worked in Travancore. Many of them worked in disguise. For example some were acted as medical representatives and some were in the form of soothsayer. Besides this, the Alappuzha coir workers struggle got support from communist leaders from outside Kerala. For example SP Ghatte attended the Thrissur conference which determined the cause of the struggle. Likewise other leaders Niharendra Dutta from Calcutta, P Ramamoorthi from Madras had visited Travancore. In addition to this CK Narayana Swami, the CSP leader from Bombay supported this Struggle.<sup>227</sup>

When this struggle was going on, the Travancore police took series of repressive measures against this agitation. About thirty leaders including C Kesavan, K Sukumaran, Kumbalath Sankarakkurupp, TK Dhivakaran, KC Govindan, were arrested by charging the stone pelting and bus firing case in

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<sup>225</sup> P. Krishna Pillai, 'Pothujanangalodum Congressinodum', *Prabhatham*, Vol.1, No.30, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1938.

<sup>226</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralatthil...*, p 77.

<sup>227</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pillai...*, pp. 474-477.

Kollam. At the same time the state congress did not show much interest in supporting this struggle. In this time a meeting of the Youth League members held at Pallana. This was attended by men like KC George, PN Krishnapillai, N Sreekandan Nair, Sankara Narayanan Thambi and K Damodaran et al. in this period there emerged a debate within the Youth League about the future cause of the Alappuzha coir workers struggle. A section of the state congress wanted to withdraw the struggle and also advocated to withdraw the derogatory remarks against the Dewan. At the same time leaders like P Krishnapillai wanted to continue this struggle. To him, the withdrawal of this struggle will intensify police repression. To Krishnapillai, the right-wing state congress was not able to discuss about the future cause of struggle instead they were engaging the futile discussion about the memorandum. To him, this attitude will help Dewan. He emphasized a need for a united struggle and start agitation based on certain demands. Including the withdrawal of suppressive regulations, the release of all political prisoners including labor activists, take action against those officials who involved in the firing and compensation to those families who were affected by this, granting of organizational freedom to the sections like Students and workers. As a part of this struggle they decided to show black flags from Aroor to Thiruvananthapuram with slogans like “We Want Responsible Government” And “Down with CP”. Hundreds of youth league members were arrested. As a part of this they observed thirteen of February as ‘Day of Responsible Government’. Through this struggle they tried to prove that the responsible government does not meant the near ending of Dewan’s rule but the destruction of the entire princely system which ruled within the support of imperialism.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 479-513.

In Navasari conference of Princely states the representatives from Cochin State were also participated. They include the left-wing leaders like KK Warrior, P Gangadharan, and others. This congress asked the Indian National Congress to be more active in the struggle in princely states.<sup>229</sup> It was in this congress a decision was taken to establish state people's congress in all princely states. In Kerala, the CSP was strongly associated with the state congress in Travancore and Prajamandalam in Kochi. Unlike Malabar, in the princely state of Travancore and Cochin there did not had an effective congress organization. This was mainly because the Indian National Congress had decided not to interfere in the internal affairs of princely states. It was the formation of the congress socialist party which accelerated the struggle for responsible government in the two princely states.

Most of the CSP leaders had secretly traveled through the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin and participated in the various struggles there. They thought that there was no need for any kind of compromise in the princely states. They believed that the main aspects of this struggle were the struggle for personal liberties and the struggle against Janmy and the entire princely system. They had advocated a struggle regardless of caste considerations. About this time *National front*, the organ of the communist party of India was circulated across Kerala. The central leaders of the CPI like P Sundarayya, Batlivala, SV Ghatte, and ZA Ahemmed played a major role in the formation of student youth and trade union movements in Kerala. Because of the effort of SV Ghatte a Kerala unit of communist party was secretly formed in Calicut in 1937. It was attended by EMS Namboothirippad, K Damodaran and NC Shekar. To NE Balaram; there existed a difference of opinion among various leaders within the Kerala CSP on the nature of this organization. For example, to EMS Namboothirippad, CSP was emerged out

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<sup>229</sup> N.E., Balaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist...*, p. 136.

of struggle for freedom and gradually turn into Communism. On the other hand AK Gopalan argued that instead of becoming an independent workers party it opened the way congress capitalist development. To Balaram, the communist party during this period faced many organizational difficulties which affected its work after the breakup of the Second World War.<sup>230</sup>

The main feature of this period was that the CSP leaders had effectively broken the distinction between the British Malabar and the princely states of Travancore and Cochin region. Most of the leaders had travelled across Kerala and organized various peasant and labor movement. For example, P Krishna Pillai a leader from Travancore had travelled to Malabar and actively participated in various agrarian movements in Malabar. On the other hand, leaders from Malabar like EMS Namboothirippad and AK Gopalan had worked in Travancore and Cochin for a long period of time. This helped them to integrate various peasant and working class movement in to a broad Anti-imperialist movement. Commenting on Malabar K Gopalan kutty stated, the integration of two movements (Anti-imperialist and Anti-landlord) was possible only because the Congress Socialist party members did not view Socialist ideology as opposed to the ideology of nationalism. Between 1934 and 1939 the Kerala CSP members transformed the Sunday congress in to the mass based and militant organization. Another important feature of this period was the rise of membership in the congress. The congress membership rose from 7000 in 1936 to 34674 in 1937. In 1938 it rose up 54700. This rise was mainly due to the work of Left-wing congress members. In the words of Krishna Pillai, due to the work done through the organization of peasants and workers, a respect towards the congress and a feeling that the freedom struggle led by the congress is “our own struggle” became prevalent among the masses, at the same time the dissemination of the Socialist ideology and

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<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

organization of workers and peasants led to the polarization inside the congress into the left and right wing.<sup>231</sup> Emphasizing unity and struggle Krishna Pillai wrote in *Prabhatham* that for the success of the struggle against British imperialism there should be unity within the Congress. In answer to the criticism raised by K Kelappan he wrote that the Congress Socialist had always stood for cooperation even when they were a minority in the KPCC. He stated that though there were two groups within the congress, both had a common enemy. He further stated that the Chinese could successfully oppose the Japanese, mainly because of the united front forged between the Koumintang and the communists.<sup>232</sup> This statement shows how the left wing congress men in Kerala had an understanding on the idea of united front. Even though they had much difference of opinion with the right-wing congress they used the platform of congress to propagate their idea of socialism.

Kerala provide an example where the concept of united front was implemented while considering the peculiar socio-economic conditions provided in Kerala society. In Kerala the concept of working class was redefined by including and integrating various streams of working class in the trade union movement. Through this, different types of workers like the press workers, the Beedi workers, the coir workers, weavers, teachers and tailors were integrated in to the broad working class movement. These movements had made an alliance with the movements of the lower cultivators and the agriculture laborers. Besides this the students and youth movement created a united front in Kerala. It was the Dutt-Bradley thesis which intensified the interaction between the agrarian and trade union movements in Kerala and the

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<sup>231</sup> K. Gopalan Kutty, *op. cit.*, 'The Integration of Anti-Land Lord Movement ...', pp. 209-210.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*



Indian communist movement. It was the Dutt-Bradley thesis which provided the condition for the formation of the Kerala unit of the Communist party in 1937. It was after the 1937 the movements in Kerala had more interaction with the movements in other part of the country. As a part of this, the CSP leaders of Kerala had an extensive contact with the communist leaders from other parts of India. They had interaction with larders like, Sundarayya, Amir Hider Khan, SP Ghatte, P Ramamoorthi et al. This interaction in a way speeded up the transition process of the Kerala CSP in to the communist party.

The important aspect of the socialist activities in this period was their ‘uncritical acceptance’ of Soviet Union. They were not aware of the nature of the purges which happened in Soviet Union. The socialist attitude towards Soviet Union was significant because they believed that it provided an alternative of development. It inspired the young generation of the Socialist and filled them with confidence.<sup>233</sup> During this period another important intervention of the left-wing congress leaders in Kerala was in the field of culture.

### **The Socialist Movement and the Debate on Culture in Kerala**

The late nineteenth century saw the emergence of a large variety of cultural activity in the fields of literature, theater, poetry, music, films, and so on. It produced such writers like Maxim Gorky, Anton Chekhov and so on. Maxim Gorky’s novel ‘Mother’ was an inspirational work during the period of Russian revolution. About the beginning of twentieth century the Russian Social Democratic Party had to engage and interact with the various cultural trends in Russia. During this period a question was emerged within the

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<sup>233</sup> K. Gopalankutty, ‘The Task of Transforming Congress: Malabar - 1934-40’, *Studies in History*, 1989.

Russian Social Democratic Party ie; in which way the social democratic party should approach the various cultural trends which prevailed in Russia at that time...?. Besides this there also emerged a question that what would be the relationship between the culture and revolution and in which way the social democratic party should approach various cultural trends in Russia...?This initiated a series of debate within the socialist movement in Russia. A group of people wanted the development a 'popular culture' in the place of 'higher culture' and another group wanted to accommodate the non- socialist culture and rejected the distinction between the socialist and higher culture. The advocates of popular culture argued that the writing should reflect the day to day life of the people and should be in line with the socialist construction of society. But the other group rejected this notion. The Russian Social Democratic Party addresses this difference.<sup>234</sup>

The debate over proletarian and mass culture had created a major impact in the communist movements in the colonial countries including India. Till early 1930 the literary tradition which had existed in India could be characterized as an elitist literature. The poems, the short stories and the novels had a clear bias towards the elite. Much emphasis had been given to epic Ithihasa and Puranic stories but not to the day to day life of the ordinary people. This was the case of the writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Most of these writings dealt with the subjects like princes, war, palatial love, and the activities of the high classes. These writings did not reflect the day to day life of the Masses. This situation was begun to change in the beginning of 1930s. The new generations of the writers in India were against these

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<sup>234</sup> VI Lenin, *Tolstoy; the Mirror of Russian Revolution*, In VI Lenin, *op. cit.*, collected works, Vol XV, pp. 202-209. See also, V.I., Lenin, 'On the Proletarian Culture', in VI Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1965, pp. 316-317. See also, Anatoly Lunacharsky, *On Literature and Art*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1965. See also, Leone Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, Moscow, Soviet Government Publication, 1924.

tendencies. They wanted to give a new meaning to the culture and literature. It was in this situation efforts for the establishment of a progressive cultural movement were started in early 1930's and it was culminated in the establishment of progressive writers association in 1936. In 1930's many of Indian writers like Premchand, Mulk Raj Anand, Faiz Ahammad Faiz and others were influenced by the literary movements in Russia and also influenced by figures like Maxim Gorky. These Indian literary figures began to write novels, plays and short stories which depicted the life of ordinary people like peasants, workers and others. They were also influenced by an international literary movement against Fascism and capitalist system. In the words of Mulk Raj Anad "as writers of an oppressed country, as members of a generation which has actually seen the decay of Capitalism, suffered from the effects of a war of conquest completed long ago but still waged against the world through the slow and insidious repression of people's will to freedom, as men who have felt the necessity to rebuild the social order, the scientific and objective exploration of the foundation of all belief becomes a duty".<sup>235</sup> To him, a cultural awakening was demanded not only by the contingencies of lives in India but by the world struggles against Fascism in Europe affected them in a far more real way than they imagined.<sup>236</sup> The need for organizing the progressive writers' movement in India was being felt by many of the writers from 1933. These writes declared that need of making a break with the 'passive' and 'escapist' literature with which the country was being flooded; of creating something more real, something more in harmony with the facts of our existing social reality.<sup>237</sup> During this period the conference of world

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<sup>235</sup> M.R., Anad, 'Other Progressive Movement', in Sudhi Pradhan, Ed., *Maxist Cultural Movement: Chronicles and Documents*, Calcutta, National Book Agency, pp. 1-23.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> S.S., Zaheer, 'A Note on Progressive Writers Association' 1936, in *ibid.*, pp. 48-52.

writers was held in Paris under the leadership of Maxim Gorky, Andre Gide, E. M. Foster, André Malraux and others in 21<sup>st</sup> June 1935 which led to the formation of the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture Against Fascism. This international conference made a profound impact upon a group of intellectuals who were interested in creating a new form of literature. To these writers, in Indian political and social life there emerged a generation of 'declassed intellectuals'. they were not only beginning to see the crisis in Indian culture brought about by the breakdown of Indian old social values, literary codes and grammars, but who, while recognizing the necessity for a common cause with the movements which were slowly liberating the Indian people, sought for a more revolutionary ideology in all spheres.<sup>238</sup> Commenting on the need for the formation of a 'Progressive cultural movement' SS. Zaheer Stated that "our culture, which we wanted to reinvigorate, which we wanted to use as an instrument of service, of enlightens and of joy for the entire people of this country, was withering away before our very eyes"(sic).<sup>239</sup> On the one hand there were restrictions of education to a minority of the Indian population by the colonial administration, the poverty and misery of the Indian people as a whole and unemployment among the intelligentsia ; on the other hand there existed the policy of abject revivalism, the attempts of copying the artistic forms and concepts of our past in an entirely different present social environment, resulted in making Indian art and culture restricted and devoid of vision and the actualities of life. It was a consciousness, in many cases vague and undefined, of these things which led to the formation of the "Progressive Writers' Association".<sup>240</sup> On this basis writers like Permchand, Abdul Haq, Daya Nerain Nigam, Abid Husain, amongst many others, signed their

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

manifesto in February 1936. Subsequently an organizing committee of the 'Progressive Writers' Association' was formed. After this, its branches were opened at Lahore, Delhi, Allahabad and Aligarh. Based on this the first meeting of All India Progressive Writers Association was held in Lucknow in April 1936. After the formation of this organization they establish contact with the progressive writers of England and India respectively. They aimed to establish a branch of the Progressive Writers Association in every literary centers of India. They decided to convene fortnightly or monthly meetings of the Association in different parts of India. In these meetings papers, stories, poems of a progressive nature were read and discussed. They wanted to organize a meeting of like-minded writers and those who were interested in the 'Progressive' literature and tried to take effort to change the cultural life of the country. It was in the first congress of these organization writers from all parts of India, including Bengal, U. P., Punjab Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Madras, were gathered together and laid the foundation of this movement. To Zaheer, It was the first all India gathering of writers, writing in different Indian languages, but wanting to unite for solving out common national cultural problems. To him, this conference looked at literature not from the point of view of a pedant, as something apart from the rest of life, but as a social product, and as such molded and influenced by social environment. Social convulsions did not leave literature alone, and therefore they believed it was their duty to take account of them to consciously heap through their writings the forces of enlightenment and progress, to struggle against reaction and ignorance in whatever form they may manifest themselves in society.<sup>241</sup> The important aspect of this Association was that although they wanted to produce literature of a new kind, they did not completely reject the existing literary traditions in India. Instead they declared, it was only the progressive writers and not 'pedantic reactionaries', who worship dead forms, could claim

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<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

to be the true inheritors of all that was best in Indian cultural tradition.<sup>242</sup> In this conference they also declared their creed in the manifesto which gave a minimum basis of unity for all those writers, who, though differing in many ways, were united as far as the progressive writers' movement was concerned. They stated, Fairy tales and romantic stories of princely levels might have impressed people in olden days, but they mean very little to the present generation of the people. To them, unless literature deals with reality it has no appeal. They added, literature can be defined as criticism of life. The literature of the past had nothing to do with actuality.<sup>243</sup>

The founding of this organization led to the proliferation of writings in different Indian languages like Hindustani, Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati and so on. The growth of Hindustani literature was evident first in the publication by the *Naya Sansar* Publishing House of Amed Ali's collection of stories *Sholey* and Sajjad Zaheer's play 'Bimar', Likewise 'Halqa-i-Adab' which has merged with *Naya Sansar* of Manzil by Ali Sardar Jafri and 'AnokhiMusibat' by Hayat-Ul Ansari. Another important language which this movement gave its contribution was Bengali. Important writers in this category include Sudhindra Dutta, Naresh Chandra Sen, Budhadeva Bose, Premendra Mitra and others. From its beginning this movement had the support of Rabindra Nath Tagore. And he was the first writer to sign the statement sent by Indian Intellectuals to the Peace Congress at Brussels on the limits set by the Government of India on freedom of thought and speech through direct and indirect censorship in India. To Mulk Raj Anand, they had the broadest organization of the Intellectuals of India, the largest bloc of writers who, whatever the difference in their standpoints, whatever their contradictions of philosophical, religious and cultural belief, join for common

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

actions, in the defense of old Indian culture and the development, through a proper criticism of the past, of a new culture.<sup>244</sup> He claimed that in this movement various scholars, poets, novelists, essayists and lay readers all stand united for the winning of the right to the democratic ideal, and to the economic, political and cultural freedom of India. Commenting on the need for this organization, they declared that unless these writers came together India's national existence will be challenged very much similar to that of China and Spain.<sup>245</sup>

This movement was by and large influenced by the efforts in Europe against the rise Fascism. They claimed this movement was trying to liberate the Indian literature from age old literary tradition without completely rejecting it. To many Indian writers the works like Maxim Gorky's 'Mother' was an inspiration for this movement. They introduced new issues and themes for writing various novels, dramas and short stories like the suffering of the cultivators, the exploitation by the Landlords etc. To them, literature was an important tool for social transformation and the liberation of India. They believed the literary works should reflect the suffering of the people not the stories of kings and princes. They believed, the literature should reflect the changing social realities. They argued it should not be used as an instrument for the preservation of all culture. However they did not advocate the complete rejection of all existing literary tradition. Instead they claimed they were the real successors of the literary tradition in India. As far as this movement was concerned their main objective was to use literature for the social transformation but not for the sake of art itself.

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<sup>244</sup> M.R., Anand, *op. cit.*

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

In Kerala also this kind of trends made a profound impact from early 1930s. Till then the existing literary tradition in Kerala was not in line with the new writings. Instead was based on the Puranic stories. Even the nationalistic poets like Vallatthol Narayana Menon tried to promote traditional art forms like Kathakali through the institutions like Kerala Kalamandalam. Likewise Kumaranashan, in spite of his socially radical works wrote generally within the existing literary tradition. The new literary movement in Kerala had the task of creating an alternative cultural movement.

As a part of this, from the early 1930s a new kind of literary works began to appear in Kerala. News papers like Mathrubhumi gave an opportunity to the new generation of writers for publishing their works. Many of them were influenced by writers like Victor Hugo and Maxim Gorky. While recollecting his reading of Victor Hugo's novel 'Les Miserable' (which had already been translated into Malayalam by Nalappatt Narayana Menon) Cherukad Govidappisharadi stated that a new light was getting into his thought. He believed that this novel was relevant as long as the social injustice exist.<sup>246</sup> Likewise Maxim Gorky's novel 'Mother' was another influential work among the young writers of Kerala. From early thirties many writers began to write stories, novels and poems which depicted the day to day sufferings and miseries of the common people. These writers were not interested in writing in the traditional frame work of Malayalam literature and also were not concerned about the traditional aesthetics. The depression of 1930 and the skepticism over Gandhian struggle had accelerated this process. Through his story in 1932 P Kesava Dev highlighted the poverty and exploitation of the poor by landlords through the life of a house maid named vasanthi. In this story, her house owner wanted to sexually exploit this lady

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<sup>246</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Jeevitha...* p. 155.



in return for some small tips to her. This story went on by explaining the mental conflict within vasanthi. On the one hand she wanted to save her chastity on the other hand wanted to treat her ailing husband and look after her child. In this situation she receives some rupee from the landlord and agreed to reach his home at night, but her mind did not permit her to do that. Instead of going there she committed suicide along with her family by writing a letter which stated that she is sacrificing her life in the 'sacrament of poverty'. When the angry landlord reached there to evict the family he had noticed this letter. This changed his mind and he atoned this by sacrificing his wealth. This story reflected a new kind of themes which was common among the younger generation of writers of Kerala in early thirties.<sup>247</sup> Likewise, Cherukad Govinda Pisharodi wrote a short story entitled *Theruvinte Kutty* (child of the street). In this story he wrote a hunger and suffering of a child who lived in the street and how he was abused by the people because his condition.<sup>248</sup> During this period the themes related to the life and condition of the ordinary people began constantly appear in Malayalam literature. Various sections of peoples like rickshaw workers, scavengers, women, street children and others began to appear in their writings. The impact of socialist realism had begun to reflect in the Malayalam literature from early 1930s. This gradually developed in to a literary movement called the 'Living Literary Movement' (*Jeeval sahitya prasthanam*).

The Congress Socialist party in Kerala used this movement to propagate their idea among the people. Art became an important tool for the political mobilization. After 1935 the difference between political and cultural activity was ceased to exist especially to the CSP members. During this

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<sup>247</sup> P. Kesadev, 'Daridryathinte Balipeedathil' (*Mal*), *MathrubumiWeekly*, 1932, pp. 5-30.

<sup>248</sup> Cherukad, 'Theruvinte Kutti', *MathrubhumiWeekly*, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1936.

period there emerged a debate within the literary figures in Kerala. The main contentious issue which led to this debate was the question of the objectives of art. A section argued that the art was for the sake of art itself but on the contrary as far as the 'Progressive writers' were concerned that art cannot be separated from life. It was in this context the first conference of the living literary movement was held at Thrissur in 1937. This conference was held under the presidentship of Vidvan AD Harisharma. It was attended by many figures like P Kesadev, A Madhavan, KPG, K Damodaran, Achuthakurupp, KK Varyar, EMS Namboothirippad, Subramanyan Thirumumb, KA Dhamodhara Menon, C Narayana Pillai et al. The conference declared that art is not only for art's sake, but for the society. Besides stating this they produced literature which has new form. The plays like '*Pattabhakki*' and '*Rakthapanam*' by K Damodharam had influenced the working class trade union in Malabar and Cochin. Performing these plays became an integral part of various peasant conferences in Malabar at that time, 'Red Volunteer' of P. Kesadev, 'Anaathamandirangal' by Thakazhi Sivasangara Pillai, 'Inquilab Zindabad' by Vikom Muhammed Bhasheer and 'Achane Kandappol' by SK Pottakkad had contributed to the progressive movement in Kerala. Besides this, the poems of KPG, Premji, PN Nambuthiri, Neelanjeri, Keraleeyan and kittettan had influenced the youth.<sup>249</sup>

At the same time this movement was subjected to severe criticism by some contemporary literary figures. Most important among them was MR Nayar (Sanjayan). He describes it as 'Dead literature'. Ridiculing this movement he stated; this revolutionary writers sought to replace the existing aesthetics with 'Ash dip, cow-dung dip, grouse basket, crom basket, Ash of the coconut shell, sasrem hoarder and mud bloc and they were satisfied by the

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<sup>249</sup> N.E., Balaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist...*, pp. 114-118.

roaring of Bulls, Beef and cuff'.<sup>250</sup> He continued to ridicule this movement by stating that if the rose flower a symbol of Capitalism, the mud was the symbol of farmer's victory. To him, as far as these writers were concerned the better taste was mango pickles and its sourness not the sweetness of grape. He identified this trend of literature with Atheism and Blasphemy.<sup>251</sup> By ridiculing Kesadev sanjayan stated that Dev's writings were characterized by unreliability of knowledge and information, the valuable futility of hell life and the impracticality of music and literature.<sup>252</sup>

He characterized the living literary movement as idiotic. Writing in 1934 he ridiculed it by stating that they rejected all existing literary tradition as wastes or a heap of waste.<sup>253</sup> He continued to ridicule by stating that this literary movement viewed that all literature as the agent of capitalism and did not reflect the life and starvation of the workers and peasants. Sanjayan was not in agreement with the progressive writers that the literature should reflect the suffering of the people and it was foolishness to think like that.<sup>254</sup> By defending the existing literary tradition he pointed out that the real aesthetics of Art was visible in the work of Homer, Shakespeare, Kalidasan, Kunjan Nambiar and Chandumenon was existed without any change and it will not change with time. He was completely against dividing the aesthetics between living and non living. To him, the art and literature should be entrusted with the artist and should not be linked with politics. To him, the actual artist does not need the advice of politicians, like that of Shakespeare and Kalidasan.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> M.R., Nair, 'Viplavaplavam' (Mal), in Sanjayan, *Sanjayan*, Vol.I, Kozhikode, Mathrubumi, 1986, pp. 227-228.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *Idem*, 'Vanka Sahityam' (Mal), in Sanjayan, *Sanjayan* vol.II, Kozhikode, Mathrubumi, 1987, pp. 164-165.

<sup>255</sup> *Idem*, 'Leelayum Jeeval Sahityavum (Mal), in *ibid.*, p. 19.

Besides attacking the progressive literature he characterized Marxism as a Soviet ideology based on plunder and mass murders.<sup>256</sup>

By responding to this criticism EMS Namboothirippad stated the new movement was not against culture. Instead, it wanted to liberate culture from its 'actual enemies' and gave it a new shape and life. By attacking the critics of the living literature he argued, these critics were not ready to challenge the real enemies of culture like Imperialism, Fascism, and the princely atrocities. To him, the living literature does not destroy the existing literature instead it creates a new one. To him, this literature strongly insists that in the field of politics this category of writers should side with the progressive forces. To him, this movement also needs to oppose Fascism, imperialism, landlordism and all kind of oppression and also support individual liberties. He clarified that though all Socialist literature can be considered as living literature, all living literature cannot be considered as Socialist literature. He argued, as far as the living literature was concerned Art does not exist for Art. To him, there were two forces in the world, one makes the world forward and other one makes it reverse back. The forces like imperialism, Fascism, capitalism and landlordism turned the world and forces like liberty, democracy, nationalism and socialism direct world in to progress. Likewise, the forces like untouchability and Matriliny turn the world into back. Other side was represented by freedom and equality between men and women. To him, this could be reflected in every branches of knowledge. By rejecting sanjayan's criticism he stated, it was not aesthetics which separated the living literature from others.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> *Idem*, 'Sakhavu Engottu', in *ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>257</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Jeeval Sahityavum; Akshepangalkkulla Marupadiyum' (Mal), in *Mathrubumi*, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1937, also in P. Govindapilla Ed., *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.II, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-242.

From this, we can see that the emergence of new literary movement like the living literary movement became an important tool in the hands of the left-wing leaders of Kerala to propagate their political ideas. As mentioned earlier the distinction between the political and literary activity was ceased to exist about this time. For example, the staging of K Damodaran's play 'Pattabakki' was an integral part of various *Karshaka Sangham* meetings in Malabar. The important actors in this play include later Communist leaders like Chandroth Kunjiraman Nair. Likewise the staging of various plays became an integral part of the CSP in 1930s and the communist party activity in the later days. The important feature of this period was that many of the writers who were termed as progressive were not communist writers as such, like Takazhi Sivashankara Pillai. But their writings reflected the content of progressive literature. It was in this context the poems of Changampuzha Krishna Pillai like 'Vazhakkula' and 'Ramanan' became important. To many of the literary critics Vazhakkula did not have the much desired requirement for a poem. But its theme of landlord exploitation had attracted the people to this poem. His poem 'Ramanan' depicts the love between a shepherd and a lady of a noble origin. This kind of themes was very attractive to a new generation of readers. So this literary movement provided an alternative literary tradition. The debates over the nature of Art were continued in the later days.

## **Chapter III**

# **THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE EXPANSION OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN KERALA**

### **The Imperialist War and the Emergence of Communist Party in Kerala**

The beginning of Second World War in September 1939 made a significant change in the history of the communist movement in Kerala. It provided an opportunity for the Kerala unit of the Congress socialist Party to accelerate their political activities in the form of trade union and peasant movement. This led to the transformation of the Kerala CSP into communist party within the few months of the breakup of the war. The initial years of the war witnessed increase the mass political activity in Kerala. The earlier understanding of Comintern towards the war enabled the Kerala communists to increase its influence and expand. Their anti-imperialist struggle enabled them to break from the congress and their by ending the strategy of the united front. It was in this period the steps for the formation of an organized party in Kerala had been taken. It is important to discuss the earlier Comintern Attitude to the war before analyzing its implication of on Kerala.

Between 1939 and 41 the Communist International viewed the Second World War as an imperialist war. To the international this war was resulted by the imperialist rivalries and contradictions. Even before its breakup many leaders of the international believed that the policies of western European countries in the late 1930s had the objective of appeasing the Nazi-Germany, there by weakening the Soviet Union. While writing 1938 in *Inprecor* Richard Goodman characterized the political situation in this period as the “Three Power Blackmail”. To him, “ever since the conclusion of Anglo-Italian

agreement France has been subjected to a campaign of blackmail diplomatic and financial pressure and scaremongering which must be almost without parallel in European history”.<sup>1</sup> To Godman, the campaign has been still run from Rome and Berlin. But the Fascist aggressors have only found it possible to run this campaign because of the active assistance given by the Chamberlain government in Britain.<sup>2</sup>

While USSR criticized the European policies on Fascism they signed a non aggression pact with Nazi-Germany in September 1939 immediately after the beginning of the war. This pact avoided the participation of USSR in the Second World War, at least for two years. This influenced the Comintern’s understanding on the war in its initial years. It was based on this Comintern considered the new war as an imperialist war. Commenting on the new war in June 1940 Dimitrov pointed out that there was an obvious tendency to extent the war and to convert it into a world shambles, which threatens to bring new and untold hardship on the nations and exterminate millions of lives for the benefit of the imperialist. To Dimitrov, even the working class of the capitalist countries had to face enormous suffering due to the war efforts. To Comintern, the military expenditure of the belligerent countries had reached incredible proportion. To Dimitrov, the bourgeoisie was laying the monstrous cost of the war on the shoulders of the working people. It was drastically increasing the taxation scales and introducing new indirect taxes on articles of general consumption.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Godman, ‘World Politics- Three-Power Blackmail’, in *International Press Correspondence (Inprecor)*, Vol. XVIII, No. 28, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1938, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Georgi Dimitrov, ‘The Struggle Against the Imperialist War’, *Inprecor*, No 6, June 1940, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

By quoting Lenin Dimitrov stated in all capitalist countries the most reactionary forces of imperialism raised their heads on the outbreak of the war and ever since they have been setting the tone to the whole political life of these countries. Dimitrov characterized this World War as an imperialist reactionary war against the people's interest. To Dimitrov, in this the bourgeoisie which hold power and determined the aims of war was out for conquest and plunder and subjugation of other nations. To him, this war was for the rich as the poor were bearing all its burdens and costs are suffering and dying in order that the rich may grow richer. To Comintern, it was a reactionary war as the bourgeoisie were launching another war in order to wage this war ie., a war against their own people whom they were squeezing. To the International, the imperialist will not voluntarily consent to the cessation of war, to it the bourgeoisie won't renounce their plan of extending and converting it to world carnage as long as the international working class and the people of their countries do not put an end to their 'mysterious villainy'.<sup>4</sup>

After declaring the Second World War as an imperialist war the Comintern made it clear that the important task of the international proletariat was to prevent the spread of the war in to other countries, to resist its conversion in to a world slaughter, fight against the criminal design of the bourgeoisie and to save the people from the abyss of imperialist war. As far as the international was concern, the working class is the only international class which was not solidly united by the community of interests of all its various national units and which was not interested in the exploitation of colonies or in the oppression of nationalities nor in the world supremacy of any of the imperialist power. The international declared that the working class was the most advancing class in society, whose mission was to liberate itself and all

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



liberating people from the yoke of capitalism which was the root cause of wars. Dimitrov believed working class was the only class which was capable of uniting all sections of laboring people, in each of the countries and internationally, in a common front against imperialist war to rouse them to struggle against war and to organize and lead the struggle. To Dimitrov, the more vigorously the proletariat takes the field against its own bourgeoisie in the second world war, the more powerfully it stimulate the struggle against war among the proletarians of the state with which its country was at war. That was the guarantee of the success in the united international struggle of the world proletariat against imperialist war. It declared, the people need peace not war. The movement for peace was growing universally. Whatever the least legal opportunity still the struggle for peace finds expression in workers meetings and conferences.

As a part of this strategy the international viewed the people of the colonies and the dependent countries who were struggling against imperialism were the allies of the proletariat in its struggle for peace. For example, the war of national liberation of the Chinese people against Japanese imperialist is not only defense of the integrity and independence of China, but also a tremendous help to the people of Europe in their struggle against imperialist war. Likewise the proletariat movement of India was also against the British attempts to take Indian people into the war efforts. To international, the proletariats struggle against war required the union of the fighting forces of the working class within each countries, a genuine popular front of the working people led by the working class, the united action of proletariat internationally and its own independent single international policy in the struggle against imperialist war. A combination of the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries within the anti-imperialist movement in the colonial and dependent countries and the rallying of the working people around USSR, which according to international, the only state which

championed the cause of peace among nations and which defends the vital interest of the working people of the whole world.

The important aspect of this Comintern strategy was its changing attitude towards the social democracy. In this same pamphlet Dimitrov while advocating the strategy of proletarian united front maintained that this strategy could be possible only through waging a relentless struggle against social democracy which was considered by the international as the main enemy of working class. To Comintern, the chief obstacle preventing the working class from fulfilling its role was social democracy. By criticizing the social democrats Dimitrov stated that when the war broke out the social democrats appeared in the role of the most bellicose and jingoistic party of the imperialist bourgeoisie. He continued his criticism on social democracy by stating that, they were trying to outdo the bourgeois ideologists who held that capitalism was not responsible for the present war, and that in general “there was no connection between capitalism and war”. By continuing his attack on social democracy he pointed out that besides defending and propagating the imperialist aims of the war the social democratic and reformist trade union leaders also bear direct responsibility for the capitalist offensive against the workers standard of living, for the cost of the war being place on the shoulders of the working class people, for the riot of reaction and military and police terrorism. To international, an essential condition for success in the struggle of working people against imperialist war and capitalist reaction was to open the eyes of the masses to the treacherous role of the social democracy, to arouse the anger and indignation of the masses against it. To international, defending the communist parties from the blows of reactions was the first line of self-defense for the working class and the whole people.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Between 1939 and 41 the communist international characterize the new world war as an imperialist war. Therefore its basic strategy was to accelerate its anti-war propaganda in the advanced and the colonial countries. The important aspect of the strategy was its emphasis on the role of colonial countries on the one hand and its strong attack on social democracy. Therefore this strategy accelerated various working class and peasant movements in different colonial countries like India. In India the working class movements were revived this major cities like Bombay, Kanpur, Surat and other palaces. The Comintern's position on the colonies provided trade unions an opportunity to intensify their trade union activities.

Immediately after the outbreak of the war CPI demanded that the war needs to be converted in to a revolution. This stand was visible in an official resolution of the Politbureau adopted at its meeting in October 1939. According to this resolution, the task of the Indian people was the revolutionary utilization of the war crisis for the achievement of national freedom. Commenting on congress Satyagraha they made it clear that a congress satyagraha campaign would serve no useful purpose unless communists not only take part in it but also guide it in such a way as would avoid procrastination and would prepare the ground for a nation –wide struggle. To them, if they win the confidence of the Rank and file of the congress and start anti-war activities with them, they shall be able very much soon to more and more influence the movement.<sup>6</sup>This shows that the CPI did not want a complete break with the congress in the initial days of the war instead it wanted the intensification of the struggle through their intervention in the congress. Based on this the communist organized the militant trade union struggle in different Indian cities. For example the communist led trade

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<sup>6</sup> Bhagavan Singh Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India- 1920-1947*, Vol.XI, New Delhi, Sage Publication, p. 285.

unions in Bombay organized a strike in the textile mills on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1939 as an anti-war protest. CPI took a very active part in carrying on intensive propaganda in the mill areas of Bombay in connection with the observance of Independence Day 26 January 1940. Out of 68 mills in the city 57 mill comprising 101238 daily-shift workers, remained closed on the day, only 11 mills with a complement of 7768 working. In this the workers shouted the slogans like; ‘defend the Soviet Union; fight for complete independence’. During this period communist were of the view that the participation of the workers and peasants in the struggle for independence with their own weapons, their own forms of struggle more than would upset Gandhian plan for honorable settlement.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise the breakup of the war created a rift between the congress socialist party and CPI. This was over the question of the attitude towards the war. On 9<sup>th</sup> October 1939 AICC meeting at Wardha was called to discuss the new situation arising out of the Second World War. Soon after, on 12 and 13 October, Subhash Chandra Bose called a meeting of the representatives of the left groups in Lucknow. At the end of this an agreed programme was formulated, but it was soon after CSP published a document which accused CPI of advocating the programme of armed insurrection. This created a friction between the CSP and CPI. In December a war circular of the CSP proclaimed that the communists had destroyed left unity. By responding to this national front the organ of CPI stated war was an international event and the left unity crashed as CSP had not yet reached a stage where it could acquire the ability to understand national events in their international setting. In a letter to Jayaprakash Narayan, P.C Joshi told that “events were taking place that would reduce us to pulp and we are supposed to shape events. We

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.

are perhaps deemed too puny and self-centered, instead of riding the wave we are not even swimming together”.<sup>8</sup>

As far as Kerala was concerned this war led to the transformation of the congress socialist party in to the Kerala unit of Communist party by around 1940. This practically ended its participation in the Indian National Congress. Unlike in other parts of India the emergence of the war created a permanent break between the congress and CPI. After January 1940 we would see the complete transformation of the Kerala unit of congress socialist party in to the Kerala unit of Communist Party of India. When there were some disputes between Congress Socialist Party and the CPI in other parts of India, Kerala had witnessed the transformation of the entire unit of CSP into CPI. Like other parts of India In the initial years of the war a new wave of peasant and labor agitations emerged not only in Malabar but in the princely state of Travancore and Kochi. Besides the strategy of imperialist war the day to day difficulties which accompanied the war accelerated the people’s agitation. It was the condition of the people following the outbreak of war which precipitated the struggle of various social classes. As stated by NE Balaram, with the beginning of war the price of essential commodities had risen and the scarcity of essential commodities became common. The forceful war fund collection of the government suffocated the farmers. It was in this context the communist party developed a strong anti-war movement. It was on the basis of this grievances from March 1940 the workers started agitation by raising demands like the introduction of dearness allowance based on their life index, open shops to sell grains in cheaper rates, to punish those officials who undertake the forceful war fund collection, give adequate price for agriculture products.<sup>9</sup>

After the Wardha session of the AICC in late 1939 ninety members of

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>9</sup> N.E., Balaram, *op. cit.*, *Kerala Communist...*, pp. 156-162.

the Kerala CSP met secretly near (Pinarayi) Tallassery and officially formed the Kerala unit of the Communist party of India. This conference was attended by E.M.S Namboothirippad, P.Krishnapillai, K.Damodaran, P. Narayanan Namboothiri, K.K Variyar, A.K Gopalan, Subramanya Sharma, E.P Gopalan, P.S Namboothiri, C.H Kanaran, K.A Keraleeyan, Subramanyan Thirumumb, K.P Gopalan, A.V Kunjambu, Chanthiroth Kunjiraman Nair, M.K Kelu, Subramanya Shenoy, N.E Balaram et al. This session was presided over by K.P Gopalan. After the pinarayi conference, two conferences were also held at Cheruthuruthi and Ernakulam respectively. While the Cheruthuruthi conference was organized under the leadership of Achuthakkuruppu, at Ernakulam it was under P Gangatharan. In January 26 1940 with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of congress's declaration of *Poorna Swaraj* as its goal- they publicly announced the existence the Communist party with tarred slogans on walls, culverts and government offices. It was in March 1940 the secret journal called 'Communist' was first appeared in Kerala. It was in the same year communist party circulated a pamphlet (called enemy of the unity, enemy of the struggle) in this conference at Kottakkal. In Kochi leaders like George Chadayanmuri, C.J Narayana Menon, E.S Gopalan, P. Sekharan and Kammanpalli Kakku played major roles in organizing the CPI. In 1940, its various party cells were formed in places like Thrissur, Andikkad, Ampallur, and Chalakkudy, Thrippoonitthara, Azhikkal etc. the trade unions movements were developed in places like Chalakkudi, Anthikkad, and Amballoor. In Travancore the organization work was made by K.V Pathros, P.A Solaman, C.O Mathew, C.G Sadasivan, K.C George, C.S Gopala Pillai, M.N Govindan Nair, P.T Ponnus, S. Kumaran P.G Padmanabhan et al. It should be noted that many of these leaders had started their life as ordinary workers. During this time party cells were formed in many places like, Cherthala, Alappi, Koothattukulam, Punaloor, Vaikom, Kottayam, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram etc. in Malabar the entire left-wing congress was transformed in to the communist party during this period. It was during the period of imperialist war, the pamphlets from the CPI central leadership were

secretly circulated among the party cadres of Kerala. In the words of N.E Balaram, in these pamphlets the issue of imperialism, imperialist contradictions, bourgeois parties and their contradictions the need for anti-imperialist struggle were discussed.<sup>10</sup>

These developments had intensified the movements of various social classes like cultivators, factory workers and school teachers and so on. The basic feature of this movement was that most of these movements were worked independently from the congress leadership. As stated by Dilip menon, from 1939, the CSP in Malabar adopted a more radical stand in the issues of cultivators. At the same time the right-wing congress was trying to establish their domination over the KPCC. In 1938 KPCC election the left-wing was able to capture the KPCC. However they continued within the congress till 1940. In the election of the KPCC in 1940 between two third of those who elected belong to the Kerala unit Congress Socialist party. About this period most of the congress committees of Malabar were dissatisfied with the Gandhian leadership of the congress. For example a resolution of the Kottayam Taluk congress committee criticized Gandhian control over the congress which according to them obstructed the desire of ordinary congress men to guarantee a mass movement against Britain's war efforts. The protest against the arrest of congress leaders, the KPCC called for demonstration in 15<sup>th</sup> August 1940. The working committee of the KPCC then asked to observe the day of protest in the same date against the repressive policy of government. As a result of this meetings were held all over north Malabar. The most vehement demonstrations were held in places like Calicut, Talassery, Papinisheri, Mattannur, and Kannur.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-162.

<sup>11</sup> Dilip Menon, *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India: Malabar 1900-1948*, New Delhi, Cambridge South Asian Studies, 1994, pp. 152-155.

This event became an important turning point in the history of communist movement in Kerala. It marked the irreversible termination of the united front strategy of the communist in Kerala. The observation of the day of protest of the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1940 led to the mass upsurge from the part of the cultivators. As a part of the day of protest the cultivators confronted with the police in places like Mattannur and Morazha. The next two years this region witnessed the mass upsurge of workers and peasants. The important part in this agitation was taken place in March 1941 at Kayyur where there erupted a clash between the police and the communist party agitators which led to the death of a police man.<sup>12</sup> In this period the communists of Malabar were in peculiar position; they were on the one hand, an independent political party functioning illegally and fighting the official policy of the congress while on the other hand, they were the leaders on the provincial district and lower units of the congress organization. Right wing of the congress was not in favor of mass anti-war campaign, the congress high command asked the Kerala unit to restrict their anti-war propaganda after the prohibitory order was issued on 15<sup>th</sup> September. After the event in Mattannur and Morazha in 15<sup>th</sup> September 1940 the all India congress committee dissolved the left dominated KPCC and instituted an ad-hoc committee in the leadership of Nandakeliyar to undertake the affairs in Kerala.

In the words of EMS Namboothirippad, in the initial phase of the war, it was not the effect of the war but the day to day aggression of the Janmies which intensified the peasant movement. As part of this mass meeting and rallies of the cultivators were held in different places. To him, this created tremendous wave of enthusiasm and political awakening. Anti-war and anti-

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<sup>12</sup> K.K.N., Kurupp, *Kayyur Riot; A Terrorist Episode in The Nationalist Movement in Kerala*, Calicut, Sandhya Publications, 1978, p. 43.



recruitment propaganda was also carried on the wake of this movement.<sup>13</sup> To him, peasant leaders evolved a new method for keeping their organization intact. They took a great care for saving their own leaders, who were not arrested by the police. After the outbreak of the war different peasant organizations were formed in different parts of Malabar.

Along with the peasants various other groups of people were also involved in this struggle. Important among them was the rise of Teachers movement. It was the deplorable condition of the teachers which facilitated the Teachers movement. In Malabar, majority of the schools were owned by the private individuals not corporate. As stated by Cherukad Govinda pisharadi, even though the congress government came to power in Madras the situation of teachers did not undergo any transformation the education department did not recognize them. They lived under the mercy of management.<sup>14</sup> Besides this the provincial Congress government issued orders prohibiting teachers from entering any political organization including the congress. Many teachers were dismissed without any reason. In order to counter this, the teachers established rival schools with the help of the people. To PR Nambiar, instead of giving support for job security to the teachers the congress government was eager to support the management for destroying Teachers organization. On the wake of this, for the first time in the history of Malabar the teachers called for a harthal on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1939. Following this the Malabar education minister CJ Varkey visited Kannur and assured governmental intervention in this regard. But the ministry did not last long. During the war time the government intensified repressive measures like the cancellation of union registration, removal of teachers from the service etc.

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<sup>13</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Extracts From EMS Namboothirippad, A Short History of The Peasant Movement in Kerala*, Bombay, 1943, pp. 32-34.

<sup>14</sup> Cherukad Govinda Pisharadi, *Mutthassi* (Mal), Thrissur, Kerala Sahitya Academy, 1989, p.194.

As the part of their agitation, in 1939 teachers decided to boycott the *shaniyan sabha* (Saturday council), about 90% of teachers both (members of the union and others) participated in the boycott. In 1940 according to an offer from the district collector of Malabar for discussing the issues of the teachers provided the agitation were stopped the strike of the teacher's ended.<sup>15</sup> After the outbreak of the war the teachers union called a slogan that 'Teaching is national services, their aim is to serve the nation', this was after some of the teachers opted for military service during the war. During this period the communists in Kerala tried to integrate the Teachers movement in to the broad movement against British war efforts.<sup>16</sup>

Likewise the Beedi workers' unions were also intensified their struggles through organizations in different parts of Malabar. Efforts were made to organize different sections of workers. For example in Kochi George Chadayanmuri tried to organize the toddy tapper by forming their organizations.

During the early years of the war the newly formed unit of CPI in Kerala had to work as an illegal underground organization. So they had to build an organizational setup suited for this situation. Many of the leaders were either arrested or had to work in secrecy. This was an important aspect in the formulation of the party organizational system. In 1941 the Communist International had given direction to all affiliated communist parties regarding the form and functioning in different circumstances either illegally or legally. As part of this it asked all the members of illegal Communist parties to be more cautious for avoiding arrests. To Comintern, in these countries where the Communist Parties were illegal, or all agitations either individual or in

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<sup>15</sup> P.R., Nambiar, *op. cit.*, 'Adhyapaka Prasthanavum....', pp. 81-91.

<sup>16</sup> Cherukad Govinda Pisharadi, *op. cit.*, *Mutthassi*, p. 275.

groups are of enormous importance (the exposure of the Fascist and the socialist party in connection with urgent demand of the masses, which could be linked up with the struggle for power). It should be carried on among the broad masses and should be backed by facts. In this way, it will be possible to enlarge the sphere of influence of the communists.<sup>17</sup>

Based on this direction the central committee of CPI had formulated a new guidance to every unit of the CPI regarding its organization and relationship with various class and mass organizations. To the CPI Central Committee the basic unit of the party was the cells. They were formed in factories, mills, big farms, institutions etc. these cell were liked with the workers, peasants and other leading organs of the CPI. Its tasks were agitation and organizational work among the masses for the party slogans and decisions. They had to attract sympathizers and new members and give political education to them. The publication of factory papers and wall papers, Assistance to the town or local committees in its every day organizational and agitational works were also their major task. Active participation as a party unit in the economic and political life of the members and the whole country and organize and participation the discussions and fining solutions to major issues along with carrying out the general party decisions etc were the duties of the cells.<sup>18</sup> In order to carry out these works, the cells should elect secretary and should be confirmed by the town or local committee. Its function include Collection of membership due, publication and distribution of factory party paper, leadership of the fractions of the factory mass organizations (trade union, sports, cultural, educational etc., active work among toiling masses and

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<sup>17</sup> O. Piatnetsky, 'The Communist Parties Presentation for Underground Work: Utilization of Legal Possibilities and Redistribution of Cadres' in *Party Organizer*, Vol.I, No.4, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1941.

<sup>18</sup> 'The Situation of Communist Party of India', *Party Letter* No. 39, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1941, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

recruiting new members, actively carryout the decisions of the cells and higher party organizations. Another important branch of the CPI was the provincial committee. It worked on the territory included in the administrative boundaries of the province. It might be formed from the town organization of the main city of the province. To them, a party fraction was controlled by the corresponding party committees, central committee, provincial committee, town or local committee or nucleus. The fractions were required to strictly implement the directions of the party. On the mass organization it's stated, in each mass organization there should be not less three party members who should act as link between party and this organization.<sup>19</sup>

As a continuation of this the central leadership of the CPI had given some organizational direction to the Malabar unit of CPI. It asked each Taluk committees of Malabar unit to prepare a monthly action plan after discussions with the party worker who had the organizational charge. It asked each committee to increase its membership from 75 to 100. This letter asked to form one committee for every firca. It also asked to collect Rs 200 and Rs 100 for party press and Rs 100 for work in the taluk. It asked to train 12 workers in four batches and it also demanded setup a safe tech apparatus. The letter asked systematic running of Taluk kisan office and it demanded to bring out a leaflet on behalf of the taluk *Karshaka Sangham*. It asked for meeting of the primary members of the congress in the areas of each primary congress committee. According to this circular every volunteer of the CPI was required to enroll a new volunteer and the formation of volunteer group. It further asked the Malabar CPI to enlist 25 student volunteer for conducting literacy movement.<sup>20</sup> Likewise it asked the CPI to enroll district board teachers union.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> 'Letter No. 5 of The Malabar Committee', Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

It also asked to organize a Taluk Mahila sangham, also asked to establish primary Mahila committees (womens organizations) in at least 3 centers, and enroll at least 25 members to the sangham.

On the basis of this above mentioned letter of the CPI unit in Kerala had developed a system called Tech. Through this their messages were circulated and party leaders were transferred from one place to another. Those who coordinated this system include A.C.P Nambuthiri, A.K.Shekaran, Pisharath, Kunjunni Kartha, Appunni Kartha, P.Appukkuttan, Ragava Pisharadi, KP Nanu, P.Haridas, M.Pathmanaban, P.Krishnan(Thalasseri), P.K.Gopalan(Calicut), 'Marxist' Kannan (Perambra), Kochanuja Pisharadi, P.M. Namboothiri (Mannarkkad), P.Sankaran Varrier(Kottakkal), M.Kanaran. Based on this system there existed a tight restriction in the spread of information about the CPI. As part of this system they identified the capacity and potentiality of tech members and given responsibility according to the capacity of each member. During this time they tried to develop an organizational network from Kanyakumari in the south and Mangalapuram in North. As a part of this plan the CPI, Kerala unit was divide into 11 units ie., PLO - (Pathalalokam office) - Mangalapuram, Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Kozhikkodu, Eranad, Valluvanad, Ponnani, Palakkad, Trishivaperoor, Kochi, Travancore, etc. For these activities they purchased cyclostyle machine from Bombay. Besides organizing party activities, efforts were made to conduct secret party classes on the basis of Marxist literature. In this process there had a collective reading and discussion and the volumes of *Inprecor* were collected and translated. As a part of this, party letters were printed in the illegal stone print based on the weekly reports came from party head quarters Bombay. Around 200 editions (Lakkam) of party letters by using 2000 copies of an edition were secretly circulated from Mangalore to Kanyakumari. During this period the party letters were like a news paper, where the notes were classified into international, national, regional and

local.<sup>21</sup> This system was developed to face with the challenge of its illegal existence. During the initial year of the war the activities of the communist party in India was illegal. In Kerala the condition became more difficult for the CPI after September 1940. After various agrarian struggles in North-Malabar land that of Kayyur the police initiated a massive hunt for communist leaders. In these circumstances the above mentioned organizational methods were necessary to ensure its effective functioning.

The anti-Imperialist position of the CPI during the early phase of the Second World War was a continuation of the Comintern-CPGB formulations on India (that is the strategy of anti-imperialist united front) that the Second World War was an imperialist war. The Reibben Trop-Molotov treaty had given them a false sense of security that the Fascists will not attack the USSR. So they could concentrate on their immediate enemy, imperialism. It was in this period of the Second World War the communist party in Kerala began to operate publicly as well as illegally. The outbreak of the war created some ideological issues within the KPCC. A significant section in the KPCC had advocated for the intensification of Anti-imperialist struggle by using the favorable condition which emerged with the outbreak of the war. But the other section was insisting on the need for the continuation of Gandhian way of struggle. This created a friction within the KPCC and the entire left-wing congress in Kerala was transformed into the Kerala units of communist party by the beginning of 1940. It was the day to day difficulties which caused by the war, enabled them to mobilize people under the leadership the CPI. During this period various social classes were organized and a new meaning was given to the trade union movement. Various sections like teachers, beedi workers, toddy tappers who were not included in the general concept of trade

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<sup>21</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pillai* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 577-601.

union movement were integrated into the broad united front. Through this the concept of united front was reinvented in accordance with the particular Socio-economic condition which existed in Kerala. This enabled the CPI to intensify the struggles of various social groups against the grievances they faced. The Comintern's understanding of the war in its initial years also helped them to do this. With the signing of the non-aggression pact, USSR was out of the war till June 1941 when the German forces invaded. This also helped CPI to intensify their agitation across the country. In other parts of India the communists did not have a complete break with the congress. Even though they had many differences with the congress leadership the CPI tried to intensify their struggles thereby tried to attain leadership in the congress led struggle. But the outbreak of The War resulted in the complete break of the Kerala Congress Socialist Party from the congress party and subsequently they were converted into the Kerala unit of the communist party. Till 1942 the communist tried to integrate the Anti-war movement into the anti-imperialist struggle. But the German invasion of the USSR had completely changed this situation.

Through this, USSR was forced to become a part of the world war. It persuaded the Communist International to change its strategy of imperialist war into peoples' war. Soon after the German invasion Joseph Stalin through a radio broadcast asked the entire international working class to rally under USSR against Fascism.<sup>22</sup> Through this changed strategy USSR became an integral part of the international alliance against the 'Axis Powers'. The period between 1941 and 1945 is an important period in the history of international communist movement. It was in this period the Communist International was dissolved in 1943. Likewise USSR had to make alliance

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<sup>22</sup> Joseph Stalin, 'Radio Broadcast', in *Peace Front to People's War*, Bombay, 1941, p. 86.

with the western capitalist powers against the common enemy of Fascism. Besides this the transition to peoples' war had created some problems for communist parties who worked in the colonies. At the same time many of these parties got an opportunity to work legally. Likewise many of them in the colonies hesitated for a sudden shift from imperialist war to people's war. There occurred a heated debate within various communist parties of the colonies over this new line. Above all these parties had to formulate new strategies of their own, to face this isolation from the mainstream Anti-colonial movement.

### **People's War and the Organizational Issues in Kerala**

The history of Indian communist movement between 1942 and 45 has been a subject matter of debate among scholars. Earlier there existed notion regarding this period was that during this period of time the Indian communist party had betrayed the Indian national movement by siding with British imperialism. This was manifested by writers like Arun Shourie argued that 'the only father land' of the communist was the Soviet Union. To him, the CPI loyalty was more towards Soviet Union than to the Indian national movement. To Shourie, during 1942 the Indian communist party had a secret deal with British Government. He claimed that, PC Joshi, the then general secretary of the communist party of India who was in jail at that time had established a contact with the Intelligence Bureau. Accordingly by April 30 1942 Tottenham the Additional Secretary of Home informed all provincial governments that the warrants against PC Joshi were being canceled to enable him to meet senior officials of British government. To him, the result of all these meetings and exchanges was a secret understanding between the Communists and British government. He argued that as a deal between the government and the Communist Party the British government did not take action against some objectionable remarks in the '*Peoples' war*' the then



mouth piece of Communist party of India.<sup>23</sup>To him, the communist forwarded some demands in return for their collaboration with British war efforts, they were; unconditional release of all communist prisoners and detainees, Removal of restriction on all communists who have been interned or ex-terned or otherwise restricted, Withdrawal of warrants against all underground communists, Withdrawal of bans on the National front, the *New Age* and all organs of the communists in provincial languages, immediate grand of press declaration for new newspapers, Journals and periodicals.<sup>24</sup>He was of the view that the Communist attitude towards the quit India movement needs to be understood in this context. Like Shourie many other writers share this argument. Likewise, others like Bipan Chandra and Bhagwan Sing Josh argued that the Indian communist had done a great blunder by denouncing the 'Quit India Movement'. To them by doing so the Communists were isolated from the main stream national movement. While studying on the communist movement in Kerala E Balakrishnan accused the CPI of blindly obeying the USSR by keeping away from the Quit India movement.<sup>25</sup>This kind of arguments are simplifying this entire issue, some recent studies had questioned this assumption. For example Sanjay Bhattacharya argued that there exist an extremely turbulent relationship between the Communist party and the British government. By quoting intelligence records he maintained that the British intelligence community was not pleased with the Anti-war propaganda of the Communist. Instead they were alarmed by various slogans of the Communist party. To Bhattacharya, the international implication of the war remained extremely important for the majority of the largely middle class

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<sup>23</sup> Arun Shourie, *The Only Father Land: Communists, 'Quit India' and The Soviet Union*, New Delhi, ASA Publication, 1991, pp. 22-56.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 34.

<sup>25</sup> E Balakrishnan, *A History of Communist Movement in Kerala*, Ernakulam, Kurukshetra Prakashan, 1998.

leadership of the CPI Politbureau and the party's provincial branches, but a significant majority of the 'old style communists' who remained uncomfortable with the People's war strategy throughout the war. For them even a temporary truce with the British imperialism was anathema.<sup>26</sup>

Before discussing the implication of people's war strategy it is important to examine the process of transition from imperialist war to people's war. It is essential to note that, this transition process was not sudden and simple. The German invasion of USSR was not resulted in the immediate change of the strategy. The strategy of the imperialist war was continued up to February 1942. Till then, there did not take place any substantial change in the attitude of the communist party towards the Second World War. In a letter dated 23 June, 1941 to the party units, the involvement of the USSR into the war was described as nothing more than an 'episode', which was immediately followed by sharp criticism from different quarters, leading to subsequent sharpening of the formulation. Consequently, the Politbureau clarified that the party's position was to accept the slogan of the 'people's war', to think in terms of the possibility of transforming the imperialist war.<sup>27</sup> Commenting on the war one month after the Nazy invasion CPI stated that, 'this is not an Anti-Soviet War or does it continues as a purely inter-Imperialist war but it has been transformed in to an Anti-Nazi war, in to the Anti-aggressors war. To CPI, one important change in the situation has come about and that is the crisis and collapse of British imperialists. To that extent CPI's struggle also becomes more protracted. To CPI, in this stage they must intensify their struggle during this period instead of weakening it. This protraction effects

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<sup>26</sup> Sunjay Battacharya, 'An extremely Troubled Relationship: The British Colonial State and The Communist Party of India- 1942-44', in Biswamoy Pati, Ed., *Turbulent Times: India 1940-44*, New Delhi, Polpular Prakashan, 1998, p.152.

<sup>27</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *Comintern and The Destiny of Communism in India: 1919-1943*, Calcutta, Seribaan-2006, p. 208.

another change, that is, the negative aspect of our struggle (struggle against war) goes in to the background, to return again in the future. CPI has therefore, to intensify the positive aspects all the more. CPI's struggle against war, as the part of CPI's struggle for freedom does not cease. Only in this period, it becomes of secondary importance. To CPI, even after the Nazi-invasion of Soviet Union the imperialist contradictions are becoming sharper instead of smoothening. To it, the two main contradictions of the Second World War, one was the sharpening of inter-imperialist conflict and second one was the sharpening conflict between the camp of people's revolution and the Soviet Union and peace on the one hand and the camp of capitalist reaction and war on the other. It is the emergence of the second conflict and its growth which distinguished the Second World War from the first. Every stage of the Second World War was determined by the interaction of these two basic conflicts'.<sup>28</sup> "The CPI asked to intensify their struggle against all manner of imperialist war effort. It had to harden the struggle for democratic liberties and against the growing hardship of the masses. In India, it is impossible to separate the struggle against British government from the struggle against its war efforts and war, because that enforced war and a war effort embodies our slave reaction with imperialist rulers".<sup>29</sup>

Likewise the party letter issued by the CPI Central Directorate in Bombay to commemorate the October revolution that is five months after the German attack on USSR still adhered to the policy of imperialist war. To this letter, their main slogan was that 'the victory of Soviet Union is bound up with the victory of all oppressed people over their exploiters'. They felt the

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<sup>28</sup> 'Has The Character of The War Changed..?', *Party Correspondence, 16-7-1941*, Archives of Contemporary History JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

necessity of the situation is to ensure the Soviet victory and through the intensification of the national struggle for the independence.<sup>30</sup>

But this attitude was underwent a drastic change at the end of 1941. To Sobhanlal Datta Gupta the CPI's adoption of the people's war strategy was closely connected with Achhar Singh Chinna's arrival to India from USSR. His objective was to secretly convey those Comintern documents which advocated the transition to people's war. To Dutt Gupta, these documents might have reached to those communist leaders who were in different Indian prisons. This accelerated the process of transition to people's war.<sup>31</sup> After this various documents were began to reach different Indian prisons which signaled adoption of the new line by the CPI.

The important document among this was a letter written from Dioli prison on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1941. This document declared that "it is axiomatic and self evident to all communists that a policy which is required by the supreme duty of defending the USSR must also be in the best interests of our country". To this document the most significant feature of the Second World War was, this was caused by the failure of the plans of the 'imperialist encirclement' of the USSR which was led earlier by Germany and later on by Japan, supported by Anglo-American imperialism. Through this letter Comintern appealed to the peoples of the world to form a common front against Fascism at home and abroad. This letter advocated for a programme of popular front in India, which was aimed at isolating the most reactionary sections who were supporting Fascism in India and abroad. To this document, the USSR is not a nation but a bastion of Socialism, from where working class gets their inspiration. So the proletarian strategy at this period was the

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Arun Shourie, *op. cit.*, *The Only Father Land* p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and The Destiny* p. 210.

isolation of the main enemy of the international proletariat. The main enemy of the proletariat was that section or sections of the bourgeoisie which take a lead in organizing a direct assault on the soviet. To the document, the proletarian unity and proletarian internationalism subordinate national considerations to international ones.<sup>32</sup>

To the Jail Document, the proletarians measured their national advancement by the general international advance of their class. For isolating the main enemy, the proletariats enter in to alliance with the sections and states of the bourgeoisie who were driven towards them by their own contradictions. To the document, British imperialism was no longer a threat of the world nations. Their temporary aim was to maintain its own security. Therefore, at the moment, their immediate aim was not the destruction of USSR. Commenting on German invasion of USSR this document declared, by attacking the only proletarian state the Nazi-Germany had declared a war upon the entire international proletariat. Therefore this document asked the Indian communist party to rally under Soviet Union and Allied powers against Fascism.<sup>33</sup>

The basic component of the new strategy was that the Indian communist party should wholeheartedly support efforts especially in the Soviet Union. To the new strategy with the entry of USSR into the war its character was under gone a significant shifts, that is a shift from imperialist to the people's war. According to this new line the Indian communists should give more emphasis to the anti-Fascist struggle than the national struggle against British. To this document, British imperialism did not possess an

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<sup>32</sup> 'A Note from Jail Comrades', in *Information and Documents*, No: 11/48, 13<sup>th</sup> December-1941, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

immediate threat to the world peace. On the contrary the threat was posed by Fascism.

Commenting on the new situation, from Yerwada prison, BT Ranadive stated this war was a people's war; the basic conflict in this war was between USSR and Nazis that is, international working class and Nazis. To him, "the basic conflict was not between imperialist. It arose to begin out of this conflict but it is the new conflict which determines the character of the war. The new conflict conceals the old one. To him, whatever being the motive, if this new conflict is solved by the victory of the people, strength of the will increase, not that of imperialism".<sup>34</sup> To him, 'it would not be possible for India to erect the edifice of its independence on the grave of Soviet Union'. India's progress depends upon Soviet victory in this war. Otherwise, imperialism will be strengthened and the world will be thrown back a few generations. As a part of the new strategy B.T Ranadive suggested for the formation of a constitutional assembly and a national government. These are necessary to solve the national crisis during the period of people's war. Ranadive believed that the strategy of people's war does not affect its fight against Imperialism. To him, all further rights of Indian people depend upon winning war. To him, Indian people could demand their rights and win them too while speeding up the war effort. In December 1941, the CPI's Politbureau adopted a resolution admitted that, it made a serious mistake by giving conditional support to USSR after the Nazi invasion.<sup>35</sup>

While writing a letter to the congress working committee in January 1942 PC Joshi declared that; "Indians must defend herself, India must resist Fascist aggression, India must line up with the united nations, India must have

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted in, Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and The Destiny*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

power to organize her defense, India must be free to fight for freedom”.<sup>36</sup> By criticizing the congress plan for a mass struggle he stated that; congress struggle does not lead the ‘patriots’ towards the fulfillment of the tasks they have themselves set the nation; but will produce the opposite result. To him, “the struggle against imperialist bureaucracy is the struggle for national unity. Let us have congress-league unity, backed by all patriotic organization of our people”.<sup>37</sup>

By explaining the new strategy of the communist party PC Joshi, made it clear that the war against Fascism can win only through the people’s war of liberation. By justifying the new strategy he claimed that the movement of the people became more and more determined and united around the people’s war. To him, its aims were “death to Fascism, freedom to all”.<sup>38</sup> However, the transition from the imperialist war to people’s war was not an easy task for the Communist Party. By doing this strategic shift they had to restrict the mass struggle against British imperialism which they had undertaken between 1939 and 1941. Similarly, they declared their main objective as the defense of Soviet Union. While doing this they had to limit the Anti-British struggle as both Britain and USSR were allies in the Anti-Fascist struggle. While CPI formulated this strategy, the Indian national struggle reached a new stage in mid 1942 with the starting of ‘Quit India movement’ by the Indian National Congress. Similarly, Subhash Chandra Bose and his Indian national army had created a new kind of enthusiasm among the youth of India. In places like Kerala the transition to new line was not an easy one. Till 1942, there had an

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<sup>36</sup> P.C., Joshi, ‘An Open Letter to the Working Committee From the Indian Communists’, January 26-1942, Archives of Contemporary History JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> P.C., Joshi, ‘The Communist Party and Its Policy and Work in The War of Liberation’, *NationalFront1942*, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

intense struggle in different parts of Kerala. The transition to new line therefore complicated the situation here.

In Kerala the adoption of the people's war strategy created a new kind of confusion with in the rank and file of the Kerala unit of communist party. Majority of the Kerala communist leaders knew about the German invasion of USSR from prison. To TJ Nossiter, there was some evidence that the majority of leaders were resisted the conclusion that they should change their earlier attitude towards the war.<sup>39</sup> For example, according to K Damodaran, many communist leaders were supported his counter thesis that the best way to help the USSR was by stepping up Anti-imperialist activity. To him, only a tiny minority of communist leaders were supported of the people's war. To Damodaran, after the change of line most of the pro-war communist were released, but some, including himself was kept in prison. The British intelligence knew perfectly well who to release and who to keep inside. By recollecting this period he stated when a circular arrived from the party leadership to party jail committee instructing to party workers to carry out the pro-war line, he automatically dropped his positions and was mocked by the others.<sup>40</sup>

By recollecting this period Cherukad Govindapisharadi stated that, he was shocked by the new circular on people's war. Till that day they were writing Anti-imperialist and Anti-war slogans. That had to be changed after this circular. To him, he did not share this circular even with his close friends in the day when he read it. After reading it he was a perplex situation. To Cherukad, he was not convinced by this new strategy. So he asked himself

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<sup>39</sup> T.J., Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 83.

<sup>40</sup> K Damodaran, 'The Tragedy of Indian Communism', in Thariq Ali, Ed., *The Stalinist Legacy*, England, Penguin Books, 1984, pp. 345-371.



how he can tell other comrades to follow this strategy. To him, this strategy created heated debate within the communist party in his native Taluk of Ponnani.<sup>41</sup>

The intensity of this debate had well illustrated through two characters of a novel written by Cherukad himself. Radhakrishna menon a character in his novel *Muthassi* was not convinced by communist party over the issue of peoples' war. After this there emerged a dispute between Gopalan and Radakrishna menon. To Radakrishna menon, in order to get freedom "we should stick the enemy when he was in danger". To this, Gopalan replayed "Fascism is more dangerous than imperialism. To him, it is a Himalayan blunder to jump from frame pan to fire. By responding to this Radakrishna menon stated, if the party supports the British imperialism there is no option except to say good bye to it. In this same episode Radakrishna menon strongly respond to Gopalan when Gopalan characterized Subhash Chandra bose as a Jap-agent. At the end Radakrishnamenon had portrayed as 'Fifth columnist' and he left the Communist party. To Cherukad, though majority of the party leaders upheld the new Communist Party strategy of the People's War, Some of the members were left the organization.<sup>42</sup> This shows depth of the confusion that the Communist party had entered. This notion was confirmed by EMS Namboothirippad, he stated, earlier he believed that mobilization of Indians against British will be the main support to the Soviet Union against German invasion. To him, many communist like him thought that how a colony like India can support the Anti-Fascist struggle. Till then they characterized the congress leadership as the compromisers to British imperialism. Therefore they thought the best way to support the USSR was to

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<sup>41</sup> Cherukad, *Jeevitapatha*, Mal, Thrissur, Current Books, August,1974, p.378-380.

<sup>42</sup> Cherukad, *Muthashi* (Mal), Thrissur, Kerala Sahitya Akademy, 1989, pp. 275-276.

fight against these compromises. To him, after the Nazi-invasion of USSR communist in India had confusions. They had two choices, either to continue their anti-imperialist struggle or to join the internal Anti-Fascist struggle by isolating themselves from the Anti-imperialist movement. In December 1941 they adopted the second option.<sup>43</sup> He continued by stating that to leaders like him, Quit India period was a real test as they were transformed to communist from bourgeois nationalist. To him, they got political maturity under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. But after the approach of people's war they had to cut all ideological and practical links with them.<sup>44</sup>

To AK Gopalan, after the German invasion of USSR many of his co-prisoners in Vellur central jail argued that the CPI should change its war policy due to the Nazi-invasion of USSR. But the majority thought the situation has not change. AK. Gopalan, KB. Krishna, PK. Balan, Balachandra Menon advocated that the change of strategy but majority co-prisoners like K. Damodaran, Chandroth Kunjiraman Nair, Kambambadi Sathya Narayan advocated the continuation of the present strategy. This discussion even led to the quarreling and the shouting among the co-prisoners.<sup>45</sup>

Recollecting his political activity in this period EK Nayanar stated that communist leaders like him got the new Comintern's documents on 'people's war' six months after the party adopted this line. To him, they received the documents of CPGB including that of Rajani Pam Dutt and Harry Polit which explain the new line. Likewise, they also got the Communist party publications like *National front*. To him, he was not in favor of the new party

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<sup>43</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Oru Indian Communistinte Ormakkuripp*, Mal, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 87-91.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.105.

<sup>45</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakatha* Mal, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers.

line. To him, he believed that this new line will isolate the communist party from the mainstream national movement and they thought the party was swimming against the national flow.<sup>46</sup>

To E Gopalakrishna menon, when the congress started the Quit India movement the young cadres of the party was confused whether to join the movement or not. CPI's stand of first to resist Fascist aggression was not convincing for them in the initial stage.<sup>47</sup>

By recollecting those days poet P. Bhaskaran stated he was deputed to move the resolution which adopted the strategy of people's war in the convention of student's federation at Kollam 1942. Though he personally opposed the new line he obeyed the party direction. To him, in Kochi, as a result of the people's war strategy the student's federation was split and the national student's organization was formed.<sup>48</sup>

Besides initiating some ideological debate, this strategic shift created some organizational problems in the Kerala unit of CPI. In this period most of the cadres in Kerala were not satisfied with the new strategy. This made a deep impact upon the organizational structure of the CPI in Kerala. In 1943 the Communist party called for the collection of fund worth of five lakh rupees. In this the quota of Kerala units was fixed at fifty thousand rupees. But Kerala unit decided to collect Seventy five thousand rupees. But their collection was limited to thirteen thousand rupees. This showed that even the party member were not ready to pay for it. Even many members were not

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<sup>46</sup> E.K., Nayanar, *Olivukala Smrithikal*, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 45-46.

<sup>47</sup> E. GopalaKrishna Menon, 'Communist Party Adyikalangalil' Mal, in *Indian Communist Party; Arupatham Varshikam - Janayugam Vishesalprathi*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1985, pp. 124-127.

<sup>48</sup> P. Bhaskaran, *Jeevithavum Kalayum* (Mal), Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi Books, 2004, p. 32.

ready to pay their levy to the party. This intensified the inner party struggle in the CPI. In which one section was led by P Krishna Pillai and other by leaders like CH Kanaran and TK Raju. As a result of this factional struggle, around June 1943 the Kerala state committee of the communist party was in effect dis-functional. In June 1943 secretary Krishna Pillai unilaterally dissolved the Kerala state committee and himself took over the affairs of the CPI. This opposition was also shared by CH Kanaran. There was a strong difference of opinion over the role of workers in to the success of people's war. There was a suspicion that whether the strategy of non destruction in factories and grow more food programme was suited for a revolution of any party. The party cadres on the one hand faced the problem of inability to reach out to the people, on the other hand they had to uphold the principle of internationalism.<sup>49</sup> Likewise this confusion was also reflected in various mass organizations in Kerala. The infighting was developed in trade union movement. For example, a Non-Communist united trade union movement was formed in Thalasseri. Likewise the president of the Teachers union was resigned from the post alleging that this union was used by Communists for their propaganda. Similarly, rival Beedi workers union was formed in Thalasseri<sup>50</sup> Recollecting these days CPI Leader MN Govindan Nair stated that in Kollam, they faced some difficulties in organizing the trade unions due to their political opposition to C.N. Sreekandan Nair. During this period each member was required to draft a working report. Besides public meeting and statements they also adopted a strategy of speaking to individuals. But this did not attract the public attention. Though N.K Kumaran was the vice president,

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<sup>49</sup> TJ., Nossiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86. Also see, 'Extract From Fortnightly Report From Madras For Second Half of November 1944', *Home- Political*, File No. 18/11/44/ Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi. Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pillai...*, pp. 686-688.

<sup>50</sup> K. Gopalankutty, *op. cit.*, *The Rise and growth....* pp-131-133.

the Kollam workers union, he was not been give much consideration in the activities of the organization. Because of the starvation two communists Paramu and Pathros went to Bomby, other members like; Manuval and Jeorge Joseph went to other states for seeking Job.<sup>51</sup> Likewise the policy of non strike created some problems in the trade union movement. Many were upset with this policy. The non communist trade unions used this policy as an opportunity for anti-communist propaganda. Like the labor movement the peasant movement had faced some trouble due to the adoption of people's war. The adoption of this strategy led to the formation of Kisan congress, formed to unite peasants under nationalist banner. The Cochin Karshaka sabha also split into two, with the leftist aligning with the all India Kisan sabha, and the nationalist's forming the Cochin Kisan Congress<sup>52</sup>

In Kannur (a CSP-CPI Strong hold in Malabar), former Congress Socialist Party members like Dr. KB. Menon left the CPI in protest against the new CPI strategy. Likewise in Thrissur Matthai Manjooran left the CPI and later formed the Kerala Socialist party. After 1942 the All-Travancore Trade Union Congress was fell under the control of such men like Manjooran and Sreekandan Nair.<sup>53</sup>

The most important effect of the new strategy was that a significant section of Socialists had left the communist party in protest against the new strategy of people's war. In Kerala the anti-Jap movement has accelerate this process many of the socialist were provoked by the Communist characterization of Subash Boss as a Jap-agent and fifth columnist.

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<sup>51</sup> M.N., Govindan Nair, *Ente Athmakadha*, Vol-2, Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhath, N.D, p. 119.

<sup>52</sup> *Idem. Op. cit.*, 'Malabar', p. 560.

<sup>53</sup> T.J., Nossiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86

As a result, in the initial years of the new line the Communists in Kerala were isolated from the national movement. Congress began to characterize them as traitors and the agents of British imperialism. The communist meetings were disrupted in different parts of Kerala. For example, a fortnightly report of the madras presidency pointed out that in Malabar there have been clashes in various meetings and district authority were taking action to control such meetings by licenses under the police act. It is reported that a meeting in Calicut a communist heckled the congress speaker on his refusal to answer the question whether the civil disobedience movement of 1932 was launched by congress, and if not, why he was blaming for not helping the congress in the fight for freedom.<sup>54</sup> Besides the congress the congress socialist party was in the forefront of attacking the communist party. Commanding on this situation EMS Namboothirippad stated in 1943 after late 1942 the Communist party had lost all qualities which it had possessed across the world. The party had undergone the real test of the time. He reminded all party members that, they should understand the fact that even the party membership will be tested. To him, it was the weakness of the state committee which made this situation to the party. Instead of framing new programs for the new situation the committee members made factions and groups and quarreled among themselves. This made the communist party not functioning. He added, the district committee members repeated the same practices of the state committee. The village and cell committee were unable to understand this situation and they were not aware what to do next.<sup>55</sup> This showed that till late 1943 many cadres in the CPI were not interested in

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<sup>54</sup> 'Extract From Fortnightly Report from Madras for Second Half of November 1944', *Home - Political*, File No. 18/11/44/ Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>55</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Puthiyachattangal' (Mal), November 2- 1944, Party Organizer, also cited in P. Govindapilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika 1944-45*, Vol.V, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1999, p.185.

implementing the strategy of people's war. A large number of party members did not grasp the new CPI line. Similarly the starting of Quit India movement and the adventurism of Indian national army in East Asia had attracted a large number of youth in Kerala. This made an adverse impact upon the strategy of the communist party. The second congress of the CPI self critically stated that the absence of the anti imperialist policy and strikes were the main weakness of the Communist Party during the period of the Peoples' War. It further stated there was hardly any anti-imperialist slogan except the release of the national leaders. Due to the faulty understanding of the role of the imperialism the party came out with the most horrible formulation about socialist party, the forward block and other left groups that they were denounced as fifth column groups. While in reality it was imperialism that was doing the work of 'Fifth column'. Even though they faced some initial difficulties, they adopted some new strategy to overcome these initial chaos difficulties.<sup>56</sup>

### **People's war and new strategy of the communist movement in Kerala**

Though there was an initial isolation due to the new strategy, the communist party could use it as an opportunity to operate legally. The situation created out of people's war persuaded it to adopt new plan of action in line with the people's war. It took several initiatives to organize the people by raising certain issues which affected the day to day life of the people like food shortage, hoarding and diseases. While taking up these issues it had refrained from harsh criticism of British government which according to them will weaken the war efforts against Fascism. Likewise it initiated a series of propaganda aiming to give awareness to the people and party members about the need for Anti-Fascist struggle. For example, PC.Joshi, while criticizing

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<sup>56</sup> *Political Thesis Adopted at The Second Congress* held from 28<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March ,1948, Calcutta, Communist Party of India, 1948, pp. 129-131.

the congress stated “there are elements in our national movement who think it is not a people’s war for us. Because India is not free, Instead of relating war to India’s freedom, they wait for India’s freedom fall from imperialist hand and wait instead of calling the people of India to unite with the people of the world and strike together; they keep Indian people away from people of the world”.<sup>57</sup> To him, communist must differ from those who say India must be first before we fight freedom war. Similarly Communist differs from those who say national government first and then the ministries.<sup>58</sup>To him, this war with the Fascist Germany cannot be considered an ordinary war. It is not only a war between two armies; it is also a great war of the entire soviet people against the Fascist Germany. To him, the aim of their National war in defense of their country against the Fascist oppresses is not only to eliminate the danger having over the country, but also added all the European people growing under the yoke of German Fascism. He continued to state that, the attack on USSR transform the character of the imperialist war in to people’s war. The attack on USSR is a call for people’s mobilization to win the war. The victory of USSR becomes the guarantee of people’s liberation all over.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, by criticizing the August Resolution EMS Namboothirippad stated the ordinary congress workers were not convinced about the need for congress-league unity to solve the existing national crisis. At the same time they were not thinking that the existing struggle is the way to achieve the national government. To him, the Gandhian sponsored Grama Seva sangham had two options, either to save the people from starvation or to destroy the national unity by joining with the ‘Fifth columnist’.<sup>60</sup> While criticizing the

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<sup>57</sup> P.C., Joshi, *op. cit.*, ‘The Communist Party and Its Policy...

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> P.C., Joshi, ‘Imperialist War in to People’s War: From Peace Front to People’s War’, in *The Basic Document of Communist Movement January 1934-November 1942*, Bombay, Progress Publishers, (n.d.), p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, ‘August Resolution Punaralochikkanam’ (Mal), in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika 1942-1944*, Vol. IV, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1999, p. 190.



national congress for its august struggle the communist believed that the important pre-condition for the solution of India's National crisis was the release of political prisoners including Gandhi.

In this period an important development has taken place in the international communist movement. That was the dissolution of the communist international in 1943. By reCommenting 'the dissolution of the Comintern in may 1943 the presidium of the executive committee of the communist international declared, this step will expose the columny of the advisories of communism within the labour movement to effect that communist parties in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interest of their people but on order from outside. An end is now being put this lie'. To ECCI presidium, it exposes the lie of the Hitlarates to the effect that USSR allegedly intended to intervene in the life of other nations and to Bolshevize them. It declared, this decision will facilitate the work of 'patriots' of all countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of party or religious faith, in to a single camp of national liberation for unfolding the struggle against Fascism. To them it allows the work of the 'patriots' of all countries for utilizing all freedom loving people into a single international camp for fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism thus clearing the way to the future organizations of a championship of nations based on upon their equalities. To ECCI, these steps will result in a further strengthening of the united front of allies and other to unite nations in their fight for victory over Hitlerate tyranny. By justifying the dissolution of Comintern ECCI presidium stated the 7<sup>th</sup> congress of communist international meeting in 1935 taking into account the changes that had been taken place both in the international situation and the working class movement that demanded great flexibility and independence of its sections in deciding the problems confronting them, emphasized the necessity for the ECCI, in deciding all questions of the working class movement arising from concrete

conditions and peculiarities of each country, to make a rule of avoiding interference in the internal organizational affairs of the communist parties. These same consideration guided the communist international is considering the resolution of the communist party of the USA of November 1942 on its withdrawal from the ranks of the communist international. This resolution was signed by representatives like G. Dimitrov, O. Kuusinen, M. Ercoli, W. Florin, D. Maualsky, K. Gottwald, A. Marty, V. Kolarov, W. Thorez, J. Koplanning, and A. Zhdanov. Besides them, Many communist leaders signed in the this resolution like, Bianco (Italy), Dolores Ibruri (Spain), Lekthinin (Finland), Anna Parker (Romania) et al.<sup>61</sup>

By defending this decision EMS Namboothirippad stated the communists changed their programme and strategy on the basis of changing condition and in accordance with space and time. The factor behind the dissolution of communist international was determined by the interest of the world proletariat. The dissolution of international would enable each and every proletarian party to apply their general principle in accordance with the particular condition in a particular country. To him, a possibility was emerged for a democratic international replacing the communist international for a broad anti-Fascist alliance. This front had to perform multiple tasks. They include the immediate destruction of Fascism and the early end of war and the speed frail of the 'Fascist criminals'. Each and every nation should have the right to determine their future, the economic reconstruction of the war drown countries.<sup>62</sup>The dissolution of Comintern provided an opportunity to all

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<sup>61</sup> 'Resolution of the ECCI Presidium Recommending the Dissolution of the Communist International- 15<sup>th</sup> may 1943: World News and Views', in Jane Degras Ed., *The Communist International 1929-1943*, Vol.III, Oxford, (n.d.) pp. 476-478.

<sup>62</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'International Pirichuvittathinethudarnnu' (Mal), P. Govindapilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.IV, *op. cit.*, pp. 146.

Communist parties including the CPI to formulate a strategy in accordance with the existing peculiar conditions in each country.

The important advantage which the CPI got after 1942 was an opportunity to operate legally which it had denied from early 1930 itself. In July 1942 the British government lifted the ban on Communist party and allowed its legal function. As a part of this in January 1943 it had cancelled an earlier notification (10th September 1932), known as the general communist notification, which prohibited to bring Marxist literature to British India which comes from communist international.<sup>63</sup> It helped the communist party to frame a new organizational system which is suited for a legal communist party. It was during the period of people's war the first congress of the communist party was held in 1943 at Bombay. In this period it started its mouth piece named 'people's war'. Besides people's war it started its papers in different Indian languages like *Deshabhimani* in Malayalam. Three months after the German invasion of the USSR the Comintern directed to all affiliated Communist parties about its work either on legal and illegal conditions. To O. Piatnitsky who was writing for Comintern said that in countries where the Communist parties were legal, individual and group oral agitation has enormous importance. The exposure of the Fascist and social Democratic Party in connection with urgent demand of the masses, which could be linked up with the struggle for power and should be backed by facts. To him, in this way it could be possible to enlarge the sphere of influence of the communists.<sup>64</sup> In this basis the CPI tried to formulate a new strategy and a

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<sup>63</sup> 'Government of India to All Provincial Governments Regarding Ban on Communist Literature, in Parthasarathi Gupta, Ed., *Towards Freedom*, Vol.XII, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 153.

<sup>64</sup> O. Piatnitsky, 'The communist Parties' Preparation for Underground Work; Utilization of Legal Possibilities and Redistribution of Cadres' in *Party Organizer*, Vol.I, No.4, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1941, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

new organizational system in the new reality which would enable it to face challenges posed by the August struggle.

After August 1942 CPI tried to give emphasis to the anti-Fascist struggle against the August struggle of the Indian National Congress. To it, the immediate task of the Indian working class was to fight the Japanese aggression. In September 1942 the first plenum of the legal communist party was held. It stated this plenum was met at the most critical moment in the life of the country. To it, the 'hoarders of Japanese imperialist' were messing with themselves on the borders of Bengal and Assam. To it, this situation should be faced with the stupendous task of hammering out of the clear cut 'bold and a united policy', a policy which enabled it and its units to effectively intervene the situation, to lead the people out of morass of 'disruption, anarchy' and 'demoralization' on the firm path of the national unity, national resistance and the National freedom. To the plenum, in the present situation the only way for the defense of India was the unity between Congress and Muslim league. It declared that, it can defeat Fascism only through the political campaign against Jap and Fascist agents and by organizing big mass upsurge.<sup>65</sup>

On the question of organization it declared that build a mass party out of what they have to do day by day extending it and by improving it. It asked to build an organized relationship from top to bottom. Participating in the plenum PC Joshi stated a party cannot build without building party builders. To him, the first job for this was to re-educate the entire party leadership. This will have to be mainly done through organizing special central and local school for "party building" run by the central and provincial committee. To

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<sup>65</sup> '1942 August Struggle and Communist Party of India: CPI- National Unity for The Defiance of The Motherland, Resolution of The New Plenum, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

Joshi, without trained party functionaries the party cannot build. To Joshi, the national unity cannot achieve without an iron unity.<sup>66</sup>

To the plenum, the national resistance against the Fascist invaders demands that the productions should be organized and expanded. By criticizing the British bureaucracy it stated that 'the imperialist bureaucracy which boasts having stepped up Indian industrial production for war purpose has really throttled it by methods which involve brutal exploitation of workers the suppression of their trade union rights. To CPI, the production is no longer being treated as the special concern of the profiteers and bureaucracy. On the other hand production has become the concern of the people's very existence and freedom. For this the working class needs to play an effective role in organizing national production for the defense of the country. It contented that the imperialist bureaucracy was isolated and weakened as never before. To CPI, the more it beat and represses the people, the more it hatred and disgust of all section of the nation. Its criticism on imperial bureaucracy should be seen as an attempt to garner the public support which may loss due to the isolation from the Quit India movement. The CPI declared that this national crisis would not be resolved either through the suppression of the Indian National Congress or through the intensification of the anti-British struggle by the Congress. The only way for this was the broadest possible national unity, based on congress-league unity.

Communist party envisaged three important tasks for national unity. Based on this it asked to organize a country wide campaign for national unity, to carry on political explanation among workers, peasants and congress man regarding the anarchy caused by the August struggle. Likewise it called for wide spread agitation among Hindu-Muslim masses for congress-league unity. CPI advocated for the Congress league agreement for a provisional

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

government which will help for a national unity against the Fascist aggression. As a part of this the plenum asked the congress to recognize the urgency of Muslim nationalities and thus hasten the achievement of congress league unity. However it stated Muslim independence can only come by joining with Hindus and the congress for joint action. Likewise the plenum decided to conduct a political explanatory campaign among workers, through street corners and busti (chawl) meetings as well as through Public meetings. It also asked to establish vigilance committees of militants in basti (chawl) and mill contract and panic mongering and activities of irresponsible provocateurs intent on sabotage or stoppage of production. To the plenum, the CP must make the working classes conscious of the leading role it has to play and restoring and maintaining peace, in developing the drive for national unity, for winning the national demand and thus leading the people as a whole.<sup>67</sup>

On the question of production front the plenum declared that the government of India failed to mobilize the industrial productive recourses of this country in the common fight against Fascism, to them, the government was not able to utilize the existing industry to full capacity and satisfy the normal requirements of the people. The plenum regarded that the production had a vital role in saving the country from the national collapse, and strengthen the resistance against invaders. It declared that the task of the party is to win the working classes to a national outlook on production. Unless the deep patriotic instincts of the working class are roused to action the working class will prove unequal to the task, give way to panic and desert his possibilities the logic of the bourgeoisie's policy will assert itself.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> 'Production Policy and Trade Union Tasks', Resolution Passed by The Enlarged Plenum of The Central Committee of Communist Party of India, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1942, Archives of contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

On the struggle of the state people the plenum declared the struggle for the people's unity in the state was an integral part of the struggle for uniting the whole of Indian people for facing the aggressors that stand the threshold of our country. To CPI, the task of the state people is to focus their energies forging the widest unity among themselves for achieving a patriotic unity of all parties against the state. To CPI, mass organization like Kisan Sabha, Trade unions, student's organization though well developed in certain states organization under these conditions their necessity of defining the task of people's mobilization for securing all parties patriotic governments in terms of specific task suited to specific condition of each state. To the plenum the important task of the state people are; popularization of the demand for a united all parties, patriotic government in each state, the establishment of civil liberties, release of political prisoners, the withdrawal of repressive measures and legislation and bans on state people's conference where they exist mobilization of public behind these demand. It declared that widespread mobilization of the people, particularly of the workers and the peasants behind the demands of effective control of food supplies at price within the means of poor, as also other important and day to day economic demand of the people are important tasks of the state people's movement.<sup>69</sup> Likewise in September 1942 the All India Student's Federation passed a resolution on the national unity. In this resolution it called upon to build the political unity of students on stronger front than ever before.<sup>70</sup>

The first plenum of the CPI which held in September 1942 provided a broad policy frame work for the communist party during the period of

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<sup>69</sup> 'Task of The State of Peoples, Resolution Passed by The Enlarged Plenum of The CPI', 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1942, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>70</sup> 'AISF and National Crisis, Unity The Way Out', September, 1942, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

people's war. This plenum had identified certain tasks which the communist party should undertake in order to reconnect it to the people. Now its main focus was the national unity that is the unity between congress and league. Instead of intensifying the struggle it gave emphasis to the increase in production. On this basis it asked all sections of society like the working-class to work for the increase in the production of essential commodity. Instead of the direct attack of British government the CPI directed its criticism against the British bureaucracy for depleting the production situation in India. By doing this they tried to mobilize the people against the British without disturbing its co-operation with war efforts.

About 1943 the day to day difficulties of the people due to war became acute. There occurred famine like situation in different parts of India like Bengal. During this period food grains were largely mobilized to the war front. This intensified the scarcity of food items. Likewise the hoarding and black marketing became common. This situation provided an opportunity for the communist party to engage the campaign for the growing food production. It believed that the root cause of the food crisis was the bankrupt policy of the bureaucracy. To it the prerequisite of the satisfactory solution of the food crisis was that the all stock of grain meant for the trade must be stored in public godowns. To them the price of food stuffs must be brought down to the purchasing power of the ordinary consumers. To CPI, the peasants should be assured the reasonable price for his produce. However, this cannot eliminate the honest trader. To them, the honest trader should be protected from the clutches of the monopolist hoarders. Likewise he should get a reasonable rate of profit out of his trade. To CPI, these prerequisite cannot be achieved without support of the people. So it is necessary both in rural and urban areas to have people's food committees in which representatives of all section and parties of the people and secure recognition for them from the government for the control of supply and regulation of prices. To it, only a national



government can solve the food problem on national level.<sup>71</sup> By making a self criticism in the food front this resolution declared that the main failure of the communist party's food campaign was that it intervened on the food front sporadically and piecemeal. To CPI, it followed the 'critical spontaneity pattern'. It continued by stating that Communist party took up considerable time with proceeding of food campaign. To them, they began to intervene when the situation became already bad and reached a breaking point. Similarly they confessed that it failed to realize that their intervention in the events after food front was on a par with their intervention in the events after the august struggle.<sup>72</sup>

By presenting the report on the food situation before the plenary committee of the CPI central committee S.G Sardesai blamed the British government for the worsening food situation in the country. To him, government seeks to hide the fact that its own selfish and bankrupt in matter both political and economical, that has given the birth to the hoarders and the monopolist in the country. To him, by putting all blames of food crisis on the hoarders, the government tried to mobilize people against the entire mercantile community and invites civil war and disruption in the country. Sardesai declared that, food crisis was the extreme intensification of the national crisis, it extent to the national crisis to the most elementary human needs viz. food. There by creating a deadlock in the entire economic life of the society and bringing in its train utter social disruption and ruin.<sup>73</sup> From the beginning of the war, imperialism has heaped in increasing the burdens on the

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<sup>71</sup> 'The Food Crisis and Our Tasks, Resolution Passed by Central Committee of CPI Plenum', 19<sup>th</sup> February, 1943, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi, p-65.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> S.G., Sardesai, 'Report Before The Plenary Committee of Communist Party From 10<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 1943', Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

shoulders of the people and followed an economic policy that far from the checking profiteer and hoarders has only fostered them at the cost of the people. He reiterated that the government's price policy and supply result in starvation and the robbing of people and disrupting their unity. To him, since the beginning of the war the government price policy has provided a legal sanction on every speculative rise that has taken place during the period of war. To him, that is why the 'bureaucratic' 'imperialist' government cannot and will not control supply and distribution that its price policy also was a miserable failure. Imperialism began to use more and more coercion to solve the food problem, so it is clear that the food crisis was not merely a crisis of the food but the most dangerous and acute contribution of national crisis itself. Sardesai claimed that the party alone has a policy which actually secures food for the people and does not satisfy itself by merely abusing by the government and the hoarder while doing nothing to the people food in actual practice. The more Communist party draw congressman, Muslim leagues, Hindu Maha Sabha, traders, students, women, workers and cultivators in to food campaign.<sup>74</sup>The food campaign of the CPI was an attempt to unite the people of India against the Fascist aggression. To them, the campaign like, 'grow more food' programme was an opportunity to unite all section based on a common cause.

In May 1943, the communist party had organized its first party congress in Bombay. In the words of EMS Namboothirippad, the congress did not discuss about the merit of the strategy of people's war instead it was stressed on its effective implementation.<sup>75</sup>In this congress deliberated the various strategies which were necessary for the success of the people's war

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Indian Communistinte Ormakkuripp...* p. 103.

strategy. The important feature of this congress was the emphasis it had given to the Anti-Fascist national unity that is the unity between the Congresses the Muslim league and the Hindu Saha Sabha and the formation of a national unity government. It declared that this war was the 'titanic conflict' between the camps of the people and the camp of Fascist imperialism, between the forces of liberation and those of enslavement of war between 'coalition of the freedom loving people of USSR, China, America and Britain and robber champion of Hitler's Germany, Fascist Italy and militarist Japan'. To the congress, this war was a death battle of imperialism, the culminating point of a 25 year long road depending crisis of world imperialism. The forces of Fascism- the spear land of aggressive imperialism are hopelessly surrounded. It declared that India's fate and freedom is indissolubly linked with fight for world freedom. To Communist party it is sparing no effort to rouse and unite the Indian people and bring them in a common battle line, for the final all out assault against the Fascist gangster.<sup>76</sup> By criticizing the British government and the Indian political organizations it declare both congress and Muslim league, instead of realizing their first conditional or unparamount duty for national defense instead of going forward for unite the people for the same, waited for the imperialist to give power. To the congress, instead of basing their policy on the unity and patriotism of people both Congress and the league were rallied upon the grade of imperialist to keep India as their colony. They thought and acted on the assumption that the imperialists, wishing to defend India as their possession against Japanese, would come down sooner or later and settle up with them if they head up national defense.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> 'Unity in Action for The National Defence and The National Government', Resolution Passed Unanimously by The First Congress of The Communist Party of India, May-1943.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

All above mass campaign should be run in such a way that they result in the building up of mass organization like the trade union, Kisan Sabha, students and women organizations, as the part of the campaign for “grow more food”, national unity and release campaign is more urgent task. To the Congress, every party unit should be drawn painfully on this drive to build the mass organizations. This was absolutely essential for laying an ever widening base for the building of a mass Communist party.<sup>78</sup>

Like other parts of India the strategy of people’s war was begun to be implemented in Kerala from early 1943 itself. As mentioned earlier the transition to People’s war was not an easy task for the majority of the Kerala communist leaders as they became communists from congress. Therefore they faced so many initial difficulties in implementing this new strategy. However, finally they agreed with the new line. The Kerala leaders also accepted the principles of people’s war and its message of national unity. From Kerala P Krishna Pillai and CH Kanaran participated as delegates in the Bombay plenum. Based on the CC plenum between 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November 1942 was declared by the communists as the national unity week to propagate the ideas of CPI plenum. In this various sections of workers include; Toddy tapers of Anthikkad, workers of Sitharam mill, Cotton mill workers of Calicut, workers of the common wealth factory were participate. Based on the Bombay plenum, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1942 the plenum of Kerala unit of the CPI was held at Calicut. Its main objective was to implement the decision of the Bombay central committee plenum in Kerala.<sup>79</sup>

Between 20-21 Mach 1943 the first Kerala state conference of the CPI was held in Calicut. In this conference there participated 650 delegates were

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu Krishnapilla....* pp. 624-630.

participated different parts of Kerala. From the organization of peasants, Teachers, Students, from PB Staff, Party organizer, press, friendly delegates from Bombay, Bangalore, Mangalore and Mysore 7.<sup>80</sup>In this conference there presented three reports. They were; the political and organizational report, the trade union report, the Kisan sabha report. In this, the party members were asked to propagate that the nation's defense means the self preparation for a counter attack against international threat of Fascism. It asked for propaganda for the fostering of mass organization of worker, peasants, students, teachers, children and so on. It asked to do propagation for national unity by raising issues like the release of political prisoners, solving the food crisis and problem of production. This conference elected seven members state committee consisting of five members and two substitutes.<sup>81</sup>Along with the party state conference of the CPI they organized an exhibition in Ganapathi School Chalappuram. There exhibited War pictures from Moscow, pictures of Japanese aggression, Painting of Anti-Fascist painters and the writings and speeches which depicted the life of Marxist leaders.<sup>82</sup>

During this period CPI tried to form various class and mass organization in Kerala like that of the workers, peasants, woman, and students and so on. For example, in Ambalappuzha taluk, there form a women's organization called Mahila samjam. These associations formed Anti-Jap committees. As part of their activity a class was conducted at Puthiyara Calicut for the volunteers of the Mahila Sangam.<sup>83</sup>On 27 July 1943 the Kerala unit of the Communist party asked to observe the second of august 1943 as the Kayyur day. A public meeting was convened at Calicut Town hall on the

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<sup>80</sup> *Kozhikode Jilla Communist Party Charithram* (Mal), December, 2011, Kozhikode, Keluettan Padana Gaveshana Kendram, p. 434.

<sup>81</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit*, *Sakhavu Krishnapilla*.... pp 655-656.

<sup>82</sup> *Kozhikode Jilla Communist Party Charithram, op. cit.*, p 437.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 643.

Kayyur Prisoners' Day and a central committee for action was formed. On this occasion Malabar leaders like K. Madhavamenon, PK. Moideen Kutty, CK. Govindan Nair, and MP. Damodaran, PM. Attakkoya Tangal and all MLA's signed and forwarded a memorial to the government requesting it to show Clemency towards Kayyur *Karshaka Sangham* case prisoners. The meeting was presided over by K. Madhavamenon. Petition for mercy were also forwarded to the government for the release of Kayyur prisoners. Through the jail authorities, the prisoners submitted joint mercy petition to the Governor and Governor General.<sup>84</sup> But these efforts did not prevent the execution of four Kayyur prisoners. Commenting on their execution the CPI stated that the hanging of the Kayyur prisoners be a loss to all Anti-Fascist forces in the country. Even before the hanging of Kayyur prisoners the communist party tried to save the life of the Kayyur prisoners during the period of their trials.

As stated earlier up to mid 1943 the Kerala state unit of the CPI was passing through a crisis like situation. In this situation the central leadership asked the Kerala state committee to prepare a programme within three months. To the central leadership, each member should rectify himself and to improve the working of the state committee. To the CPI, the each committee member needs to end the habit of looking towards his group and should start a new working style for the benefit of the party.<sup>85</sup>

The central leadership decided to change the working style of the state committee without altering the committee. As a part of this the Kerala state secretariat of the CPI was formed consisting of P. Krishnapillai, K.K. Warriar and T.K. Raju. Other members were asked to act as the organizers of district

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<sup>84</sup> K.K.N., Kurupp, *op. cit.*, *Kayyur Riot...* p. 64.

<sup>85</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Puthiyachattangal* (Mal), 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1944, in *Party Organizer*, also cited in P. Govindapilla, *op. cit.*, *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.V,

committees and on other fronts. New state organizers were appointed for those district and fronts where they did not exist. Based on this, in Malabar a district organizational committee was formed in which KA. Keraleeyan was the secretary. According to the new organizational rules the secretariat was required to meet every two days and needed to assess the day to day emerging situation. The secretariat was envisaged as a team, in which each of the three members had their own responsibilities. The primary responsibility of a state committee member was to send weekly letters and monthly reports. It was responsible to study the reports and make appropriate decision based on this reports. Every state committee member needed to sit with a secretariat member and examine and assess his activities and should prepare new action plan. The secretariat should resolve every minor issue for this there is no need for calling state committee. The committee meetings were aimed to frame new slogans and to lead new party activities.<sup>86</sup>

The state committee was enlarged to enable it to represent all districts and fronts. The state committee needed to have representation of all mass organizations which existing in Kerala. CPI thought that, it will enable the committee to address their issues also enable it to utilize the services of those members who had firsthand information on this people.

To the new plan, each district committee had secretariat and a state organizer was deputed for each district. The district organizers had function as the state organizers; a district committee could be formed only after regularly conducted party conference. The party decided to make some basic changes in its organizational setup. The early organizational structure contained, State committee, District committee, Taluk committee, Village committee, cell and fraction etc. To the CPI after 1942, this earlier situation was unnecessary as

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181- 185.

well as dangerous. To Namboothirippad, when this rules were formed the main consideration was given to the safety and security of the party and members. Earlier days it was decided that there will not be more than seven members in a committee, now this is unnecessary. The new regulation mentioned about provincial committee, district committee and branch committee. In the new situation cells were not permitted and instead branch became lowest unit of the CPI.<sup>87</sup> According to this a new cadre who worked under a mass organization and the unit of that organization was his party unit. The district committee organizer should depute some of his juniors for selling party literature in each Taluk. His responsibilities include sending letters and news papers to district committee, and Desabhimani, to organize the sales of literature and fund collection, to direct those cadres who worked in the mass organizations, to lead the party branches. Those party members of Taluks who works in the mass organization should function as a unit, their main responsibility was to foster the mass organization. The district committee organizer needs to convene the meeting of branch committees and secretaries in the regular interval of 2 months. In trade union developed towns like Kannur, Kozhikkodu, Alappuzha the town committee might be permitted. In chirakkal Taluk either the ferka or the regional committee can be formed. In other places no needs for an intermediate unite between a branch and district committee.<sup>88</sup>

The new organizational programme declared that the violation of the discipline of any party member in a mass organization would be considered as the violation of the party discipline. There should not be fraction in a mass organization. They should function in this organization not as a particular fraction but as best party cadre. The roll of the party in the mass organizations

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 189-191.



was limited to the overall assessment of the party and to coin new slogans. It declared that, during that period there was an impression that various mass organizations were the puppet of Communist party, because of this many of the non communist who were willing to work in the organization were reluctant to do this. Because of this working style of party fraction in this organization even the party sympathizers would be aloof instead of getting love and respect of the masses; this is also applicable to the Kisan sabha. To CPI, there was an urgent necessity of giving political education to the members of the mass organization under the guidance of district committee organizer. To CPI, the objective of this new organizational change should be the reduction of mechanistic of party work, to increase mass action in the party, to build the mass organization, to examine and learn lessons from the earlier party work.<sup>89</sup>

It declared, if all party members went to the mass organization neither the party nor the mass organization will flourish or grow. The slogan would be changed all to organization to all mass movement. To CPI, the branch has two fold functions work among the masses in a particular locality or institution, to strengthen it, for this the party members were divided in two different squads. It asked to give political education to each and every branch member thereby increase their capability, for this branch to be convened once in a week, based on the local circumstances. The branch committee was asked to organize debates and discussions on the reading of party news paper. To CPI, the branch secretary should talk to each squad leader and help him to overcome its difficulties. Their tasks include; isolating hoarders and profiteers, to increase cultivation and to set up free food shop.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.192-193.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p.199.

Besides restructuring party organization it gave some directions regarding its activities in the legal environment. It also gave each party member a personal code of conduct. The basic aspect of the party regulation was that communist should live in the society as an ordinary individual not as a special creature. The words and deeds and the actions of the communists should be done based on this. To EMS Namboothirippad, the communist should not think that it is wrongful to have an interest and desire in various art forms. To him, this situation was an opportunity for a new cultural renaissance. To Namboothirippad, the communist shouldn't done wastage in the name of party sponsored marriages. It was asked to increase the number of those members who were residing their own locality, stay with their family members to form their own mass organization within their reach.

Every party member should learn a job for his lively hood. Likewise he should also live with his work, to mingle with his family and society, to make daily intervention in society there by acquire love and respect of the community. To the new regulation, he should live as an ordinary individual in the society by opposing each and every social evil. These principles regarding members were also applicable to the party units. It was necessary to remove the perception that the communist party was a different organization from other people and organizations. To CPI, the party organization structure should not be used as against the party by those groups who were trying to destroying the national unity by stating that the communist party is not a home grown organization. To the regulation, the communist party should remove all symbols which might depict it as a different organization by maintaining its fundamental different from congress and league. According to new regulation, the CPI should remove certain terminologies like Cell, Fraction, PB, and CC and should enable to those people who wanted to defeat Fascism and achieve India's independence and to end the starvation. At the same time it asked the party to maintain its own character as a communist

party (organic philosophy of Marxism). Only through this CPI was able to explain the social development and to formulate correct policies. To the new regulation, both members and sympathizers should strive their ability to understand significantly the development in their surroundings and formulate policies according to it. To the regulation, the important qualities which distinguished the communist party from others were the ability to frame correct policies, the tireless effort to propagate and implement these policies, the capability to lead and centralize those activities which aim to propagate and implement this programme. To CPI, the party should foster this qualities programme like the earlier period but they should change accordance with changing circumstances. CPI claimed that these principles were aimed to rejuvenate the party which had reserved from the late 1942.<sup>91</sup>

By criticizing the attitude of some Kerala members EMS Namboothirippad stated, the basic aspect of the communist party was its democratic centralism, in which the minority should be submitted to the majority. By quoting Lenin he stated without an iron discipline communist party cannot operate in a difficult situation. To him, those who oppose this organization were acting against the interest of the working class.<sup>92</sup>

Based on this the CPI in Kerala tried to formulate a strategy which helped it to overcome the initial difficulties posed by people's war. The important elements of this new strategy were the 'grow more food' campaign and the Anti-Jap agitation.

Like other parts of India the Communists in Kerala started a campaign for the increase in food production on the one hand and against the hoarding

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.177-180.

<sup>92</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Achadakkathode Pravarthikkuka', in Party Organizer, 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1944, cited in *ibid.*

and black marketing on the other. To CPI, the main reason for this growing crisis was the repressive policies of the British government. Writing in 1943 EMS Namboothirippad stated the government effort to suppress the national ab-surge helped to the growth of 'fifth columnist'. To him, the talk of struggle by national leaders led a situation which allowed 'enemies' could sow the seed of pro-Jap sentiments and reap the harvest of sabotage. To him, the government started a repression in the name of defense; the national leaders want to start a struggle for the national struggle for national defense. Both ended up with the strengthening of fifth columnist and shaking morale of people. Commenting on the food situation he stated that food crisis was mostly a product of bad distribution, the absence of centralized plan of getting grains from surplus areas and transporting them to deficit areas.<sup>93</sup>

He continued by stating that after the harvest a large quantity of rice was produced by the merchant by claiming that they paid advance one month ago. After this the remaining went in to the stores of Janmies in which the Janmie stock this as rent.<sup>94</sup>

To communist party, with a minimum planning and organization of transport and distribution, with people's confidence and co-operation with the government, the food that we have in the country can properly made available to the people. If that was done, there would not be a food crisis. To communist party India import 1500000 tons of rice every year from Burma and it was on this import the large part of the Madras and Bengal used to be fed and this has used to come in for over a year. What it can do was to prevent whatever quantity of food available from going into the black market, arrange

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<sup>93</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *For The Defense of The Motherland With Ploughshare and Sickle, Kkisan Sabha in the Campaign for More Food Programme*, Bombay, People's Publishing House, July, 1943.

<sup>94</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Kammiyo Poozhthivaippo' (Mal), in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.V, pp. 123-132.

its proper distribution to places where it is needed, introduce rationing to those commodities that are really scarce, create a confidence in the people that they will get whatever was available and thus bring order and system in the food market. To him, if the cultivators organize themselves to remove many defects in the supply of food, they can keep vigilant whatever the doing of hoarders and see what number of black markets exist. To CPI, the Kisan Sabha should organize the distribution of food and other daily necessities items that hardship could reduce its minimum. To Communist party, it is only the cultivators who can remove the basic weakness of all activities of securing food through food committees.<sup>95</sup>

On the improvement of techniques of agriculture production the CPI stated that the application of modern techniques will increase the agriculture production. To them, by doing this duty Kisan's could save the nation from disaster. Refusing to do this, they will allow the nation to die. They declared, by organizing themselves and growing more food, the 300 hundred million Kisan not only wipe out the shortage but take an effective part of solution of all round national crisis. To CPI, growing more food was not only to feed the people, but also helping the workers to clutch and otherwise serve the soldier and civilizations. To them, growing food was Kisan's way of building the national unity. It unites the cultivators and traders on the basis that the Kisan produce more and the traders distribute better than before. It can unite communities and caste and political parties on the basis of a programme which was the interest of every one of them.<sup>96</sup>

To CPI, there won't be any programme of National unity without mobilizing and uniting the farmers in order to grow more food. To them, the

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<sup>95</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, Ploughshare and The Sickle..., p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

government has failed to make grow more food campaign a success and thus to solve the food crisis. As far as CPI was concern, grow more food was the interest of entire nation, there no class or section of people stand to benefit by it except the landlords and profiteers.<sup>97</sup>

To CPI, the food crisis in Kerala could be resolved through the reduction of the price of the rice, in which the poorest of the poor can afford it. To them, all section of Kerala society should come together to reduce of the price of the rice and the Janmies and high salaried people should be taxed more. To CPI, the distrust between different sections should not become an obstacle for achieving the objective of reducing the food price. CPI believed that in Kerala there exist strong nexus between the mill owners and their local agents especially in Thrissur and Palakkad. According to all Malabar food committee the food situation in Malabar can be resolved if they could procure a quantity of rice which produced which were earlier produced in Malabar. To CPI, if each Taluk became surplus area, it is possible to give one Ratel rice for an individual in every day.<sup>98</sup>

To CPI, if only the Kisan sabha grow more food programme it can be drawn itself the best element among zamindars and officials. The campaign should therefore be run as a great people's rally uniting in its ranks not only all the food producing kisan but non-food producing kisan, industrial, transport, agricultural worker and intellectual.<sup>99</sup> To CPI, the task of the peasants during the people's war was not the destruction Janmy system but the utilization of Maximum land for cultivation. For this the peasants should

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Keralathinte Bhakshana Kshamatthil Ninnu Puratthekkulla Vazhi (Mal), in P. Govindapilla, *op. cit.*, *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.IV, pp.332-336.

<sup>99</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, 'Ploughshare and Sickle'.p-18.

try to co-ordinate the janmies to solve the existing food crisis. To CPI, the Kisan sangham should take initiative to maintain peace in the interior.<sup>100</sup> As a part this, in Kazargodu taluk of north Kerala 300 acres of land had been made cultivable by the collective labour of the cultivators who mobilized all their focus and repaired a canal.

Likewise food committees were established in different parts of Malabar. By recollecting their activity, Cherukad Govindapishradi stated that, in his area of Pulamathol they played a drama called *Kanjikkalam* in every meeting of the food committees. This play dealt with hunger and death. They also wrote a *thullal* called *Acharam madakki*, which dealt with Black marketing.<sup>101</sup> As part of this, there organized a Malabar food conference under the auspices of CPI in June 1943. It was presided over by Nilamboor Valiya Raja (a land lord). This was attended by all sections of the society including Janmies, Capitalists, Traders, lawyers, workers, cultivators, students, and representatives of women organization and so on. This was in line with the CPI's programme of uniting all sections of the people against the existing national crisis. This conference decided to form Malabar food committee. The members of this food committee include men like; Nilambur Valiya Raja, KT Chanthu Nambiar, Samuel Arone, OMC. Narayanan Namboothirippad, VG. Govindan, Manjeri Ramayyar, Parayannur Divakaran Namboothirippad, P. Koyakkunji, P. Krishnapillai, Subramanyan Thirumunp, NC. Shekar, TC. Narayanan Nambiar and AK. Tampi et al., It's main objectives include; to implement peoples rationing in affordable rate for all, increase agricultural production to fill the remaining gap, increase the quota of food items grain

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<sup>100</sup> *Deshabhimani* Daily, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1948.

<sup>101</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Jeevithapatha*, pp.421-422.

procurement from outside, for all of this, it asked all Taluk food committees to cooperate with government representatives.<sup>102</sup>

In the words of Dilip Menon, in the context of shortage of food and the need to expand cultivation, the communists in Malabar negotiated with land owners for the wasteland, providing them with pragmatically compliant cultivators. To him, calls for harmony between classes and slogans like “grow more food” were translated in to negotiations with rural elites for letting out wasteland for cultivation. He added the creation of a broad alliance between political groups and parties allowed the Kerala unit of the CPI to act as the intermediary between those holding stocks of grain and those in need of it. Apart from bargaining for cultivable land, party workers were able to intercede skillfully between the government and those holding stocks of grain, in order to resolve the shortage of food grains.<sup>103</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> congress of the All India Kisan Sabha was held in Bukna, Punjab between April 3 and 4, 1943. This congress was presided over by Bunkim Mookharji, which declared that, in order to serve the peasants the imperialist oppression and the 5<sup>th</sup> column should not be an obstacle. According to the congress report, from Kerala there enrolled 14786 members to the Kisan Sabha between 1942 and 43 and 2 delegates from Kerala were participated in the congress. This congress called upon to work for the end of food crisis and to establish Hindu Muslim unity. It asked to establish food committees and increase cultivation.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu....*, pp, 738-739.

<sup>103</sup> Dilip Menon, *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India*, New Delhi, Cambridge South Asian Studies, 1994, p.166-171.

<sup>104</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Bakshanathinum Swathanthryathinum Vendi Karshakar Rangath*, in P. Govindapilla, *op. cit.*, *EMS Sanchika - April 1942-1944*, Vol. IV, pp.171-180.



To EMS Namboothirippad, Malabar can liberate from hunger only through the formation of co-operative societies by including Kisan Sanghams, political parties and patriotic groups thereby opposing hoarding and Black marketing.<sup>105</sup> The people's war thesis of the CPI had envisaged for the broadest unity of all political parties and programme in the rural areas of reviving the peasantry. In Malabar, the CPI transformed this in to a far reaching policy of uniting their activities in the towns and the countryside and of building bridges with other political groups. To Dilip Menon, the theme of unity with the Muslim league was translated very effectively at the local level. The rice trade had been controlled by a cartel of Moplah merchants. Food committees were used as a tool for negotiations and at least one prominent Moplah merchant was included on each committee. For example the Muslim league leader Kadarikkoya haji became a prominent speaker at meetings organized by the CPI on the food situation. Using these contacts with the league as a spring board, the CPI was using to spread its organization to places like Kattur, and Palalittukara which had been strongholds of the Mappilas. In Mattannur, Moosakkutty, the leading rice merchant set up a food committee of his own and concerned a major share of the market. In Kannur, the Muslim league, and other Muslim organizations met to discuss rationing procedures and the organization of food distribution through their own network.<sup>106</sup> This collaboration was existed in parts of Malabar. In Chennamangallur near Calicut, Rayeen Mohammed, a Moplah merchant had contacted with Deputy Tahasildhar on behalf of the food committee, as a result one and a half Kilogram sugar was distributed among the ration card holders of Mukkam. This was done at the Taluk office at Mukkam. Five Communist volunteers tried to arrange 400 hundred people and tried to

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<sup>105</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Malabar Pattiniyilekko..?', in *People's War*, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1944, also cited in *ibid*, p. 143.

<sup>106</sup> Dilip Menon, *op. cit.*, *Caste, Nationalism...*, pp. 171-172.

systematically manage the sugar distribution. In the 17<sup>th</sup> ward of that locality 2 seer rice was distributed among the ration card holders. For this KP Kunji, a Moplah merchant had donated 4 sacks of rice to the food committee. In that locality the Communist organized various street meeting and stressed the need for Hindu Muslim unity to face the famine. They took efforts to form village level food committees which include members of Congress, League, Communists, Landlords and localities, and deputed various volunteers for this. Committees were formed in places like Mayannur, Elatthur and Nellikodu etc. In this meeting food census was enumerated. In order to get the goods for distribution they send litigation to the Deputy Tahasildar with the signature of 17.<sup>107</sup> In Kondotty, the Food committee contacted the revenue inspector on the scarcity of kerosene. As a result this 10 tins kerosene was provided for distribution and it was distributed in 7 centers, where this committee was led by Muslim league and Communists were also participated in it. Kerosene was provided to 1600 houses and 150 shops. These kinds of events were also attempted in Manjeri. In Nilamboor the Food committees were engaged in the distribution of sugar.<sup>108</sup>

In Pappinisseri the co-operation to food committee was offered by the owner of the Hamid Company, Muslim league and other Muslims affiliated to Congress. As a result, the ration trader agreed to distribute ration to the people even without a ration card. In Kalyasseri the Communist tried to orderly distribute one sack sugar. In Bakkalam the food committee and traders had collected signature of 300 people demanding the distribution of sugar and kerosene. This memorandum was send to Tahasildhar. In valiannur even some congress men worked with the food committee. In Kuruva, a committee was established which include a congress man, Muslim, middle man, a

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<sup>107</sup> Desabhimani Daily, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1943.

<sup>108</sup> *Desabhimani Daily*, 1943 (n.d).

communist and 2 sympathizers. Committees were also established in places like Irikkoor, Kayaralam, Mayyil, Mullakkodi. In Mullakkodi the committee distributed one sack of sugar to all Ration card holders. This was received due to the petition to Tahasildar. In Thalasseri food committee members like; S Sankarayyar, KB Panikkar, Hassen, Muhammed, Ramunni, met the district collector and asked to provide all initial items to the tea shop workers of Tallasseri. Based on this, a list of items were also prepared. The tea shop workers union decides that they would not purchase anything from black market. In areas like kottakkal and Ponnani the students demanded to provide kerosene for their study. The enumeration and the food committee formed in different places of Kazarkodu like, Trikkarippoor, Uminur, Maniyad, puliyannur and Madikkai. This committee included various sections like Congressmen, Muslims, Janmies, traders and farmers. In places like Kottacheri and Thrikkarippoor volunteers distributed chimmini lamps. A Musliyar (a Muslim religious leader) was also included in the committee.(Desabhimani,14<sup>th</sup> March 1943). In Kannukkara of Kurumbranad taluk, a food conference was held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1943. In this 300 people were participated, it was presided over by a Muslim league leader Ummar Haji. Another food conference was held in Perambra between 20 and 24, April, 1943. It was presided over by KT Raghavan. Another Conference was held under the auspicious of Onchiyam Food Committee in 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1943. This conference was attended by 150 people including 22 women. <sup>109</sup>This shows an emerging unity between Congress, League and Communist party in different parts of Malabar. <sup>110</sup>

Like Malabar, in Travancore the communist were active in Grow More Food Campaign. For example, communist leaders like JP Mathew was doing

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<sup>109</sup> *Desabhimani Daily*, 1943 (n.d).

<sup>110</sup> *Desabhimani Daily*, July, 1943 (n.d).

propaganda work in Changanasseri and propagating communism in the harbors. In Kottayam, communists like JP Thomas, CS George, PA Chacko, KJ Kurian and few others moved around 12 ward sholding placards, inscribed ‘to remove starvation, increase cultivation, stop black marketing etc. and did propaganda work in connection with the meeting arranged to be held in Karapuzha on 5.10.1943.<sup>111</sup> During this period conferences were held in different parts of Kollam for grow more food campaign. In Kottakara Taluk Eswara Pillai played a major role in this. In the beginning of the war about 24000 people had died in Cherthala Takuk due to hunger and starvation. Similarly the news about Bengal famine had reached in Travancore. Due to this ‘the grow more food campaign’ did not face much opposition in Travancore as this region was not self sufficient in food production.<sup>112</sup> In line with their policy, the communist party used the Grow more food campaign to achieve unity between different political and social groups in Kerala, including Muslim league.

Like the ‘Grow more food campaign’ other important element of the people’s war strategy was the effort to use the military as an instrument of the Anti-Fascist war. After the 1<sup>st</sup> congress, the Communist party gave training to some party cadres for the capturing of ammunition from enemy camp and its usage. In this training CPI leaders like K.C George had participated. The training was given to attack the enemy’s military camp at night by killing the sentries who guarded the camp. The technique of the killing the sentries referred in the CPI circles as S.K or Serial Killing. Training was also given for the using of the captured Guns and pistols. After the 1<sup>st</sup> congress, this type of camps was organized in Kerala also. In this, training was also given for

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<sup>111</sup> ‘Daily Report From The Police Department Travancore to Chief Secretary’, *Confidential File of Government of Travancore*, File No. 6-9-43, Kerala State Archives Thiruvananthapuram.

<sup>112</sup> M.N Govindan Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

using Guns and pistols. As a part of this a camp was also organized near Mayyazhi in North Malabar. In this camp two British ex-military officials and a Burmese communist leader named Goshal had reached Kerala and given training. This training was referred in the inner party circle as 'CAT B' training. Besides KC George, those leaders who got this training include; PC Ragavan, TK Raju, PK Kunjanathan Nair, PP Achuthan Master, PM Gopalan et al. The main charge for this camp was given to KK Kunjanathan Nambiar. As part of this strategy CPI tried to infiltrate in to the army and give training to some selected members.<sup>113</sup> As a part of this strategy many communist leaders were asked to join the Royal Indian Navy. The all India charge of the recruitment was given to S.K Acharya. These cadres were required to report every event in the navel head office to the CPI and were expected to act as a link between CPI and the Navy. Its recruitment centre was in Coimbatore.

Another important leader who joined the military to propagate communist ideas was MP Narayanan Nambiar. When he was the Army training officer at Madurai he maintained contact with the CPI. In these camps, there organized CPI meetings and committees. A similar camp was organized in Travancore at Pangode. The important participants of this camp were; PR Janardhanan, Havildhar Chandran, alias, CS Chandran, Panikkar alias, Narayana Panikkar et al. besides Pangode, they extended their activities to other places like the Palayam.<sup>114</sup> P. Bhaskaran stated that he was one among the four men from south India who were given training in guerrilla warfare from Lahore during the period of people's war strategy. Besides him other important members were Nageswra Rao, Vengida Rao from Andra Pradesh and Kannabhiran from Tamilnadu. To him, this training was in a forest beside Dhavi River. To him, this training was started in the early morning and it got

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<sup>113</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu...*, p. 694.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 696.

the military support. Bhaskaran got training in silent killing. This technique was mainly to kill the enemy by targeting his nucleus of the neck without using any arms.<sup>115</sup> However, there were some disputes within the communist party over this plan of action. That was visible in Cherukad's novel *Muthassi*. To Cherukad, people's war did not mean to join the British army but work with the people. To him, this army is not the Indian people's army, which will be possible only when India become independent.<sup>116</sup>

Another important aspect of the people's war strategy was the campaign against the Japan and the so called Jap-agents. About this period Japan was advancing towards Indian border. Likewise, various Indian groups like Indian national army were collaborating in with the Japanese forces in South East Asian region. Above all Japan was an important component of the Fascist alliance which comprised of Germany, Italy and Japan. Because of this, Communists began to use the Anti-Jap agitation as an indispensable part of the Anti-Fascist united front. To them, the immediate objective of the communist party should be to prevent the Japanese occupation of India. So the organization of Anti-Jap activities became the regular feature of communist propaganda since 1942.

Likewise in Kerala, this campaign was started way back early 1942 itself. During this period many of the communist leaders were in prison, where they established an Anti-Jap committee. For instance, in Calicut it was held under the auspices of leaders like C. Unniraja, MS. Devadas, PK. Balakrishnan.<sup>117</sup> Likewise, Anti-Jap committees were established in different parts of Kerala especially in Malabar. As part of their Anti-Jap campaign, in

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<sup>115</sup> P Bhaskaran, *Jeevithavum Kalayum* (Mal), Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi, 2004, pp.41-42.

<sup>116</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Muthassi*, p.301.

<sup>117</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu...*, p. 616.

July 1942, Communist party observed Chinese day to honor Chinese people's resistance against Japanese aggressions.<sup>118</sup> The main feature of the Anti- Jap agitation of the communist was that, they utilized all existing art forms in Kerala in order to communicate with the people. They include art forms like *Kathakali*, *Ottanthullal*, *Drama*, *Ayyappan Pattu*, *Pulluvan pattu*, *Parichamuttukali*, *Kaikottikkali*, *Kummikottum kali* and so on.

As a part of this campaign various poems, dramas and songs were composed in different parts of Kerala. By recollecting this campaign in his locality, Cherukad stated that there sold thousands of copies of song named *Vallathakalam* (difficult time) which was written by MB. Battathirippad. The basic content of this song was that 'now we are in a difficult situation in which Germany is advancing to India from west and Japan from east'. In this song, this period is depicted as a difficult period because of the alien rule which has chained us. Another song ridiculed Japanese as people with flat nose and dim face. The essence of another song was to get ready for the fight as the Japanese army reaches the door steps. Likewise they played a drama *Mammooka* which depicted the dangerous situation of a Malayalee family in an area under Japanese occupation. They also decided to bring a Kathakali troupe by giving hundred rupees to perform the anti-jap kathakali. There also took place various Anti-Jap performances like *Japuvirodha thullal*, *padakam*, *kummi-kolattam* etc... They planned to cremate the statue of Fascism at the end of the play.<sup>119</sup> In 1942, in order to sing for the Anti-Jap protest KPG wrote a song entitled *Naniyude Chintha* (thought of Nani). This song was about thoughts and hopes of a girl called Nani about the Soviet Union the only socialist state.<sup>120</sup> They opened a bookstall near the *Kizhakke Nada* of

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Mutthassi*, p. 285.

<sup>120</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu...*, p. 616.

Guruvayur temple. In the day of *Guruvayur Ekadasi* books and pamphlets of Anti-Jap movement were sold and propagated messages of Anti-Jap movement.<sup>121</sup>

In order to implement this programme the communists were divided into different squads. Anti-Jap movements were setup in each and every village. They organize Anti-Jap *velichappad and vedikkettu*. Cherukad said, he thought he was able to convince about 5000 people that the Jap Fascism was more dangerous than British imperialism thereby expose the notions of the 'Anarchist Nationalist' that Jap aggression was better than British imperialism. However he said, he was stunned by the use of abusive words against Subhash Chandra Bose. Like that of boot licker and rascal. They also organized Anti-Jap fireworks.<sup>122</sup> It was decided that each member should try his level best to create Anti-Jap consciousness among his community. A character in the novel, *Muthassi* named Pothuval organized the Anti-Jap propaganda and collected money, which brought him the name Japan Mash.<sup>123</sup> They used all public places like temples. All of this campaign was based on the theme of defeating Japan and saving the country. As argued by Sunjay Battacharya, in Malabar the Anti-Jap agitation was used as a platform to raise the issues of various section of society mainly that of the working class and the peasants. To him, various sections like, Beedi workers, agricultural labourers and toddy tappers were brought in to the Anti-Jap movement by the raising slogan for an increase in their wages along with the people's war slogan.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Jeevithapatha*, pp. 382-383.

<sup>122</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Jeevithapatha*, pp. 401-411.

<sup>123</sup> Cherukad, *op. cit.*, *Muthassi*, p. 285.

<sup>124</sup> Sunjay Battacharya, *op. cit.*, 'An extremely Troubled....', p. 154.



The strategy of the communist party in this period was based on two factors. On the one hand they had actively participated in the Anti-war propaganda and worked for the increase of production of food grains; on the other they blamed the British government policy of denying Indian independence for the existing national crisis in India. They advocated the unity between congress, Muslim league and Hindu Maha Sabha for Anti-Fascist war. In this period they took utmost care to avoid those forms of strike which may affect the production and the war efforts. Another important issue which the CPI dealt during this period was the question of National self determination and the Pakistan question.

This period also witnessed some efforts of the communist party to reorganize the trade union movement by including the different categories of workers who were not included in the trade union agitation. The important among was the cashew workers. The Communist Party decided to take over the Cashew workers union of Kilikkollur. During this period, the normal trade union activity in the cashew field was not possible as cashew was not included in the factory act. Alex and Nanu were the two communist leaders who were played a major role in organizing the cashew workers. The cashew workers did not have the eligibility for those benefits which were given to the workers of other party. The workers did not have proper accommodation and many women workers were lived in sheds. The main slogan of the union was to intensify the protest to include the cashew sector under the ambit of the factory act. For this they organized a campaign. They described about the benefits which the workers will get if they include under the factory act. In the initial days, workers were kept aloof from the activities of the union by fearing the persecution from the factory owners and the lack of government support.<sup>125</sup> Because of their effort the cashew sector was included under the

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<sup>125</sup> M.N., Govindan Nair, *Ente Atmakatha*, *op. cit.*, p. 123

ambit of factory act by the then Diwan C.P Ramaswami Aiyar. Along with the Cashew workers the CPI also tried to organize the Punalur paper mill workers and the plantation workers. It was Solaman (who had organized the coir workers of Arur) was deputed to organize the plantation workers. Initially, Vattapparambil Ramanpillai was deputed to the Punalur Papper mill, even he was an energetic member he was failed to organize the mill workers, later Jacob was deputed there; his efforts also failed in it. After that through the efforts of V.K Karunakaran, C.O mathue, they were organized. About this period CPI got an opportunity to expand their influence upon the weaving workers of Kollam Taluk. Many families of Kollam Taluk were severely affected the scarcity of Yarn during the period of Second World War. The weavers even did not get the allotted yarn and the yarn was sold in the black-market. In Kollam taluk a popular yarn committee was constituted to regulate the supply of yarn. In this communist leaders like M.N. Govindan Nair became a member. The first meeting of this committee was held under the leadership of C. Kesavan. Later this committee was given the responsibility to give yarn to the fisherman. It was in this period the Travancore Coir workers union was emerged by including the majority workers of Cherthala and Amabalappuzha region. Under the leadership of Thomas the union could achieve the legitimate demands of the workers through effective bargaining without organizing any struggle.<sup>126</sup>

### **People's war and the strategy through cultural intervention**

The important aspect of Indian Communist movement during this period was its utilization of culture for propagating its ideas. During this period, the distinction between political and cultural activities ceased to exist as far as the communist party was concerned. They utilized all existing art

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 111-145

forms in India to propagate their message of anti-Fascist united front. By Commenting on the role of writers, SA Dange stated, “The Indian people have chosen their sides- they stand for the defeat and destruction of Fascism. The people of the world are on whole against their exploiters or enslavers. The writers of the world who stand with the people, wearing the robes of their respective national languages and culture, are bound to feel and work as on international brotherhood, speaking different tongues but voicing one thought, one emotion; Death to Fascism and slavery and freedom to the people of every land”. To him, “the Indians are held down under an alien bureaucracy, which refuses to allow this mighty arm of India to use its full blow against the Fascist invader. To defend India was the concern of the people to gain freedom. To fight for defense against sabotage and famine, for our national government, for the release of the thousands in jail, our effort must mobilize the people, unify them. The freedom of every nationality, the limitation to freedom was not accepted willingly and democratically alone can create the pre-requisite for the blossoming of culture”. To Dange, it was not the Akhanda Hindustan but voluntarily united Hindustan of autonomous nationalities must be the home and ideal of the people’s artist.<sup>127</sup> For this the Indian People’s Theater Association (IPTA) was formed in 1943 at Bombay under the auspices of CPI. To IPTA, it was formed to co-ordinate and strengthen the ‘progressive tendencies’ that have so far manifested them in the nature of drama, song etc. To them, this association was a movement which made art as an expression and the organizer of the people’s struggle for freedom economic, justice and democratic culture. It stands for justice and democratic culture against imperialism and Fascism for enlightening the masses about the cause and solution of problem facing them. It declared India

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<sup>127</sup> S.A., Dange, ‘Cultural Movement; Task for The Writers’, in Partha Sarathi Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Towards Freedom...*, pp. 2569-2570.

had a rich cultural heritage from the early days itself. But around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this heritage were decreased into a mere formalist one and various Indian culture forms were limited to temple art forms.

The 1<sup>st</sup> conference of the All India People's Theater Conference met on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1943 at Bombay. Two days before, the official meeting of IPTA there had an informal meeting of those delegates who were interested in the people's theater. At this informal meeting, many subjects were discussed such as the difficulties of organization, the angle from which our People's Theater plays should be written and the need to draw as many people from working class and peasants as possible. It paved the way for the 1<sup>st</sup> conference of the IPTA on 25<sup>th</sup> may 1943. Its main task was to furnish an All India and various Provincial committees. Hiren Mukherjee was elected to the chair, and then followed the reading of all the provincial reports. Bombay by Anil de Silva, Bengal by Snehanshu Acharya, Punjab by Eric Cyprian, Andhra by Dr. Gopalan, U P. by Begum Rashida Jehan, Malabar by K.P.G. Nambudiri.<sup>128</sup> The resolution passed by the first conference of IPTA stated that revitalizing the stage and traditional arts and making them once the expression and organizer of people's struggle for freedom, cultural progress and economic justice. To IPTA, the immediate problem facing the people is external aggression by the Fascist hoarders who are the deadliest enemies of freedom and culture.<sup>129</sup> They declared that "it is their task to make this movement a means of spiritually sustaining people in this hour of crisis and creating in them the confidence that as a united force they are invincible". To them, for the achievement of these aims "it is necessary that not only the themes of our songs, ballads, plays, etc. be suited to the purpose in view, but it is also

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<sup>128</sup> 'All India People's Theatre Association- July 1943' in Sudhi Pradhan, Ed., *Marxist Cultural Movement*, Vol.I, Calcutta, National Book Agency, (n.d).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

essential that our productions should be simple and direct so that the masses can easily appreciate and understand and also participate in the creation and production of these. To IPTA, a revival of the folk arts, mass singing and open air stage are desirable for this purpose. Under the stress of the present situation there develops spontaneous form of struggle among the masses, particularly the militant peasants, workers and so on. They should use various art forms like songs, recitations, dances to intensify this movement. That is movement against the Fascist aggressors, food hoarders and for the release of national leaders, and the achievement of a national government. According to them, it is essential that this spontaneous movement should be organized and coordinated into an all-India People's Theater Movement.<sup>130</sup> This conference decided to spread this movement all over the country. As a part of the first conference of this organization the performance of various Indian arts were took place. They include "Blood and Tears" a Marathi unity play directed by Altekar, a song by the Bengal squad of the IPTA; "Strange Meeting" by Ting Ling (the Chinese People's Theater Organiser and dramatist), a one-act play in English by Bombay group of the IPTA, a Partisan song by the Bengal group, three songs by Tagore "In Action", a play by the Bengal squad, "Laboratory" by Benoy Ghose, "Yeh Amrit Hai" a fantasy by K. Ahmad Abbas of the Bombay squad, Song, "Mazdoor Hai Ham" by the whole cast.<sup>131</sup>

The important aspect of this organization was the utilization of all existing art forms in India. In Bombay a Marathi play named 'Dada' directed by Prabhakar Gupta and written by T. Sarmalkar, was performed on the May Day. It depicted the day to day life of the Bombay mill workers and their exploitation. There performed a play called *Yeh Kis Ka Khoon Hai?* a play by AN Sardar Jaffri. Its situation was Chittagong, during the first Japanese

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

bombing and the play was based on two real incidents; its theme was the killing of a workers' leader and the rising of the peasants, who, when it was rumored that the Moges (a wild tribe in Assam) were coming down to raid the people, rose and demanded arms to defend themselves. Another play was *Dhani* by T. K. Sarmalkar. It was based on the peasant and the landlord. A peasant who refuses to be evicted from his land was the hero. At the beginning, the peasants go in the temple, praying for relief from their hardships. At the end of the play it was the Kisan Sabha, who organizes them into action and makes the landlord come in to terms with them. (Bombay Provincial Report, in *ibid*). Likewise various Marathi folk arts like *Puvatha*, *Lavani*, and *sand Tamasha* were widely utilized to propagate their message of people's war.

Like other places in India people's theater movement was active in Kerala. Along with the rapid development of the Kisan and trade union movement there has been taken place a cultural awakening in Kerala as a part of the theater movement. Various traditional art forms like *Kathakali*, *Ottamthullal* (dance commentary or social affair), *Kolkali*, *poorakkali* (dance recital of mythological themes, Thacholi kali (rustic dance depicting the heroism of a warrior of Malabar) have been taken out of their ritualistic surroundings have been staged before large masses of people with new theme portraying the people's struggle. Instead of Kurukshetra they have Stalingrad and Wangpoo or the many scenes of national struggle for freedom. They replaced the Kauravas and pandavas with Stalin, Hitler, Tojo and Roosevelt, Churchill and Gandhi. At the Shornur conference of the Progressive writers association in 1944 poet Vallathol Narayanamenon wrote and presented a Kathakali depicting the Jap invasion of China. In 1944, during the fourth congress of the living literary movement held at Shornur, its name was changed into the progressive literary movement. This was attended by prominent writers like, Vailoippilli Sreedhara Menon, P. Kesadev, Takazhi Sivasankarappillai,

Joseph Mundasseri, Mp Paul, G. Sankarakkurpp.<sup>132</sup>The folk arts from Kerala became means of educating the masses about personalities and significance of the movements and struggles across the world. The masses of Malabar have succeeded in making these arts the expression of their own life. Those songs which printed like KPR Gopalan's Call for Battle unite to defend the motherland and Batthathirippad's "strange times" have been widely circulated. Those plays which became successful during that period include Jap agents and a Chinese heroine. This awakening was closely linked with the people's struggles against the foreign aggressors and internal foe.<sup>133</sup>Various songs and plays were written in this period in order to reach the message of anti-Fascist struggle among the public.

In this period artists of different category were began to associate with the Indian People Theaters Association. They include various actors, script writers, singers, composers and so on. They tried to utilize various traditional Indian art forms as a part of their political campaign. They devised various art forms which depicted various contemporary issues like the Fascist aggression, the anti Fascist struggle, the workers and peasant struggle, famine, Indian independence and so on. They eliminated the distinction between the political and cultural activities. The difference between the two was eliminated due to their interventions.

### **Pakistan and question of National self determination**

As mentioned above through the adoption of the strategy of people's war the CPI envisaged the unity between different social groups and political parties in India including the unity between Congresses, Muslim league and

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<sup>132</sup> P. Govindapillai, *EMSum Malayala Sahityavum*, Kottayam, DC Books, 2006, p. 45.

<sup>133</sup> 'Provincial Report' in *Indian People's Theatre Association Bulletin* 1943-44, No.I, July, 1943.

Hindu Maha Sabha. To them, the Anti-Fascist struggle is not possible without the unity between these different social groups in India. During the period of people's war they envisaged not only the unity between various social groups but the solving of nationality problem in India. It was in this context the communist attitude towards the Pakistan question assumes significance.

There were various interpretations regarding the attitude of CPI towards the Pakistan question from 1942 to 1946. One argument is that this approach was a mere application of the Russian understanding in to Indian situation.<sup>134</sup> Some writers gave importance to the difference between CPI and CPGB regarding the nationality question in India.<sup>135</sup>

Before coming to the Pakistan question it is necessary to analyze how soviet union especially Stalin tries to understand Nation. Writing in 1930 he stated, a Nation is not a racial or Tribal but historically constituted community of people. To him, it is stable a community of people. But not every stable community constitutes a nation. The national community is inconceivable without a Common language, while a state need not have a common language. To Stalin, a nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of people living together generation after generation. To him, difference of territory led to the formation of different nations. However, a common territory does not by itself create a nation. This requires, in addition an internal economic bond to weld the various parts of the nation into a single whole. To Stalin, another important feature was the specific spiritual complexion of the people constituting a nation. The most important feature of nation which was identified by Stalin was the Common psychological makeup. To him, 'national character' is not a thing that fixed

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<sup>134</sup> Sriprakash, 'CPI and The Pakistan Movement', in Bipan Chandra, Ed., *Indian Left; Critical Appraisals*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1983, p. 215.

<sup>135</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 224.



once and for all, but is maintained by changes in the conditions of life. He defined nation as the stable community of the people, formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture.<sup>136</sup>

This formulation of Stalin had made a profound influence on the CPI's attitude towards the 'Pakistan question'. In March 1940 the All-India Muslim league adopted the Lahore resolution which generally referred as the Pakistan resolution called for a Muslim separate Homeland. To Jinnah, both Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations thereby they cannot live together. However it did not specify which way this separate homeland should be established. This led to various interpretations regarding Pakistan. About early 1942 CPI had changed its strategy of imperialist war into 'people's war'. The CPI's understanding of National unity had been expanded to include anyone who was prepared for mobilization against the Fascist aggression.<sup>137</sup> It is in this context CPI's attitude towards Pakistan demand should be understood.

It was in the plenum of September 1942 in which the CPI took a position on the Pakistan question. This plenum asked to build the united national front of the people of various communities and nationalities that inhabit in India for the defense of the country. To CPI, it was necessary to dispel the mutual distrust and suspicion that existed among them. To CPI, it was the remnant of the past historical oppression and present social inequalities rising from the feudal imperialist exploitation. For solving this basic right of Communities and Nationalities must be made an essential

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<sup>136</sup> J.V., Stalin, 'Marxism and National Question', in *Prosveshcheniye*, March-May, 1913, Marxist Internet Archives.

<sup>137</sup> Sreeprekash, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

programme of the united national front.<sup>138</sup> According to this programme in there should be 'perfect equality' among various nationalities and communities that live together in India. There should not be any oppression of one nationality by another. There should not be any sort of inequality or discrimination based on caste or communities. To ensure this, national movement must recognize the following right as part of its programme for national unity. By getting inspiration from Stalin's understanding of nationality CPI declared 'every sections of Indian people which has contiguous territory as its homeland and common historical tradition, common language and culture, psychological makeup and common economic life should be recognize the distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state with the free Indian union or freedom and will have the right to secede from it, if it may desire'.<sup>139</sup> Based on this resolution the CPI took a positive attitude towards the Muslim league demand for self determination of the Muslim's without directly supporting the slogan of Pakistan.

To Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, there existed a difference of opinion between CPI and CPGB over the question of Pakistan. The position of CPGB was made by Rejani Pam Dutt, he was critical of Muslim league's demand for the establishment Pakistan as a separate state; his understanding was based on two arguments. First argument was about the oneness of India. Second, he considered the Muslim league as separatist and communal organizations and its demand for Pakistan as a reactionary slogan.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> 'Pakistan and National Unity, Resolution Passed by The Enlarged Plenum of The Communist Party of India' on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1942, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*

In 1943, there was a marked shift in the position of the CPI, as Adhikari presented a revised thesis in the central committee, which came out in 1944 under the title *Pakistan and nationalunity*. In this new document the slogan of Pakistan was endorsed. Adhikari's argument was that Muslim league was the national organization of Muslims. League's demand for a separate Muslim homeland represented the urge for freedom of the ordinary Muslim masses.<sup>141</sup> To him, the demand for Pakistan is in reality the demand for self-determination and separation of the areas of Muslim nationalities of Punjab, Pathans, Sind and Baluchistan and of the eastern provinces of Bengal. To CPI, the granting of the right of self-determination (including the right of secession) to all nationalities, including the Muslim nationalities would forge revolutionary Hindu-Muslim unity as the core of national unity.

To him, India's freedom cannot be achieved without the unity of various sections of the people including the Hindus and Muslims. To CPI, it was more so in 1943 when the Japanese and German aggressors are preparing to pounce upon on the country. To CPI, India need national unity not only to organize a national people's resistance but also to win National government, enjoying the confidence of the people and power to make that resistance really effective. To them, unity was the first prerequisite for striking for freedom. The imperialists knew it as well. That is just the reason why they always sought to disrupt that unity to spread distrust between communities.

“Commenting on the nationality question in India G. Adhikari stated, All India national movement resembles a stream which while it flows through the soil of each nationality naturally takes on the color of the soil of that nationality. The stream becomes a multi color steam though it still remains

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<sup>141</sup> G. Adhikari, *Pakistan and National Unity*, Bombay, People's Publishing House, 1943.

one stream flowing in one direction".<sup>142</sup>To CPI, in order to unite the entire people of India for the common task of achieving independence, the democracy, it become necessary to take into account the pride and love the different sections of the people have their own language and their own homeland, to taken in to account their aspiration to build and live their own free life in their own homeland. To ignore this pride and love, this aspiration of various sections of our people, to brush them aside saying these are provincial prejudices or communal demands, is to ignore a growing reality. To ignore these sentiments is to repudiate the task of building national unity. To CPI, these sentiments about a homeland and nationalities are not reactionary. They need not be in conflict with the sentiments of all India national movement. On the other hand, the growth of these sentiments and aspirations of the people belonging to different nationalities has followed in the wake of the spread of the anti-imperialist consciousness among the masses. Adhikari agreed that even before the British conquest, large feudal imperial states had come into existence which extended their sway over almost the whole of India. But these states did not develop in to multinational states as in the case of eastern European states. They had already disappeared before the advent of capitalism. To him, 'within the womb of the Indian national movement now preparing the ground for a free and democratic India are throbbing not one but many baby nations'. They hoped, in the case of revolutionary upheaval in India many hitherto unknown nationalities each with its own language and its own distinctive culture. To CPI, the indigenous bourgeoisie in each area is attempting to consolidate its own Market in its own homeland. Besides each of these areas there is development of their own language, culture and literature. To CPI, no nationality can have freedom and scope for free development until and unless all imperialist and feudal fetters

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

are shattered, until and unless Fascism is beaten back from the borders India are crushed. To CPI the problem before Indian people was not one of drawing maps and boundaries and trying to partition India off under British rule- but of forging the revolutionary unity of action of all section of our people to win national government, to win common war of liberation against Fascism and to secure freedom of all.

They stated, 'the uneven development under imperialist rule has created a basis in our political life for equality and the fear of domination as among various nationalities'. To them, the Muslim nationalities of India need to stand shoulder to shoulder with all their brother peoples, both the league and the congress need to work together to win national government. Only through such united action can a free democratic India emerge and conditions to be created in which all the people of India can enjoy their freedom. They hoped that, once the common freedom of all the Indian people has won, the Muslim people will be able to defend their newly won freedom in their homeland by face and voluntary co-operation with other sections of India.<sup>143</sup> By doing this formulation CPI viewed Muslim league as an organization which was capable of fighting against imperialism there by ignored its communal characteristics.

To CPI the Muslim community in India can be characterized as an important nationality. They stated 'right in our own midst live Muslim people like the Sindhis, Baluchis, pathans, western punjabis, eastern Bengalis and they have the necessary characteristic of Nations. To them, they share the common aspiration to be free and autonomous in their own homelands and to stick together in a common state. To CPI, they have common bond of their own folk culture, strengthened by the traditional Muslim culture. They have

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

contiguous territory in the North West and north east zones of India except for the eastern Bengalis who share a common homeland with their Hindu brothers. To Joshi, the Pakistan movement under the banner of the league was the national movement of these nationalities. By criticizing Gandhi (who argued India as a united family) he stated India is not a single family of definite units, but a family of nationalities.<sup>144</sup> To him, India had two national movements. One was led by congress and the other was led by league. Both of them were directed against British imperialist domination of India. Both embody the urge of Indian people to be free. To Joshi, Indians need a common destiny, they need to defend it common freedom, and need to work together for the economic and social reconstruction of our common motherland. Predominantly Hindu nationalities like Tamiliyans, Andhras, Malaylees, Marathas, Gujarathis etc., would like to stick together and be satisfied with the assurance of complete autonomy and perfect equality under a common Indian union. Similarly, the Muslim nationalities living in the North West and North East borders of India want to stick together and have a separate nation of their own.

Commenting on Bengal situation Joshi stated, the Bengali Muslims have a right to form their separate and sovereign state- their Pakistan state. But by the same right by which they demand Pakistan, they cannot claim as a right that the western Hindu districts be also included in their eastern Pakistan state. To CPI, by creating Pakistan, India will become stronger not weaker. Independent, strong, contented Muslims states on India's North western and north eastern borders will constitute the best defense of the country. To Joshi, Gandhi failed to see the demand for Pakistan as a freedom demand which he should instead have supported; he saw it rather as a separatist demand.

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<sup>144</sup> P.C., Joshi, 'They Must Meet Again', 1944, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

Commenting on the failure the Gandhi-Jinnah talk, PC Joshi stated that, both congress and league were unable to explain themselves to each other in terms of common experience and common ideals. To him, both Gandhi and Jinnah had expressed the hope to meet again. But this hope will not materialize unless the entire body of patriots in both camps does their thinking all over again. To him, the failure of leaders was the failure of all. The gap between Gandhi and Jinnah was the gap between the congress and league, between two concepts of Indian freedom and the way to achieve it. To him, they differed because they stuck to their own specific ideas; each felt self confidence because they had succeeded in the building up the two premier organizations in the country.<sup>145</sup> As far as CPI was concern Muslim league's demand for a separate Muslim homeland was a just demand which needs to be supported. To CPI, the Muslim nationalities like Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, and Pashtun have a contiguous territory and had a close proximity; there fore it should be recognized. It should also be noted that other than these communities the Muslim population which was scattered across the country did not recognize as nationality. This shows that it was not the religion which was the main criteria for supporting the demand for Pakistan. To communists, India was not a single nation but a country of different nationalities.

He reiterated this argument in 1945, he stated, unless the congress, which stand for the freedom of India as a whole, ask itself and answers satisfactorily the question; how it is that the representatives (call so by Gandhi himself) organization of Muslim, in the name of Muslim freedom, refuses to join hands with it, Indian freedom will not come nearer. The more the league abuses the congress and identify it with Hindudom, the more they will be forced to look to the British rulers and force ultimate disillusionment. If the foremost leaders of our two major organizations do not even make serious

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

effort to face up the biggest single problem facing their own respective organizations, they cannot but start belittling and attacking each other in self-justification, their followers will go forward to slander each other.<sup>146</sup>

Based on this formulation CPI had issued a circular regarding its attitude towards organizations like Muslim League in June 1943. It reaffirmed that the grave danger that India faces today, externally from foreign aggression and internally from acute food crisis which can only be resolved through congress-league unity. This circular asked Jinnah to demand letter from government which will bring the opportunity of Gandhi-Jinnah meeting for congress league unity. CPI declared that, it is the duty of congress 'patriots' to help Jinnah for the release of Gandhi and there by achieve congress-league unity. This unity should be based on recognition of self determination of Muslim masses and defeat government moves in bringing disruption between the Hindus and Muslim of India. CPI asked to increase the party's Muslim membership and encouraged Muslim members of the CPI to join the league to enable the party to bring congress and league together and stimulate and supposed anti-imperialist awakening in Muslim Masses as well as to foster a progressive democratic trend among them. To CPI, as a first step in this direction the Urdu edition of the people's war needs to be specially written in future for the circulation among the Muslim 'Patriots' instead of being a mere replica of English edition.<sup>147</sup> Based on this circular many Muslim members of the CPI were enrolled into Muslim league and began to operate in this organization. By supporting this Pakistan demand P. Krishna Pillai stated the self-determination of Muslims was necessary to attain Hindu Muslim

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<sup>146</sup> P.C., Joshi, 'Inevitable Logic; Weekly Review', in *People's War*, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 1945.

<sup>147</sup> 'Communal and Separatist Movements, Communist Party Circular, Government of Bengal Office of The DCP. File No. 506, 1943, Part V, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.



unity there by defeat the common enemy. To him, the self determination of a group is right, not a favor.<sup>148</sup> At the same time leaders like EMS Namboothirippad was critical about some aspects of league politics while supporting their arguments for National Self-determination. While writing in 1945 he stated that on the one side the congress support the Hindu princes and the Muslim league support the rulers like Nizam of Hyderabad. To him, both congress and league were planning to support the Anti-soviet alliance led by British. To him, their main duty was to save the ordinary workers of both congress and league from those who had a vested interest within their respective parties. If both parties failed to liberate themselves from the vested interest in their respective parties the society will face the harsh repression that will be more dangerous than Fascism.<sup>149</sup>

By commenting on the Shimla conference EMS Namboothirippad stated the Shimla conference would not have collapsed, if Communist were able to convince the majority of the congress league leaders about their unity against British imperialism. If the communist were able to convince both Azad and Jinnah that the importance of government was better than the question of congress Muslim or league Muslim, if that happened the conference would not have been failed. To him, communist should confess the fact that they were failed to convince the members of both congress and league about their unity. If that was happened both Shimla conference and the earlier Jinnah Gandhi negotiation would not have collapsed. To him, the main responsibility of the communist party was to continue to work for congress

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<sup>148</sup> Chanthavila Murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu...* p. 670.

<sup>149</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Congress League Netruhwangale Pinthirippichillengil' (Mal), *Desabhimani*, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1945, in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika 1945-46*, Vol.VI, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1998, p.78.

league unity instead of self admiration.<sup>150</sup> This shows that even in early 1945 Communist party was advocating for the congress league unity against the Fascist aggression. The theme of unity with the Muslim league was translated very effectively at the local level. As stated earlier, the rice trading Malabar had come to be controlled by a cartel of Moplah merchants. Food committees were used as a tool for unity with league.

The difference of CPGB was manifested in an article by Rajani Pam Dutt in 1946 in *Labour* monthly, which questioned the position of the CPI. The CPI immediately gave a reply contesting Dutt, in an inner party communication and justified its own position. In this Dutt argued that the CPI's slogan of national self-determination of Muslims and its endorsement of an "idealized Pakistan" had nothing to do with the Muslim league's official position on Pakistan, since Muslim league is not a national movement of certain nationalities occupying certain parts of India; it is a communal organization which organizes Muslims as Muslims in all parts of India, just as the Hindu Maha Sabha organizes Hindus. To him, such communal organization is a sign of political backwardness and carries clear danger of disruption. In a self critical note written by Adhikari in April 1946, which admitted that the 1944 understanding had been a fatal mistake and it was proved by result of the 1946 election.<sup>151</sup> To Soban lal Dutt Gupta, the CPI's reply to Dutt focused on the point that the he overemphasized the communal and undemocratic aspect of the league and its demand and in contrast over stressed the national democratic character of the Congress in a manner which distorted reality, since the Muslim league is today an expression of freedom and anti-imperialist aspirations of the masses, even though in a distorted form.

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<sup>150</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Shimla Sammelanathinu Shesham' (Mal), in *ibid*, pp. 140-142.

<sup>151</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *op. cit.*, *Comintern and the Destiny...*, p. 224.

To him, the main deviation in Pakistan and national unity is that it talks of the progressive essence of the Pakistan demand; but not explains its separatist disruptive aspect and does call for a struggle against the same.<sup>152</sup> After this, CPI began to rethink its attitude towards Pakistan question especially after the 1946 election and its worsening communal situation.

The second congress of the CPI which held in Calcutta in early 1948 did have critical introspection regarding the Pakistan question especially of Adhikari's formulation. To the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress G Adhikari's 'pamphlet on Pakistan and National unity together with the resolution he drafted for the September meeting of the central committee are not only not free from blemishes but in many places contain the 'seed and germs of the opportunist surrender' that the Communist party made in the subsequent period'. While Adhikari hits constitution mongering and warns that our path is the path of revolutionary unity of the people, still this was not the central idea of his pamphlets. To the congress this pamphlet does not expose the bourgeois leadership as the obstacle and the disruptor of the struggle for self-determination and a force by defeating which alone the people can march forward to self-determination. To the congress, in his argument Adhikari misses imperialism completely. To the congress, the whole conception of Hindu-Muslim problem arose at different times in non class conception in which classes were not taken into account and deliberate policy of imperialism of divide and rule is screened from the reader's eye. To the congress, Adhikari's pamphlet further fails to attack the league leaders and their cry of Pakistan a weapon of compromise with imperialism, separation being the special form of compromise of the league leaders with the imperialist government. The obstructionist role of Pakistan in dividing the Muslim masses from the common struggle, the disruptive role played by

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, p. 225.

league connection with this is ignored and ground was already cleared for drawing the conclusion that Pakistan contains the core of the freedom demand of Muslims.<sup>153</sup> This shows that the earlier formulations of Pakistan were questioned in 1948 owing to the changed circumstances. The period between 1946 and 1947 witnessed a large scale communal riot across northern India. The Muslim league had a major responsibility for these riots like that of Hindu Maha Sabha. This necessitated a rethink from the part of communist party regarding its attitude towards Muslim league and Pakistan. Likewise the partition and the subsequent bloodshed destroyed the foundation of its earlier attitude towards the Muslim league. League was no longer regarded as a liberating organization and Pakistan demand not viewed as any kind of nationalist demand. (At the same time the attitude towards the Muslim league became an important matter of debate in the CPI and later in CPI(M) even after independence. It was only in early 1970s the league was begun to seen as a Communal organization. This show though the CPI had changed its position in 1946 the impact of the earlier attitude was continued for a long period).

### **Attitude towards Community organization**

During the period between 1942 and 45 the main thrust of the communist policy in Kerala was the united front of the people against the Fascist aggression. They advocated the unity of all sections of the people in the Anti-Fascist people's war which include the organizations like Muslim league, Hindu Maha Sabha and so on. It was based on this principle of people's unity the communist party had formulated its policy towards various social and community organization in the period of people's war. As mentioned earlier in mid 1943 communist party had issued a circular

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<sup>153</sup> Political Thesis, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169.

regarding its approach towards various community organizations. This circular stated that the grave danger which India faced at that time were both internal and external. The external challenge was the Fascist aggression and the internal challenge was the acute food crisis. To them, this challenge could be resolved only through the unity of all section of the Indian people including between congress and league. The important aspect of the circular was the call to the Muslim members of the CPI to join the Muslim league.<sup>154</sup> They thought while doing this CPI could transform the league in to a progressive organization and could rejuvenate the progressive elements within the league, even though it was a miss calculation. Besides league the CPI had followed these attitudes towards all community organization during this period. They believed that while penetrating into two various social organizations they can transform it and make this organization more progressive. It should be noted that there were certain factors which persuaded the CPI to adopt this attitude towards these community organizations. The important factor was an emerging trend of Pan-Islamism with in the Muslim league. Men like Maududi had tried to introduce a Pan-islamic movement in North India and its influence was begun to be felt in the Muslim league. Similarly in Travancore an effort was been made to form a broader Hindu community under the leadership of organizations like Nair service society. Likewise the new leadership of the SNDP Yogam had openly declares their support to the then Diwan of Travancore Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. These development necessitated CPI for an engagement with these organizations.

In Kerala also they tried to follow this strategy during this period. As a part of this many party members were deployed to revolutionize various social organizations. As a part of this some Muslim cadres were asked to join

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<sup>154</sup> Communal and Separatist Movement, *op. cit.*

Muslim league and asked to acquire its leadership, cadres were also asked to join other groups and do the same task.<sup>155</sup> Based on this many cadres were enrolled in various social organizations like NSS, SNDP and the Yogakshema sabha. The communist party in Travancore declare that the caste and communisty organization should limit their involvement in to Social and religious affairs. They demanded the removal of the present SNDP leadership which was loyal to C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. For this many had joined SNDP.<sup>156</sup> After a gap of ten years EMS Namboothirippad was found actively engaged with Yogakshema sabha. Writing in 1943 EMS Namboothirippad stated Yokakshema sabha was started not to pursue the Janmy system, as there are many poor non Janmies in the Namboothiri community. To him, if the Janmies wanted to preserve their class interest they should form Janmiy sabha and should not use the Yokakshema Sabha for their interest. He asked the educated members of Namboothiries to emphasize in research and higher learning. Others should acquire technical Knowledge like agriculture and engineering etc. They should also give stress in Agriculture and trade industry and commerce. To him, all community organization should work for unity in a possible united Kerala. To Namboothirippad, the interest of all community organization was to destroy the old caste based social system. It suffocates each organization one way or other. To him, all community organizations should abandon those privileges which were enjoyed by them in a period of time. He asked to all Community organization to work for giving proportional representation for every community in government bureaucracy.<sup>157</sup> This article clearly reflects the attitude of the communist party towards social reform. They believed through their involvement they could transform the social

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<sup>155</sup> Chanthavila murali, *op. cit.*, *Sakhavu...* p. 702.

<sup>156</sup> M.N. Govindan Nair, *op. cit.*, *Ente Atamakatha*, p. 136

<sup>157</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Namboothiriye Manushyanakkam' (Mal), 1944, in P. Govindapilla, *op. cit.*, *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.V, pp. 304-312.

reform movements into a progressive one. They thought, by enrolling cadres in to these organizations, they could change its character and use it for their political activity.

But in the long run this policy became counterproductive. Many cadres who went to various social organizations did not come back to the communist party. Instead many of them were absorbed in to those social organizations in which they were deputed. For example P Gangadharan, who was deputed to SNDP by the CPI did not return to the communist party. Instead he became the active member of SNDP (and later became instrumental in founding SRP a Community based political party). Likewise many cadres who were deputed to League did not return to CPI. Thus, this decision of the CPI did not help it to achieve its objectives.

The period between 1942 and 45 became an important milestone in history of Indian communist movement. On the one hand the Indian communist were isolated from the main stream national movement because of the adoption of the people's war strategy on the other they got an opportunity to work legally the first time in history of Indian Communist movement. Around the mid 1941 USSR was invaded by Germany. This necessitated a policy shift from the part of Communist party. After this, imperialist war became people's war. There after they believed their major task was to defend the USSR against the German invasion. The attack against USSR was viewed as an assault on the all freedom loving people. Therefore the CPI demanded the unity of all sections of Indian people against the Fascist aggression. In colonial country like India the transition from imperialist to people's war had created certain difficulties for the Indian communist party. As a part of this strategy they had to restrict the struggle against British. Likewise their mass organizations like Kisan Sabhas and trade unions had limited their struggle and instead concentrated in increasing production that include programs like "grow more food". To Sunjay Battacharya, while the CPI Accepted the

opportunity provided by the government of India to strengthen its organization, its members at all levels of the Society sought to do so by presenting themselves as members of an anti-imperialist party.

In order to overcome their earlier isolation they initiated certain programs like the Anti-Jap propaganda, the 'grow more food campaign, the struggle against hoarding and black marketing and the support for national self-determination. These programs were directly linked to the day to day Socio-economic life of the people. Another important aspect of the communist activity was the importance they have given to culture. They have utilized all existing traditional art forms to convey their message of anti-Fascist unity. Likewise the communist party had deputed its various cadres into various social organizations aiming to convert these organizations into progressive. It should be noted that while they supported the governments' war efforts they did not dilute the demand for the release of political prisoners and the granting of India's national independence. Likewise they stood for the congress league unity. It should be noted that comparing to other parts of India the Quit India movement did not have much impact in Kerala. It was the Communist parties' policy of people's war which prevented the transformation of Quit India movement in a mass movement in Malabar.<sup>158</sup> Likewise in Travancore, the Quit India movement did not have much impact, it was limited to arrest of some congress leaders. Along with them communist leaders like M.N. govindan Nair and P.T Punnus were arrested.<sup>159</sup>

Between 1942 and 45 the legalization of CPI helped it to build a new organization structure including various class and mass organization. These programs helped them to overcome their early difficulties due to the changed strategy.

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<sup>158</sup> K. Gopalankutty, *Malabar Padanagal* (Mal), Thiruvanthapuram, The State Institute of Languages, 2007, p.125.

<sup>159</sup> M.N. govindan Nair, *op. cit.*, *Ente Atma...* p. 110



## **Chapter 4**

### **THE POST WAR UPSURGE AND NEW STRATEGY OF COMMUNIST PARTY**

About the middle of 1945 the Second World War was came to an end. In May 1945 Germany was defeated and the allied forces entered in to Germany. Three months after this, Japan was also surrendered after the dropping of Nuclear Bombs in two cities, Hiroshima (August 6) and Nagasaki (August 9). After the war Germany was divided among different countries that are USA, USSR, France and Britain. Japan was entrusted under a US General MacArthur. This war had completely altered then existing international order. Both Britain and France had lost their earlier political importance and a new international order in which their existed two power blocks, one was led by USA and another was led by USSR. This led to a situation which we generally referred as 'Cold War'. This gradually ended the war time co-operation between USSR and the western capitalist countries. Likewise, in many eastern European countries there emerged new people's democracies mainly either under the leadership or with the participation of the communist parties. Another important feature of this period was the intensification of the Anti-colonial struggle in different Asian African countries. In areas like East Asia different former European colonies came under the control of Japan but after the defeat of Japan the former colonial powers tried to reoccupy these countries. For example, after the defeat of Japan Netherland reoccupied Indonesia. This led to the intensification of Anti-imperialist struggle in different Asian African countries. Likewise, a Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) was formed in October 1947 under the leadership of USSR. About 1950, a one third of the world population was directly came under the influence of Communist governments.

After the war the support for USSR became stronger mainly due to its role in the resistance against the Fascist aggression. It is in this context the changing strategy of Indian Communist party should be analyzed.

As mentioned earlier during the period of Peoples' War strategy CPI followed a policy of supporting the war effort while demanding the release of congress leaders who were arrested during the Quit India movement. During this period their main objective was to defeat Fascism and defend the USSR. But after the end of the war the relevance of this policy had lost. The defeat of Fascism allowed the CPI to re-intensify their agitation against British. This shift was visible in the late 1945 itself. The CPI central committee resolution on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1945 had reflected these changes. To this resolution, the post war period in India was the period of an unprecedented opportunity to make the final bid for power. To them, this was arrived from the unparalleled hatred of all sections, all classes, all generations of our people against British rule due to the denial of power, war time government repression, war time increased miseries of the people and the ensure of the utter incompetence and through corruption of government apparatus from top to bottom. However, it stated, instead of being unified into a united front of struggle against imperialism, it was being led into suicidal channels of mutual strife. This was raised from the political strategy which the leadership of the political organizations of our country. As a result of this, the Anti-British sentiments was not being transformed in to a Joint front for Indian freedom, the freedom urge of the Hindu, Muslim masses was being disrupted into rival Hindu and Muslim camps.<sup>1</sup> CPI characterized the post war period as a period of final united struggle for Indian freedom. To them, if CPI fail to full fill the role as the unifier of the freedom loving masses or alternatively national bourgeois

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<sup>1</sup> 'The New Situation and Our Task: Resolution of The Committee of The Central Committee of The Communist Party of India', Passed on 16-12-1945, pp. 1-2, Archives of Contemporary History (ACH), JNU, New Delhi.

leaderships of the congress and the league will surrender to the imperialist creating a situation in which spontaneous outbursts would be turned in to civil war and thus inflicting a disastrous setback on our struggle for freedom. In this condition, their programme for the achievement of immediate national independence from their national homelands voluntarily united together into one great Indian union of completely free nations. 'The new tactical line of the CPI was based upon the understanding that the war period of 'No Strike' was over and that they should take the lead in organizing not only partial struggles of the workers and peasants but also Anti-imperialist mass protest actions and it must fearlessly intervene and participate in every spontaneous outbursts of popular furry against British rule and police terror and thus give the new rising spontaneous mass upsurge a sense of its true direction and effective organizational leadership and prevent the functional game of congress and league leaderships of turning mass discontent against each other instead of against common enslavers'.<sup>2</sup>This would be necessary to prevent both congress and league from a unilateral settlement with British imperialism. This resolution declared that, strategy and tactics of the CPI must guard above all against 'vanguards mistakes', unorganized actions and party leaders must take the foremost part in studying every new situation carefully and take responsibility for guiding every single action under the guidance of their own party units and in consultation with the next higher unit. It emphasized, the greatest need of the hour was for the party leadership to re-educate itself for the new period, and remain ever vigilant in the rapidly changing situation and go ever nearer to CPI's Masses and look out for the masses and democratic elements in the periphery of CPI's own organized bases and study the mood and criticism of neutral members of our common mass organizations.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

To central committee, the central slogan of the CPI was the demand for the immediate transfer of power to the Indian people through an all India constituent assembly which recognizes the sovereignty of the people of every natural national unit in India and was composed of delegates from the constituent assemblies of these units who were elected on adult suffrage. This includes the right of self-determination of the people of Indian states. So that they frame their constitution through constituent assemblies elected by adult franchise and re-unit with the people of their nationality in the contiguous unit or units of the present British India, if they so desire.<sup>3</sup>

This reflected the changing position of the CPI after the end of Second World War. The new strategy gave emphasis to the intensification of the struggle of different social classes like Working class and the peasantry. Likewise, they wanted to intensify the struggles in different princely states for the achievement of responsible government. Besides this, the debate on the national self-determination was continued and got a new dimension. Similarly, the new theater movement was active in different parts of India. Kerala had a major role in the implementation of the new strategy after 1946.

### **Peasant and labor upsurge in Kerala after 1945;**

As we said earlier the end of Second World War made a substantial change in the national and international situation. The end of the war allowed the communists to re-intensify the struggles of the working class and the peasants which were restricted during the period between 1942 and 45. The miseries of the common people had aggravated the situation for the intensification of struggles. Likewise the negotiation between Congress, Muslim league, British government and various native states over the question of transfer of power became prominent in this period. In these

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p.8.

negotiations various princes were tried to assert their political authority by insisting their independence in the post British scenario. Similarly the various sections of the population had intensified their struggles. They were struggling against the arrest and trial of INA prisoners. Besides, many struggles were done in support of the Royal Indian Navy apprising. Likewise, many working class struggles and demonstrations were carried out against the reoccupation of East Asian countries by the formal colonial powers like France and Netherland. As a part of this the Communist party tried to organize various workers and peasant upsurges in different parts of the country including the Telangana region of Ex-Hyderabad state, Bengal, Patialaans so on. They mainly fought against the age old repressive apparatus of different princely states. See for details.<sup>4</sup>

Kerala witnessed the reinvigoration of workers and peasants struggle in the post war period. This period had witnessed the intensification of the peasant struggle in Malabar. The war had thoroughly destroyed and affected the everyday life of the people in Malabar. In order to counter the food crisis the government took some measures. It introduced procurement programs for the purchase of rice. Seven purchase officers were appointed for procurement of all surplus rice from the producing area for export to deficit area. There were district grain purchase officers, Taluk purchase officers and Firka purchasing officers were appointed. Likewise, there was grain purchasing inspectors. Their duty was to procure all available surpluses of cereals from the ryots and distributed them to the statutorily and informally rationed areas according to their requirements. In spite of this action the condition of

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<sup>4</sup> P. Sudaraya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Lessons*, New Delhi, Foundation Books, 1972, pp. 4-42. See also, Mridulamukharjee, 'Communists and peasants in Punjab; A focus on the Muzara Movement in Patiala 1937-53', in Bipan Chandra, Ed., in *Indian Left*, Delhi, Vikas publishers, pp. 402-413, See also, Sunil Sen, 'Tebhaga Chai', in A.R., Desai, ed., *Peasant Struggle in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 443.

ordinary people of Malabar was continued to be deteriorated. To KKN Kurup, earlier CPI's policy of people's war persuaded them to suspend all struggles and collaborated with the British war efforts. To him, the suspension of a peasant movement on account of the temporary collaboration rendered by the CPI to the British since 1942 as a matter of strategy during the Second World War in reality articulated chances of the landlord to consolidate their grip over the poor peasantry. During the period of people's war the acute shortage of food persuaded the peasants and the *Karshaka Sangham* to undertake a campaign for grow more food by bringing every strip of cultivable land under cultivation. But after the war, the peasantry in Malabar demanded new tenancy legislation for this region and started mass agitation. The Malabar Kisan Sangham organized a meeting of its working committee on 29 June 1946 at Calicut.<sup>5</sup>

Addressing this meeting EMS Namboothirippad the president of this *Karshaka Sangham* stated, in Kerala, the post war period witnessed the intensification struggle for various social classes under the leadership of communist party. Those grievances which were existed during the period of Second World War had continued and even accelerated after the Second World War. The problems like food scarcity, hoarding, black-marketing, deceases and exorbitant land tax rates were continued. Likewise the rulers of the two princely states especially the Diwan of Travancore had tried to consolidate his political authority through different means. Likewise the impact of national level resistance had also visible in Kerala. This led to the intensification of the struggle of the peasants and workers in Kerala including the Malabar region and the two princely states. By explaining the need and context for the intensification of mass struggle EMS Namboothirippad stated

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<sup>5</sup> K.K.N., Kurup, *Agrarian Struggle in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, CBH Publication, 1989, pp. 14-15.

during the British period the power of old Janmies and Landlords were replaced by direct British domination. This system was able to exercise its control over every aspect of human life. However they established their control without the complete destruction of the old Janmy and Naduvazhi system. They destroyed those elements in the old system which was harmful to the British interest. Besides this the British even strengthened this old system to protect the political and commercial interest of the ruling class. Like British India the British model was applied in Travancore and Cochin in areas like in the formation of Civil and Penal code, procedure code, criminal code and evidence act. To Namboothirippad, in this situation the major question before the Indian peasants was whether to join with the people of Soviet Union and North China to defeat the reactionary forces or 'Churchilism' or not. Whether the peasants will fight against those reactionary forces, they were the bases of British imperialism, against superstition and against social evils. On behalf of the CPI he asked all cultivators and their committees to mobilize the people against the recommendations of the cabinet mission.<sup>6</sup> To him, during the post war period both the Janmies and reactionaries in Malabar were the main support base of the congress, the Kisan Sabha wanted a united front of all sections of the people against the British and princes and so Janmies. The Kisan sabha asked the congress not to side with the janmies and reactionaries instead asked to implement its election manifesto. It also declared, it will support every progressive decision of both congress and league. They asked to distribute various implements through co-operative societies. To EMS Namboothirippad, Kisan sabha should try to ensure that, those government

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<sup>6</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Krishikkarude Kadamakal' (presidential address of all Malabar Kisan sabha), Mal, 1946 June 9, cited in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.VII, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, pp. 236-245.

assistances should not be reached to the hands of the well to do people. They should mobilize the cultivators in each village to achieve their objectives. The Kisan sabha should propagate neither among the cultivators that they were nor against any party and they were working for the entire cultivators and their interest. They were asked to include elder cultivators. It should strengthen its activities by include the cultivators of the lower caste and the middle peasants and agricultural labors.<sup>7</sup>

In a letter to T.Prakasam the then prime minister of the Madras presidency he asked the Madras government to force the Janmies to hand over their waste land for cultivation either through government order or through notification. CPI demanded that the rent for this land should be fixed on the recommendation of 1940 tenancy committee Malabar. To them, the government should direct the police not to go with Janmies to collect their rent as paddy. On behalf the Karshka sangam CPI assured the government that the cultivators will pay rent as cash which were based on the recommendation of tenancy committee. They asked the government not to force them to pay their rent in paddy. To them, it is the best way to prevent the black marketing in Malabar as this kind of rent was the root cause of black marketing.<sup>8</sup>

The meeting discussed a draft tenancy bill prepared by EMS Namboothirippad and A. Madavamenon. They recommended provisions including the Fixation of fair rent, prohibition of eviction and possession of waste lands as common property. In another meeting of the Kisan sangham which presided over by EMS Namboothirippad, it was decided that the

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Malabarile Karshaka Kuzhappam Thadayan' (A Letter to T. Prakasam, The Then Prime Minister of Madras) (Mal) cited in *ibid*, pp. 248-251.



Sangham should take all the possible steps against hoarding and black marketing in grains by landlords and for making a proper distribution through producer-cum-customer co-operative societies which there were 107 branches in Malabar. It was also decided to request the government that all available waste lands belonging to the landlords and the assessed waste land of the government should be assigned to the cultivators. It was also decided if the demand was not implemented that they will give leadership to encroach and cultivate such lands on 15 December 1946.<sup>9</sup> During the post war period, the CPI leadership in trade union movement in Malabar and Travancore organized the workers in different industries and mobilized them as a united force in strikes and upsurges. In the mid of 1946, A congress led government was formed under the leadership of T. Prakasham. They tried to oppress the workers movements. However, militant working class movements were took place, in places like Madurai, Coimbatore, Golden rock and Vikrama singha puram etc, leaders like Anathan nambiar were arrested. When Prakasham visited Malabar there took place huge demonstrations in different parts. One of the larger processions was held in Kannur.<sup>10</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> august 1946 the CPI adopted a resolution which requested the congress to prepare for the final bid for power and described that the Indian freedom movement has entered in its last phase. This resolution stated that the working class strike wave, the RIN mutiny and the peasant uprising in different parts of India had heralded a period of mighty battle “which must lead to the end of the imperialist feudal regime in India and the dawn of Indian freedom. Based on this document in the august resolution the CPI leadership in Malabar through its official newspaper, the Desabhimani requested the Moplah peasantry to join the post war revolutionary upsurge. The CPI in Malabar and Travancore adopted an

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<sup>9</sup> KKN Kurup, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>10</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *Ente Jeevitha Katha* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1980, p. 170.

action plan for stopping black marketing and detecting surplus accompanied with growing more food using cultivable waste land.<sup>11</sup> The Chirakkal Taluk witnessed an active mobilization of peasantry had taken place during the 1937-42 became once again an arena of class struggle and anti-imperialist fight. As a part of the agitation against black marketing on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1946 the CPI organized a anti-black marketing day throughout Malabar and burnt effigies of black marketers' as a prelude to the programme of 15 December 1946. The agrarian discontent and discord between landlords and tenants and the acute food crisis helped the CPI and its mass organization, Kisan sangahm in initiating an intensive struggle against landlords and governmental authority. The government used repressive measures against the upsurges. In that circumstances an anti-repression day observed by the CPI on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1946. In Chirakkal the cultivators resisted the shifting of paddy by landlords in several places. A meeting was convened at Calicut to implement the party programme to stop black marketing by directing asked surplus food grains available in the rural areas. It also demanded compulsory measuring out of paddy at the co-operative societies for the distribution at fair price. The members of the party and Kisan sangaham took all possible measures to stop black marketing by landlords, rich peasants and traders. The Sangham organized a series of processions and demonstrations in the villages against hoarding and black marketing. The marching song recited by the peasants were; "Oh! Peasants! Organize and shout, against the black marketing and thieves. These treacherous man have no mothers and sisters, they rob the food that we eat".<sup>12</sup>

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1946 a Jatha consisting of 50 peasants of the *Karshaka Sangham* marched through Kankol village in Chirakkal Taluk, and

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-24.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

its members shouted slogan against hoarding. A police mobile party then come in their way and arrested eight participant including V.M Vishnu Bharatheeyan a peasant activists and prosecuted them for causing obstruction to the duty of public servants. In Erannam village there were more oppressive measures by the police agents against the peasants and they even chapped off the ear of a corrupt grain purchase officer. Association like Abhinava Baratha Yuvak Sangham under the leadership of AV Kunjambu, VV Kunjambu and other political activists were responsible for mobilizing peasants of Karivalloor.

Rama varma valiya raja of Chirakkal in his capacity as the proprietor of Karivallur temple was one of the prominent absentee landlord of this village. From his tenants of village he procured nearly 10000 seers of paddy and kept in the granary at Kuniyan. The Kisan Sangham under the leadership of AV Kunjambu gave a representation to the Raja. It asked to hand over the entire quantity of paddy as procured as rent at his granary to the local society for distribution to the villagers at a fair price in that situation of famine. The scheduled price was 2.50 per ten seers. But in the black market it varied from Rs 5 to RS 8. While shifting the paddy to Chirakkal the agents of the landlords could not get coolies from the villages to carry head loads of paddy out of the granary. The land loads even brought some coolies from Baliapattam. But the Sangham workers restricted the removal of paddy. In this circumstance the Raja asked police protection for shifting of paddy. The Sangaham in its meeting on 17 December at the central school, Karivallur decided to resist all such efforts even with force. The argument of the Sangham was that Karivallur was a deficit area need for the food about 6000 villagers and there after the removal should not be affected without answering local demands. On 20 December, two platoons of 22 men each of the Malabar special police manned by two Janmindars under the leadership of the sub-inspector of police payyannur marched off to the granary to give

protection to the agents of Raja for the removal of paddy. A big boat laid moored on the river a furlong of the granary and the Moplah coolies from Baliyappattam shifted half of the quantity in to boat. Then big crowd including communists assembled near the granary in two groups, one under the leadership of AV Kunjambu and another under P Kunjiraman and Shouting slogans against the removal of the paddy. They criticized the authorities for giving protection to the landlords by the police force. The Sangham had already gathered stones and slings near the granary to resist the police and drive them away to their river bank. The leaders of the crowd represented to the police that the removal of the paddy to another village was inequitable, unjust and unsocial. When the leaders were arrested the crowd demanded their release. Suddenly with the orders of the sub-inspector the crowd was charged with 303 rifles and machine guns. Some people were dead including Titil Kannan and Keeneri Kunjikkan a 16 year old boy of a peasant family. The rest of the paddy was transported to Payyannur by the escort of the police. The police made charge sheet against 197 prisoners and many of the wanted persons went underground.<sup>13</sup> In Kazaragode, some Janmies disallowed peasants from taking wood and foliage from private forests. This was opposed by the peasants. These struggles were repressed by the congress interim ministry. For the communists the struggle resulted in great suffering but won for them all the prestige of martyrdom.<sup>14</sup>

Besides the peasants upsurge, this region witnessed a mass labor upsurge during the post war period. It was the revolt of the Royal Indian navy soldiers and the trial of INA prisoners which intensified the labor upsurge in Malabar. In the beginning of 1946 captain Lakshmi visited Kerala attended

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>14</sup> K. Gopalankutty, 'Malabar', in P.J., Cheriyan Ed., *Perspectives on Kerala History; The Second Millennium*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Gazateers Department, 1999, p. 560.

public meetings in Calicut, Kanjangad and other places. The RIN mutiny affected the political scenario of Malabar there were massive demonstrations against Bombay firing and sympathetic strikes to the RIN mutiny. The CPI took an active leadership in conducting a harthal on February 26, 1946. It was decided to organize secret groups in all the factories to conduct strikes. Under P. Krishnapillai CPI organized meetings and demonstrations all over Malabar. Most of the workers came out from their places of work and participated in the Harthal on February 26. Cotton mill and Beedi workers of Chirakkal also joined by organizing protest meetings. But the chirakkal congress election committee tried to prevent the workers from participate the protest meetings. They exhibited banners which declared these strikes as illegal. They declared that congress did not recognize these strikes. On the 26<sup>th</sup> February 1946 the CPI Karivallur branch organized a harthal. In the evening all the shops were closed and there were processions of workers. They paraded through the streets, shouting anti-imperialist slogans and then took part in a meeting in the nearby maidan. The meeting was addressed by local communist leaders K Krishnan. It passed a resolution which demanded the congress and league to address the issue of RIN mutineers. The cotton mill workers of Cherukkunnu and Kammanpuram also observed harthal. The beedi workers and cotton mill workers of Peralasseri also held a meeting presided over a local communist leader KK Kunjikkannan. Similar protest meetings organized by cotton mill workers of Thiruvannur was addressed by local communist leader M Apputti. In Payyannur, the workers and students observed harthal and was addressed by E. Kannan. They passed a protest resolution supported the demands of the naval ratings.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the protest demonstration continued on February 27 at Kannattiparambu by cotton mill workers under the leadership of KK

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<sup>15</sup> Priya. P, *Royal Indian Navy Mutiny; A Study of Its Impact in South India*, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Calicut, 2014, p. 201.

Krishnan Nambiar. At Chala near Kannur, AK Gopalan addressing a rally criticized Sardhar Vallabai Patel's appeal to the naval ratings to surrender. "According To him, in the struggle against imperialism, Sardhar Vallabai Patel should have asked Wavell to surrender not to the naval ratings". By recollecting those days of revolutionary favor communist leaders Subramanya Shenoy and K Madhavan stated that many protest demonstrations and meetings were organized in Payyannur, Kanhangad and other places.<sup>16</sup>

On February 26, the workers in spinning mill of Samuel Aron, (a congress leader), at Papinisseri went on a strike to sympathize with the naval mutiny. Some of these workers were retrenched and the strike lasted for 110 days. The workers under the leadership of P Krishnapillai protested against the deed of Aaron who employed goondas to suppress the fighting workers. The workers in and around Knnur came out in strong support against Aaron. But the management dismissed all workers who participated resulting in an indefinite strike. A strike committee was formed under the leadership of Krishnapillai. C, Kannan was its president and KP Stanley was secretary. Aaron was ready to reinstate the workers if they apologized. But the workers were not ready to do that. They considered that if they apologized in this matter, it will be a disgrace for the national movement itself. Thus the strike went on for 110 days. The strike came to an end only by sending it to arbitration. After negotiation, Aaron reinstated the workers but he dismissed some of them who in Aaron's argument, tried to kill him.<sup>17</sup> During this period the Beedi workers of south Canara district had waged a long struggle. In southern parts of Chirakkal Taluk the police started repressive regime. They set fire in the house of peasant leader Taliyan Nambiar. The British deployed

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.203.

Malabar Special Police (MSP) in villages of Malabar.<sup>18</sup> During this period communist party organized a railway strike and a postal strike. Students also participated in this. They held meetings processions and boycotted classes. Reports of their involvement came in from all over Malabar. They boycotted classes on February 25 and 26 and went for processions led by communist leaders. The main feature of the protest was that in Malabar there were no urban rural divide as far as the demonstrations and protests were concerned.<sup>19</sup>

Like Malabar, the princely states of Cochin had also responded to this appraisal. Cochin had the largest urban population with four towns in it including the commercial emporium of Mattancheri and the seat of the Cochin government, Ernakulum. This place became a very important location of active supporters of agitation against INA trial. The Cochin harbor was full of ships and landing craft Terminal. In Cochin the RIN strike first started in HMIS Vendurutthi at the base establishment. On February 22, the ratings posted a strike notice on the Notice board and started the hunger strike. It stated that of ratings of HMIS Vendurutthi have decided to go on strike to express sympathy for the victims of recent firing held in Bombay against RIN ratings. To demand better pay and allowances as given to ratings of the RIN, speedy demobilization, post war settlement and equal terms with officers, To demand withdrawal of new rules and of HMIS Vendurutthi, to demand better food and basic needs. Ratings staged a demonstration going in a procession along with the streets of Eranakulum shouting slogans such as ‘cease fire in Bombay’ and Indian Navy zindabad. Later in the day HMIS Baroda, a minesweeper arrived from Colombo, contacted the strike. The ratings were on strike and propose to abstain from food until the trouble in Bombay was settled. About 150 ratings conducted a demonstration shouting slogans they

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<sup>18</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, *Ente Jeevitha Katha...* p. 171.

<sup>19</sup> P. Priya, *op. cit.*, *Royal Indian Navy...*, pp. 203-205.

demanded equal wages and positions to the Indian ratings. During the same day, the ratings held a meeting at Wellington Island. They condemned the British military action against Castle barracks and demanded the withdrawal of the settlement by the FOCRIN. Majority of the lower ratings were involved in the mutiny. Senior ratings did not join the Mutineers. But some of them were in sympathy with their grievances.

Students had actively participated in the solidarity movements. On February 25, a joint meeting of Indian student's congress and student's federation was held in Aluva. It was presided over by M. Lohidadas, a prominent student congress leader. It passed a resolution which condemned Bombay firing. P. Govindapillai, PK Vasudevan Nair and Madhavakurupp addressed the gathering. All of them criticized the suppressive policy followed by the British towards the Bombay riotings of Bombay and Karachi. It brought various sections of working class including; compass mills, factories, railways, workshops, presses, offices, banks, schools, water works, power houses, buses and even governmental departments.<sup>20</sup>

Like Malabar the princely state of Kochi had also witnessed the struggle of various sections of the society including different sections of working class. One of the major strikes was in Amballoor Textile Mills. Another one was that of the toddy workers of Anthicadu. The leadership of the Anthicadu struggle was with the communists. It was the miserable condition of the toddy tappers of the Andikkad region which persuaded them to do struggle in the post war period. To P Baskaran, the toddy tappers had led a miserable life with no property and they were treated as slaves by the shap owners. Leaders like George chadayanmuri played a major role in organizing

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 188-191.



the toddy tapers of Andikkadu.<sup>21</sup> One descriptive caption of a press release by the striking workers had showed their political consciousness. To them, “Post war crisis, democracy is the only solution- that is the lesson from Anthicadu.” The agitation was prolonged one those last four months. Even while agitating for the redressed of the economic grievances, the toddy workers of Anthicadu had clear ideological perception that the imbalances could be rectified only through the attainment of proper democratic rights of the people. In the course of the agitation they succeeded in enlisting the solidarity of the various trade unions as well as general public. This struggle of the toddy workers of the toddy tappers was instrumental in drawing substantial sections of the people of Kochi to the communist fold.<sup>22</sup> On behalf of communist party A.K. Gopalan mobilized many volunteers to the Paliyam satyagraham in Kochi. In this strike A.G Velayudhan was shot dead one the 1<sup>st</sup> march 1948 the T. Prakasam government introduced the public safety act. Under this many leaders including communist were arrested.<sup>23</sup>

Like Cochin and Malabar the princely state of Travancore had witnessed a communist led struggle in areas of Punnapra and Vayalar. Punnapra, Vayalar uprising was named after the two major centers of struggle, which was led by the working class of Ambalappuzha and Cherthala Taluks in October 1946. In this the rural masses were joining hands with organized trade unions and inspired by communist ideology came into a direct armed confrontation with the state administration of Travancore. Like Telangana this uprising was a combination of the struggle against the day to day condition of the population and a struggle for the establishment of a

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<sup>21</sup> P.Bhaskaran, *Jeevithavum Kalayum* (Mal), Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi, 2004, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> P.J., Cheriyan, ‘Radical Political Movements in The Twentieth Century’, in P.J., Cheriyan *op. cit.*, p. 546.

<sup>23</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, pp.174-176.

responsible government. Here the issues of the working class and the cultivators were integrated in to the broad struggle against the princely autocracy. The important background for this struggle was set by the Communist party resolution of august 1945. This resolution asked the communist party to co-ordinate and supports the struggle of the masses. In order to understand this we have to analyse the peculiar living condition in this region before and during the Second World War. The Punnapra region was characterized by intense class contradiction. This region was consisted of large coconut plantations and large building on the one hand and a majority of leaf huts on the other. These coconut plantations were occupied by jannies and the huts were occupied by the poor workers. Though the major landlord was a church there were other jannies too in this the important one was Aplone Arout (who was an important leader of the state congress). The majority of the occupance were either the coir workers or the fisherman. The nets of the fisherman were owned by these jannies. By quoting K.S Ben, (a prominent communist leader from Punnapra) George state; like other workers majority of the fisherman of the locality did not posses in the ownership of the productive tools. Unlike the industrial workers they are not independent. They were the tenants of either the beat and net owners or their relatives. The landlords maintained their supremacy by using these workers.<sup>24</sup> These jannies deliberately tried to divide the working class of this locality by creating the conflict between his workers and the workers of other jannies. All of this exploitation was led by the church. It was the middle man of the Janmy who fixed the price for the captured fish. As a result of this a fisheries workers union was formed in the Ambalappuzha Taluk. Like the fisherman other unions like Toddy Workers Union the Coir Workers' Unions, Agricultural

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<sup>24</sup> K.C., George, *Punnapra-Vayalar* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhath Book House, 1998, pp. 26-27.

workers union, Toddy climbers union were formed in this region. The post war difficulties had intensified the class contradictions in this region. Cherthala taluk was the region was the remnants of the old Travancore Janmy system had made its grip on the people of this region. This region was severely affected by the all India famine of 1943. According to statistics of the servants of India society 20000 people died in this region due to starvation. Like punnapra region the coconut plantation and paddy fields were mainly occupied by the janmies. Majority of them were their tenants they consists of; coir workers, coconut tree climbers, toddy tapers, agricultural labours and fisherman. The major Janmies of the Cherthala include; Katayattu Sivaramappanikkar, patatthil velayuthan kartha, ACM Anthrapper and parayittharakanmar. These janmies had the leadership of different community organization. For example; both Katayattu Sivaramappanikkar and pattathil kartha had balking of Nair service society, Andrappier was a prominent person of catholic Cristian sabha and Parayittharaganmar was the sympathizers of state congress. Both communist party and Cherthala taluk coir workers union had certain issues before the people. The increasing food scarcity in 1946 and the need for the increase of food production; the difficulties of the cultivators in the increasing production, the government failure in procurement and distribution, the anti-people policies of the janmies and hoarders, besides taking these issues the communist party and this unions made a vigorous campaign for the abolition on diwan's rule. The majority of the Agricultural laborers were coming from the untouchable caste. They were even referred as pulayar's of murikan, pulaya's of Mankomban etc.<sup>25</sup> The communist party started its union activity in Kuttanad in 1943. During the famine and subsequent price rice the communist led union demanded the giving of wages in the form of paddy. By raising this demand the communist party initiated

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 27-33.

struggles in Kavalam and Kainakari. After attaining their demand they formed a Travancore agricultural labourers union where Varghese Vaidyan was president, SK Das as secretary. It was the post war economic problems like food scarcity, price rise, Black marketing that immediately intensified the struggle of the workers in this region. Their slogans include; 'American model is in the Arabian sea', 'to end the diwan rule', 'to allow the responsible government', 'we don't want the rule which do not provide rice to us', 'we don't want the government which don't provide clothes to us'. By raising these issues in July 1946 the workers of Cherthala, Muhamma, and Alappuzha had conducted a 3 days strike the diwan of Travancore viewed it as a national calamity and introduced some reliefs.<sup>26</sup> It was the new constitutional proposal of the then Dewan CP Ramaswami Aiyar which immediately caused this appraisal. The new proposal was regarding the 'American model' constitution. Many believed that the new proposal was intended to sabotage the struggle for responsible government and to ensure the continuation of Dewan's rule in the state. He hoped that if a Muslim majority nation of Pakistan was to be created, India would get fragmented and Travancore should also be an independent entity. On the creation of Pakistan, later Dewan even sent his government's envoy to Karachi as the ambassador of the independent state of Travancore.<sup>27</sup> The 1946 cabinet missions recommendations on princely India allowed the states either to merge with Indian Union or with Pakistan or they can stay as independent state. It did not mention any kind of democratic reforms in these states. It was the strategic location of Travancore which persuaded the British to try for marking Travancore in their side. The so-called American model was a deliberate attempt to defeat the state congress demand for a responsible

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-47.

<sup>27</sup> P.J., Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 'Radical Political Movements ... p. 537.

government. The state congress demanded a ministry which is responsible to the legislature which was basis on the universal adult franchise. In this there was not any roll for Dewan. But in the proposed American model Diwan is an executive who cannot be removed. Though there was an assembly based on universal suffrage the Diwan was not responsible to the elected Assembly. The important tactics of CP Ramaswami was to weaken the trade union movements in order to destroy the communist party. In order to do this he made certain tactics that include; the intensification of the class contradiction of the Punnapra-Vayalar region, to create communal antagonism, and anti communist feeling among the people, to provoke the worker by intensifying the class struggle and police goonda activity thereby forcibly enter them to them to the struggle.<sup>28</sup> The early stages, all the political parties were unanimous in rejecting the proposals. But the state congress leadership was not in favor of mass protest and direct action against this proposal. For a secret negotiation with the congress on 'American model' Diwan C.P Ramaswami Aiyar deputed his private secretary Chithambaram. The working committee of the congress had convened to negotiate with Diwan; the right wing congress was more favorable with the negotiations. But others like C. Kesavan, Kumbalath Sankupillai, and K. kunjupillai were opposed to this and stated that 'American model' was a shame. Besides them others like MN. Govindan Nair and PT. Ponnus and congress socialist leaders like Sreekandan Nair and Jenardhanan Nair were opposed this and they wanted to reject it. After the ATCC meeting held at Kollam the right wing leaders like TM. Vargees were also rejected the 'American model'. All of them were unanimously passed a resolution asking for the intensification of struggle for the responsible government.<sup>29</sup> From early days itself, communist party was

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<sup>28</sup> K.C., George, *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>29</sup> G. Janardhanakurupp, *Entejeevitham* (Mal), Thrissur, Current Books, 2003,p. 90.

not in favor of this new constitution. The discussion of the state congress leaders with the Diwan resulted in the widespread rumor that a compromise was on the way. But the communist party and its trade unions rejected the proposal outright with the slogan 'American modal Arabikkadalil' became the slogan of the period. To communist party, there should be a universal adult franchise in Travancore to select the six representatives from Travancore to the constitution Assembly of India. To them; the Diwan rule should be ended, an interim government with the representation of all political parties which is capable of addressing the immediate problems of Travancore should install in place of Diwan. A representative assembly which has enormous power to frame the future constitution of Travancore should immediately convene and all groups and communities should get their due representation in the council. To them, the 'American modal' violates the fundamental rights of the Travancore people to choose a form of government which they like.<sup>30</sup> In this situation the Travancore Diwan CP. Ramaswami Aiyar invited communist leaders TV. Tomas, CK. Kumarapanikkar to negotiation. The Diwan said the communist leaders that he is ready to accept the demands of workers except the abolition of Diwan rule and the establishment of responsible government. These leaders were not ready to accept any demand less than the establishment of responsible government.<sup>31</sup>

Like the new constitutional reform the Communist party was also critical of the government management of food situation in the postwar period. In a memorandum to the Travancore king CPI Stated that the American model violated the fundamental rights of the Travancorean to choose a form of government which they like. The existing unpopular food

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<sup>30</sup> 'Resolution Passed by The Communist Party' on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1946, Accessed from ACH, JNU, New Delhi, pp. 3-5.

<sup>31</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

committees should be replaced with a new committee which consists of members from the state congress and the communist party. The committee should have the power to formulate and implement programs in the field of food production, procurement and distribution. To CPI, three Lack acres in the reserved land should be allotted for agriculture without tax. To them, the one crore which allotted for the rural upliftment should use for the cultivation. They advocated for the formation of the co-operative societies of the cultivators to cultivate new and waste land. To communist party, in Travancore the government did not touch the existing agrarian relation. To KC George, the new reform of Diwan is an attempt to divert the people's attention from the demand of universal suffrage. He told the British parliamentary delegation that the Communist Party will continue their agitation against this autocratic move of the Travancore government.<sup>32</sup>

Between August and September 1946 there aroused a series of protest in this region which were led by the communist party and its affiliated organizations. Besides the hunger Jatha and Protest meetings the situation led to a spate of strikes in the coir factories. The owners of these factories became panic and declared lockouts. This only helped to deepen the crisis. The workers now found themselves in the open, with their suffering brethren, and to fight it out was the only option left to them. The government declared martial law throughout the two Taluks and C.P Ramaswamy Iyer was promoted to the rank of Commander in chief of the Travancore Armed Forces. Under his personal supervision a reign of terror was unleashed in the Ambalappuzha and Cherthala Taluks. There was army firing in more than half a dozen centers. Over 300 workers were believed to have been killed in them. Large number of arrests, and other tortures followed the shootings. The

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<sup>32</sup> K.C., George, 'Communist Partiyude Memorandum' (Mal), 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1946, Accessed from, ACH, JNU, New Delhi, pp.5-16.

government was vindictive to the maximum extent in dealing with the insurrection in Ambalappuzha and Cherthala Taluks. C. Narayana Pillai who was not appreciative of the upsurge or of the Communist involvement in it condemns the nature of the suppression as brutal and barbarous. He says that when a single unit of police force would have been enough to face the disturbed situation, Diwan C.P Ramaswami employed the whole Travancore armed force for the same.<sup>33</sup> The working class notwithstanding the strains, trials and mounting pressures took their own defensive measures to meet the situation. The formation of volunteer camps in the remote and isolated areas of the Taluks should be viewed in this background. These volunteer camps were the centers designed to impart defensive and offensive training through indigenous technological innovations. The debilitating handicaps were no try to overcome through training in effective improvisation. Though the crude wooden spears made in thousands were no answer to the sophisticated arms and ammunitions of a mighty army, they were the product of a careful and innovative utilization of their meager resources. Ex-servicemen were in charge of the training and the spirit of the community living gave a sense of purpose to these camps. The resistance of the people lasted only for four days and the entire resistance was crushed by November 8, 1946.<sup>34</sup>

When we look at the Punnpra-Vayalar apprising it is interesting to note that then central leadership of the CPI including PC. Joshi the then General secretary of the CPI was not in favor of a Mass struggle against Diwan C.P Ramaswamy Iyyer. To Joshi, the violence struggle will lead to a repression from the administration. A message was said to be reached in the Travancore leadership in this regard. But this message did not reach there. This attitude of the central leadership was criticized by BT. Ranadive as

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<sup>33</sup> P.J., Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 'Radical Political Movements... p. 544.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 545.



reformist deviation in 1948. Leaders like KC. George who wrote a work on Pummapra-Vayalar apprising did not mention this. During the struggle against the American model and independent Travancore the volunteer organizations become an integral part of the Communist party, its strategy was to counter offensive the attack from provincial authorities. At the same time the important element of the communist party strategy was to create political awareness among people. While there existed ideological difference between the CPI and KSP (Kerala Socialist Party) many of the KSP members were participated the August struggle, so had anti-communist feeling.<sup>35</sup> Though this appraisal was lasted for 4 days (October 24 to 28), it intensified the struggle for responsible government in Travancore. Even after this diwan had stick to his position on independent Travancore. About June 1947 there was an assassination attempt on diwan C.P Ramaswami Iyyer in Trivandrum. This forced him to resign from the post of diwan. As a result of this on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1947 the king of Travancore declared his decision to merge Travancore with the future Indian union.

After the war India witnessed resurgence of communist led movements of peasants and working-class which were restricted during the period of the Second World War. After 1946 various sections of the working class both physical and salaried classes were mobilized under various trade unions. In this period those section of workers who were not earlier entered into the struggle were integrated in to this movement. When we assess the struggles of this period it should be noted that the period after the Second World War the British government started a negotiation process with congress and Muslim league on the question of the future transfer of power. At the same time many section of the Indian society were skeptical of this process. This was over the

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<sup>35</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Communist Party Keralaltil* (Mal), Thiruvanathapuram, Chintha publishers, 1984, p. 323.

question of the nature of future Indian state, the attitude of congress towards the Indian princes, the future attitude of the independent Indian state towards workings class and peasants etc. These suspicious were the important factors which were responsible for the mass upsurge which took place in India after 1945. To EMS Namboothirippad, it was in the first time that the NGO's were directly engaged in agitation. In this period along the coolli workers the salaried workers were also came together and a new concept of working class were formulated. Along with the working class the peasants were also mobilized in different parts of India.<sup>36</sup> In the Telangana region of the erstwhile Hyderabad state there had a mass peasant upsurge which continued even after India's independence. In Bengal there had an upsurge in different districts like Jalpaiguri, Maimansing, Rangpur, and Birbhum and so on. They were for getting one third of the produce. Likewise there witnessed an intensification of the trade union struggle in different parts of the country including Bombay and Calcutta. Likewise Kerala witnessed the re-intensification of the struggles of working-class and peasants after the end of World War. Malabar had witnessed various struggles of the peasants and working class. This struggle was the response against the day to day problems coursed by the Second World War. Similarly there emerged some movements as support to national wide development like the royal Indian navy revolt. In the princely states of Travancore and Kochi the struggle was mainly for the attainment of the responsible government. At the same time as a port town the RIN appraisal made some impact in that region. Likewise the various sections like toddy tappers became an integral part of communist led struggle during the post war period. In Travancore the struggle was mainly against the new constitution proposed by the Diwan of Travancore. It should be remembered

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* p.279.

that it was in this context the communist party give a new formulations on the nationalities in India.

### **The Nationality Question and the Support for Linguistic States**

As stated in a previous chapter, the question of national self determination became prominent in Indian communist party with the debate on Pakistan question. During the period of people's war the Communist party advocated the unity between different sections of Indian society that also included the unity between congress and Muslim league. As a part of this the Indian Communist party supported the demand for Muslim homeland. The Communist leaders like PC. Joshi and G. Adhikari believed that the demand for Muslim homeland should be accepted and is necessary for the unity between various sections of Indian society. To CPI, Indian was divided into different nationalities and each nationality should have the right of autonomy and they should have even the right of secession.

However, about 1946 there emerged a debate within the communist movement about its attitude towards the Pakistan movement. It was mainly Rajani Palme Dutt the member of CPGB had a difference of opinion regarding this issue. Writing in 1946 he stated after the Second World War there swept a popular upsurge in India between 1945 and 46. To Dutt, the whole tactics of the cabinet mission was now directed towards the congress and Muslim league leadership in order to play on their popular masses and their hope of peaceful transfer of ruling authority into their hands and above all to play on their mutual division and antagonism. To him, the unity of India was desirable from a progressive point of view and the partition would be a reactionary step.<sup>37</sup> To him, the demand for nationality based on religion

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<sup>37</sup> R.P., Dutt, *A New Chapter in Divide and Rule*, Bombay, People's Publishing House, 1946, p. 10.

encourages communal antagonism and its doubt full from practical point of view since the Hindu and Muslim are in reality intermingled all over India. However he affirmed that the unity of Indian people in the struggle against imperialism or the possible unity of a future free India does not mean that the Indian people are all of one uniform national character any more that Soviet people. He stated there are great differences between a Pathan, a Sick, a Bangali and a Tamil. They have different national culture, language and tradition. To Dutt, the slogan of Pakistan does not directly express this rising national consciousness. As alternative to the earlier CPI's position on Pakistan, Dutt stated that final solution of the nationality question in India had to come through applying the self determination as in the USSR. To him, the recognition of the principle of self-determination does not mean that separation was desirable. Any union want to be a voluntary union, recognition of the principle of self-determination would enable the national gripping to choose freely their political future and on a free basis to enter on to an all India union. To him, in place of presenting a joint front and demanding a firm declaration of Indian independence with all internal questions to be settled by Indians themselves without British intervention, instead of congress and league negotiated separately with British representatives, hoping to will British support for their conflicting aims. Commenting on the new cabinet mission plan he stated, it was not an Indian plan for India, it was a British plan for India imposed by British power. He insisted to conduct democratic election by universal suffrage, a constituent assembly in India on the basis of redrawing the existing provincial boundaries on linguistic, cultural lines so as to allow for the exercise of the right of National self determination if desired in any region.

Similarly he asked to handover to a provisional national government of Indian leaders either of the congress and league jointly if they reach an agreement or in the absences of an agreement, to the major political

organization, the congress which would have the further responsibility of meeting the requirement of the situation in Indian and negotiating with the British government until such a time as the sovereign constituent assembly would have established the future Indian constitution and government. Such a settlement with India on the line which Indian freedom was not only a vital interest for 400 millions of Indian people, it was equally vital for the interest of democratically all over the world and of world peace.<sup>38</sup> This shows that both Rajani Palme Dutt and CPGB were not in agreement with the official CPI position on the question of Pakistan. He believed that the question of Pakistan cannot be considered as the full expression of the question of national self-determination.

The position of CPGB was consistently critical of Muslim league's demand for the establishment of Pakistan as a separatist state; their understanding was founded on two main arguments. First one was the argument of oneness of India; second, it considered the Muslim league as a separatist and communal organization and its demand for Pakistan as a reactionary slogan. The CPI gave a replay, contesting Dutt, in an inner party communication and justified its own position. However G Adhikari prepared a self critical note in April 1946, which admitted that the earlier understanding on Pakistan question had been a fatal mistake proved by results of the 1946 elections. To Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, "this virtually amounted to the admission of Palme Dutt's position and the falsity of CPI understandings. Thus, in labour monthly Dutt argued that the CPI's slogan of National self-determination of Muslims and its endorsement of an 'idealized conception of Pakistan' had nothing to do with Muslim Leagues' official position on Pakistan, Muslim league was not a national movement of certain nationalities occupying certain parts of India. It was a communal organization organizing

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-32.

Muslims as Muslims in all parts of India, just as the Hindu Maha Sabha organizes Hindus. Such communal organizations are a sign of political backwardness and carries clear danger and disruption”.<sup>39</sup>

About mid 1946 the CPI's position regarding the Pakistan movement had begun to be changed, till then they were unable to fully understand the complex relationship between ethnicity, religion, community and nationality. Like said earlier, the Stalin's conceptualization was viewed in India in a way which led to their support to the demand for a Muslim homeland. 1946 election and the subsequent deteriorated communal situation persuaded the Indian communist for a fresh look on the nationality question in India. This change of attitude could be seen in an article written by PC Joshi in 1946. To him, the Muslim League's demand for self determination for Muslim majority region, at the same time it claim Muslim majority homelands and refuses to define their relationship with the rest of India. This makes the congress suspicious it of treachery and disruption under cover of the slogan of Muslim self determination. To him, the congress stands for the unity of India but cannot unite all freedom loving people. It does not put proposal for an Indian union, that will be based on the freedom of all this make it loose the support of Muslims more and more instead of gaining it more and more for freedom battle. CPI declared, if India is a nation through the unity against British imperialism there was no wrong in it. When it wants independent India to preserve its unity, it is also expressing a desirable idea. On the other hand the concept of India a nation becomes the basic of denying our internal differences lead and to the war among us. There was obviously wrong in such a concept. To them, all Indians must stand together against British rule; it was not at all necessary to say that India is one nation. League slogan that

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<sup>39</sup> Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India*, Calcutta, Seribaan Publishers, 2006, pp. 222-223.

Muslims are one nation was equally untenable. They declared, “When the concept of Muslims being one nation becomes the basis for denying that there are any needs or interests common to both Hindu majority and Muslim majority homelands, there was something very wrong with the concept”.<sup>40</sup>

By continuing his criticism Joshi stated, Pathans allied not with league but with congress, because they understood that only congress could overthrow British rule and establish a free Pathan land of their own. He asked the Muslim league, can the concept that Muslims are one nation enable the league leaders to understand the new national awakening of Kashmiris, 82 per cent of whom were Muslim and which was embodied in the Kashmir national conference led by Sheikh Abdullah. To him, the conference of self-determination for Kashmiris supports determination for Muslims majority homeland and itself more akin to the congress than league. He also further asked, why was it that on the eve of Gandhi-Jinnah meeting the Bengal provisional Muslim league passed a resolution in favor of united Bengal which would exercise its sovereign will and decide whether to join Pakistan or Hindustan or join neither and instead remain completely independent. The new attitude of the CPI was that neither the concept of India as one nation, nor the Muslims as one nation can help towards a real understanding of India’s past history or present problem of achieving Indian unity. But rather, both concepts only build further barriers between the congress and the league and hinder the achievement of unity for the final battle.<sup>41</sup>

Instead they put forward the concept of India as a family of nations; they thought it was the correct understanding of their own history and the most desirable future for their country. This nationalities expresses their

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<sup>40</sup> P.C., Joshi, *For The Final Bid For Power: The Communist Plan Explained*, Bombay, People’s Publishing House, 1946, pp. 3-10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

freedom urge against the British rule today, it open out the prospect of building up our country into an independent country that will be a great power in the new world of today, play a peaceful and liberationist role and build up people's prosperity in a vast subcontinent through modern Indian democracy. It guarantees every section of Indian people had the right for free development of their own choice. To CPI, both the leadership of the congress and league today were resurrecting the old revivalist propaganda- this time however; they do it not to rouse their following against the British, but to rouse them against each other. To CPI, India want its people to cut the Gordian knot of Hindu Muslim differences to avert the disaster of a third communal award, which would divide their country, split their freedom movement and perpetuate their slavery. To them, it was the grip of the ideas of 19<sup>th</sup> century British imperialism of reformist bourgeois democracy on the older leaders of the freedom movement of both congress and league which was responsible for the great deal of confusion on the Hindu Muslim question. Another source of confusion of this question was the fact that their older leaders instead of understanding India and its people in terms of their own peculiarities and in terms of their Social modern development have tried to do so in terms pre-conceive notions and false analogies drawn from other countries. To CPI, the British were succeeded in the game of divide and rule because the congress and league failed to jointly their differences on the basis of justice among themselves and true democracy. To Joshi, the crux of the freedom plan was to make the Indian demand against British only a morally unanswerable case but a practically irresistible freedom movement, and for this we must apply the same principle of self-determination among ourselves. To CPI, if the freedom programme should be real it should embody the freedom of all, rouse all freedom loving Indians must unify their ranks and file them with the will to fight. If the league cannot make Muslim self-determination a part of Indian self-determination it can never get the support



among the Hindus for the self –determination of Muslim majority homelands but will only rouse their worst suspicions.<sup>42</sup>

Based on this new proposition the CPI representative in the constitution assembly Somamath Lahiri had presented a memorandum to the British Cabinet mission in 1946. In this memorandum the CPI stated, in India there should be a provisional government backed by the entire people and should tried to convene a sovereign and democratic constituent assembly, based on adult suffrage, proportional representation and the self-determination of all national units. CPI advocated, difference between the Indian National Congress and all India Muslim league, on the Indian unity and Pakistan should be resolved by the vote of the people through the democratic application of the principle of national self-determination. They advocated that the setting up of a boundary commission which proceeds immediately to re-demarcate the existing states and provinces, so that each such re-demarcate unit together with the contiguous state or part of the state formed by a unified homeland linguistically, culturally homogeneous people. As far as the Communists were concerned India should be re-grouped on the basis of different nationalities including Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Sind, Baluchistan, Pathan land.<sup>43</sup>

To CPI, the boundary commission should re-draw India based on the principle of national self-determination. Similarly they demanded a plebiscite for each nationality over the question of joining new Indian nation. Such plebiscite should be taken wherever demanded before a union constitution is

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-79.

<sup>43</sup> Somnath Lahiri, 'Freedom and Independence at Constituent Assembly: Memorandum of Communist Party of India to The British Cabinet 1946', Accessed from ACH, JNU, New Delhi, p.8.

actually framed. It asked the constitution assembly to declare that the retention of 584 feudal autocrats ruling over one third of the country was completely popular interim governments be framed at once in each one of these states; each of these governments should call a constituent assembly based on adult suffrage and proportional representation to establish a democratic constitution and to decide the future statue of the ruler. The same constituent assembly should elected delegations to the all India constituent assembly. The people of state should decide by a plebiscite. To Somnathlahiri, the Communist party stands for a free, voluntary, democratic Indian union of sovereign units.<sup>44</sup>Based on this the CPI asked its various provinces to draft on the nationalities of each provinces. Following this, different pamphlets were written including P Sundarayya's '*Vishala Andhra*', Bhavani sen's '*Nathun Bengal*', and EMS Namboothirippad's '*Onnekal kodi Malayalikal*'.

The communist attitude towards the national question in Kerala should be understood in this contest. About 1946 the CPI's attitude towards nationality question had undergone a drastic change. Their earlier identification of nationality with religion had been altered. The works like *Onnekalkodimalayalikal* should situate in this context. After the Second World War some important developments were taking place in Kerala. The most important development was the effort of Travancore to assert its independence through the 'American model constitution'. At the same, there took place a resurgence of various agrarian and peasant movements in different parts of Kerala. Similarly the negotiation for a transfer of power was intensified in the post war period. Likewise in Kochi there were attempts to form a united Kerala under the leadership of Cochin ruler, who were aiming

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

to reinvent the earlier Perumal dynasty. The Communist position on new Kerala was a response to these developments.

Similarly Indian National Congress did not take a firm stand in support of the formation of linguistic state. Though the provincial congress committees were organized on the basis of language the congress did not declare its intention to form the linguistic states and they also tried to dilute it. It was in this situation the communist parties stand on the linguistic states assumes significant. Writing in 1946 EMS Namboothirippad stated that the main factor behind the hardship of Malayalees was not the war but the economic system which existed during before and after the war. To him, in order to end this suffering Malayalees have to liquidate the one and half century old British imperialism, which was the root cause of the hardship. It was this imperialism which made the resource rich people into Bankrupt and made civilized into clerks and Coolies. To him, India can't live in a post war situation without the end of British imperialism.

Commenting on the existing Janmy system in Kerala he stated unlike Bihar and Bengal the Janmy system in Kerala had existed even before the coming of British. They enjoyed some rights like Janmam, Kanam, Verumpattam, and Otti. He further stated after the coming of British both Janmies and Kanamdars did not have the obligations which they had to undertake before the coming of British. To him, this class was transformed as a parasitic class. It was this class which controlled the chunk of the resources in the rural areas.<sup>45</sup>

British rule was characterized by EMS Namboothirippad as the period of pauperization, unemployment, epidemics and starvation. Artisans,

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<sup>45</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Onnekal Kodi Malayalikal* (Mal), Calicut, Desabhimani Books, 1946, pp. 4-12.

cultivators and middle strata are most affected by this. To him, the division of Kerala into Travancore, Cochin and Malabar helped the British to destroy the culture of Kerala. This division had no scientific basis and all of this area can be considered as a single economic unit. By criticizing the congress stand on the responsible government in princely India had weakened the struggles in Travancore and Cochin. To him, an all Kerala leadership of the congress was not possible until they change their attitude towards the struggle in the princely states. To Communist party, the future Kerala can be created only by making a leadership which can mobilize the agricultural laborers, workers and other social organizations in the cause of anti imperialist struggle. To CPI, the most important supporters of British imperialism were Janmies and Naduvazhees. Another important well-wisher of imperialism was the capitalists especially the foreign monopolies. The other important groups which support the British imperialism were the community leaders who skillfully ignore the fight against the Janmies by raising the issues like employment and representation. Through this they help to maintain the British rule. The Communist should work towards convincing all community leaders the fact that along with raising issues of employment and representation the community leaders to join hands against the British imperialism, Janmies, Naduvazhees and the capitalists. To them, along with the liquidation of imperialism all other forces which support its existence and deny the free life of the people also to be liquidated.<sup>46</sup> To EMS Namboothirippad, if the Tamil speaking people of the southern Travancore did not want to live in Kerala they can merge with Tamil Nadu. To him, the communists want a Kerala, which will be free from the relics of *Naduvazhi* culture.

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-61.

Commenting on the Cochin rulers plan for a united Kerala Namboothirippad stated like the Dewan of Travancore the Cochin ruler was not ready to surrender his sovereignty. To him, while advocating for a united Kerala Cochin ruler stated both the princely states and Malabar while joining together in a single unit should not break its link with 'Ancient kingdom'. While advocating for a united Kerala the Cochin ruler always discriminated against untouchables and try to deny their right to walk near the Irinjalakuda temple. Likewise the Cochin ruler collected excessive rent from the cultivators. The Cochin state police support the interest of the Janmies. To Namboothirippad, the plan of Cochin and Travancore rulers were aimed to assert and protect their political authority with the help of landlords, planters and capitalists. They also wanted to restrict democracy for them, there by deny the basic political rights to cultivators.<sup>47</sup> By criticizing the Nationalists EMS Namboothirippad stated the nationalist leaders failed to understand the fact that not only the Cochin state the 584 princes of India were spade kings and they were tightly under the control of the viceroy. He did not have even the right to appoint his own Dewan.<sup>48</sup>

This shows that the CPI's understanding on the nationality question in Kerala was based on certain principle. Initially this was about the struggle against the cast system, the Janmy system and the Naduvazhi system. To CPI, both the Janmy and Naduvazhi system was the main support base for British ruling Kerala. Though the Janmy and naduvazhi system existed in Kerala prior to the British rule, the British administration had converted these classes

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<sup>47</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Kochirajavinte Aikyakerala Vilambaratthinu Pinnil', (Mal) *Deshabhimani* 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1946, P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.VII, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1999, pp. 141-144.

<sup>48</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Kochi Maharajavinte Aikyakeralam British Kammattatthiladicha Kallananayam' (Mal), *Deshabhimani*, cited in *ibid.*, p.179.

in to a parasitical class. To EMS Namboothirippad, the nationality question of Kerala cannot be resolved without a hard struggle against both Janmy and Naduvazhi system.

Another aspect of this new principle was the consideration of Kerala as a basic economic unit which include both the British India and the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin. They advocated for the intensification of the labor and peasant agitation to solve the nationality question. Other important aspect of this formulation was its attitude towards various community organizations. They recognized communities as the existing realities but they criticized community organizations for not giving much importance to the struggle against Jathi, Janmy and Naduvazhi system. Instead the Communists wanted the community organization to play a pro-active role in the struggle against this system. To Namboothirippad, these organizations were not ready to fight against the British instead they were raising certain issues like employment and representation. The communist wanted these communities to be an integral part of the struggle against the Jathy, janmy and naduvazhi system. For example, commenting on the role of all India scheduled caste federation the CPI stated that the scheduled caste federation cannot be ignored by the national movement. While stating this communist party criticized it by stating that this federation was against the struggle for India's independence. To Communist party, most of the scheduled caste laborers were either agricultural laborer or factory laborer. Therefore besides caste base struggle they should not only fought for social and political right of scheduled caste but to socio-economic rights of the working class. In order to win this struggle they should work in shoulder to shoulder with both upper caste Hindus and non Hindus. To Communist party, the federation should understand a fact that besides the caste system the Janmies, capitalists and imperialist are the enemies of scheduled castes. So those parties who were fighting against this system including Congress and CPI were their well-wishers not their enemies. To CPI, no movement can

make victory if they failed to integrate the movements of the depressed class including Pulaya mahasabha in the movement of national independence. So CPI considered this movement as the brotherly organizations. CPI opposed the notion that this movement was reactionary as argued by congress. If these movements were opposed they will be annihilated from the main stream movement.<sup>49</sup>

Other important aspect of their united Kerala was the abolition of landlordism and the struggle against the Janmy system. During this period there emerged a discussion over the abolition of landlordism by giving compensation to the Janmies. The communist party was not supportive of this formulation. To them, if the congress plan for the compensation of landlord be implemented the peasants will be liable to pay same amount as interest to the government which they were earlier payed to the landlord. By criticizing congress EMS Namboothirippad stated the congress cannot publicly support Janmy system, so they were advocating for giving compensation to the Janmies. To communists, the land of the large Janmies should be confiscated without any compensation. This parasitic class should be liquidated. If anybody from the Janmy family wanted to live as ordinary man they should be supported and their land ceiling should be fixed as hundred acres.<sup>50</sup>

This proposition persuaded some communist leaders in Kerala to take some initiative to study the emergence of the caste system, the Janmy system and the Naduvaazhi system. This assumes significance as Soviet Union had closed the study of the pre-modern eastern societies in Russia including the discussion on Marx's Asiatic system. The major aspect of this initiative was

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<sup>49</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad 'Pattikajathikkarude Raksha Nattukarude Rakshayil Ninnu Vere Alla' (Mal), *Deshabhimani*, May 1946, in *ibid* pp. 78-81.

<sup>50</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Prathifalam Kodukkunnath Janmithathe Arakkitturappikkananu' (Mal), *Deshabhimani*, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1946, in *ibid.*, pp.52-53.

the attempt to analyze and interpret the origin of caste system in Kerala. For example, writing in 1948 EMS Namboothirippad stated that not only in Kerala but the entire country, the caste system is the contribution of Ariya Brahmins. In India the Caste system had a similar base like that of the slave system in Europe. However he stated both slave and caste system had exploited a large section of the population. At the same time both the slave and caste systems had enabled both Indian and European societies to move from 'uncivilized to civilize'. To him, cultivation, handicraft, arts, Martial arts and trade were begun to develop with the classification of people in to different 'Jathis' based on their occupation. This system had enabled the man and woman of each caste to acquire an occupational skill from their parents. Besides acquiring skill from their ancestors the each group acquired new skills and innovation through their effort.<sup>51</sup> To him, if the caste system was the contribution of Aryans to India, their specific contribution to Kerala was the Janmy system or the customary *Janmam, Kanam Maryada*. Commenting on the Janmy system EMS Namboothirippad stated that the Janmy system was emerged through the process of transformation. To him, there did not exist land ownership till the coming of Namboothiries. The Namboothies began to use their power to increase rent with their ownership of the land. If the peasants accepted Namboothiri leadership over devotion they accepted the leadership of feudatory chief's for protection. To him, it was the Namboothiries who migrated to central Kerala were succeeded in conquering native society and maid Nair's under their control. He added, the Brahmin migrants of Kerala couldn't easily established their domination over Kerala unlike their brothers in Andhra.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Keralam Malayalikalude Mathrubhoomi* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 61-76.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



Commenting on the British period he stated, during the period the power of old Janmies and landlords were replaced by direct British domination. This new system was able to exercise its control over every aspect of human life. However they established their control without the complete destruction of the old Janmy and Naduvazhi system. They destroyed those elements which were harmful to the British interest. Besides this they even strengthened this old system to protect the political and commercial interest.<sup>53</sup> In Kerala, there had an effort to understand the Kerala society including the origin of caste system. It should be noted that this kind of efforts were taken even before Marxists like DD Kosambi wrote his work in Indian History. Likewise the pre-colonial social formation in Kerala was also discussed in this period. This was against the background of Soviet Union which discouraged efforts to discuss the pre-capitalist societies in the Eastern world including the Soviet Union. This shows there had an attempt with all its limitation to analyze the Pre-British society in Kerala as a part of their struggle against the Caste, Janmy and Naduvazhi system.

The basic feature of the communist idea of united Kerala was that this question cannot be resolved under the leadership of any Naduvazhi and British imperialism. Instead the Kerala's national question can be resolved through the liquidation of the British imperialism, the janmy system and the Caste system. To them the Janmy and Naduvazhi systems were the two pillars through which the British imperialism had a made a foundation. So liquidation of British imperialism cannot be separated from the destruction Janmy and Naduvazhi system. As far as the communist party was concern the Cochin state effort to form a united Kerala was mainly to protect the British commercial interest including various British plantations. On the question of anti-caste movements the communist party recognized the role of various

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

caste organizations like Pulaya mahasabha. At the same time they were critical of these organizations for supporting British imperialism. Likewise they wanted to integrate this low caste movements in to the movements for broader socio-economic transformation as majority of the low caste people were poor agricultural laborers or the factory workers. While recognizing the existence of caste and community as reality they wanted to direct these anti-caste movements in to the movements for the liquidation of caste and landlordism as both were inter linked in Kerala. This shows that after 1946 they had formulated a new understanding on the nationality question in India including Kerala. The communists and their cultural intervention in the post War period.

As stated in the previous chapter, the period after 1942 had witnessed a new form of cultural intervention from the part of communist party. It was through the Indian People's Theaters Association the communist party had made its cultural intervention. The important feature of this organization was the utilization of various regional art forms which had existed in India for propagating a message of 'Anti Fascist resistance'.

The post war period had witness the continuation and the intensification of those cultural activities which had started during the period of Second World War. Their produced various dramas, Novels, short stories and poems which depicted the day to day sufferings of the masses. The spread of mass political upsurge after the Second World War had made a profound impact upon these writings. Those sections that were ignored by the previous writers were largely represented in the works of these writers. The important feature of this period was the emphasis given to regional languages like Marathi, Bengali, Telugu, Urdu, Hindustani, Malayalam and Guajarati and so on.

The Indian People Theater Association had envisaged to create an 'alternative peoples art' which according to them will represent the day to day life of the masses. To Manoranjan Battacharya, "Human society has come to be stratified into classes. 'People's art' can only designate the kind of creation whose suggestion are communicable to men in every stratum of life. Only the really sensitive mind seeking the clue to basic unity can create in the comprehensive sense. Class divisions, however when they are crystallized, do not easily permit such minds to develop. And on occasion they might even bring about a situation when the exploited forget to feel their pangs, and all sources of inspiration are dead-end".<sup>54</sup>To them, the first and last word in progressive criticism is that life and letters are inseparable. There must, indeed, be something wrong with the artist when he glories in his seclusion, his 'ivory tower'.<sup>55</sup>In its third annual conference in 1946 IPTA, It stated, "Art can and should flourish not as a weapon of luxury but as a means of portraying life and reality of our people, of reviving their faith in themselves and their past and of rousing them to the will to live and the will to be free". They have endeavoured their best to fulfill the task they set out to achieve. They have tried through their dramas, folk songs and dances to create a new appreciation of the vitality and the righteousness of the folk culture. The important play which was placed under the auspicious of IPTA was Navana which was came from Bengal in 1946.

In 1946 the IPTA have written and produced twenty new plays in Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali and Hindustani. For example Zubaida by Ahemad abbas was very successful. It was based on a true event of the cholera epidemic, where a girl throws off her purdha to do relief work and save her

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<sup>54</sup> Manoranjan Bhattacharya, 'People's Art', in Sudhi Pradhan, Ed., *Marxist Cultural Movement in India*, Vol.I, Part 2, Calcutta, National Book Agency, (n.d.).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

people in a cholera stricken area. Other dramas on widely different subjects such as the life of the Gujarati poet 'Narmad' by CC Mehatha, 'Homeopathy' a play of Hindu Muslim unity by Manoranjan Battacharya and Singapurturn by Mama warekar on Jap occupied Singapore, were some of the plays presented by them.<sup>56</sup>The success of the work done by the Bengal squad, and the enthusiasm shown by these two artists, brought about the formation of the cultural troupe, Central cultural troupe of dancers and musicians. They tried work for the regeneration of the folk culture and other types of dancing and music that were of the common people. Shantikumar Bardhan and Abanidas gupta were the trainers and teachers of the troupe. The leader of Bengal troupe Benoy Roy made as secretary. Other members were Reba Roy, Usa Dutta, Rekha Jain, Bupathi nandi, Prem Dewan of Punjab, Dasharath a tram way worker of Calcutta, Gowri Dutt a young girl from Chita gong, Appunni from Malabar, Shantha Gandhi from Gujarat, the well-known workers of Bombay Indian people's theater association- Nagesh, Laila sayyad and Dina sapghari and Reddy from Andhra *et al.*<sup>57</sup>

Commenting on the Bengali theater SK Acharya stated that since the beginning of the Second World War, necessity of a people's theater was felt more intensely. To him, Bengali writers were mostly young and inexperienced, started to go to the people, were inspired by the contact and wrote a number of plays. Some of them have come near the ideal they were looking for. To Acharya, the plays, therefore, have to be written for the people, dealing with their life and solving problems. Otherwise, merely introducing a peasant or workers as characters in a play was artistic snobbery and humbug. He added, "People's plays should be written by the people

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<sup>56</sup> 'Annual Report 1946' of the All India People's Theatre Association, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

themselves or by writers who have the necessary knowledge. But here again, the rich heritage of the past as just so much rubbish would also be another kind of humbug. For must evolve the art from which will be best suited for a people's play and that can only be evolved from the experienced of the past and the experiments that are being carried on not only in Bengal and India, but also in other countries". To him, the tradition of Bengali Drama has to be utilized, in that the most advanced technique had perhaps bridged the gulf of the existing drama and the people's play. To Acharya, the people's theater, have to concentrate more on the content than on the form. Any form that expresses the content in the most realistic and vital way, is the best 'form'. The people's theater must remember that they have a great task ahead and with that objectivity they had to proceed.<sup>58</sup>

The third annual conference of Andhra progressive writers association was held at Rajamundry in last week of December 1945. Devulapalli Krishna Sastri a modern Andhra poet presided over the conference, Srirangam Sreenivasa Rao a poet of Andhra was the opener of the conference. A special feature of the conference was an Arts exhibition, where about fifty pieces of Art drawn by young artists were exhibited. Damerla Venkata Rao, Lecturer, presidency college Madras opened the Art exhibition. The session was held for three days, attended by about eighty writers. A Goshti (forum) was arranged on literature why and for whom among those that took part were Hanumach chastri-a Telugu pundit, M Visweswara Rao- publishers of 'Nava Rachana' mandali, J. Rukmini mehtha sastri- a popular paradist, novelist and story writer, (joint secretary of PWA), Balagangadara tilak, poet Pilaka Ganapathi Sastri and A. Soumya Narasimha Sarma lecture, MR college Vijayanagaram. A poet conference was also held. They presented special articles and short story and drama. Were also read Prarabtham 'a one act play

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

written by N. Venkaterswara Rao, Editor 'Andhra- prebha' Telugu daily and a well-known one act play was put on the stage 'Burra-Katha' depicting 'Veerasingam's life' composed by the poet of folk-lore Sankara Sathyanarayana.<sup>59</sup>

To Sudhipredhan, in some way the Bombay branch of Progressive Writers Association was unique. Among its members were literatures who wrote in different languages like Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, and Marathi and in English. They include Mama Warekar and the proletarian poet Anna Bhasu sathe of Marathi; Bakkolesh swapnath, Bhogilal Gandhi of Gujarati, Narshandra Sharma, Upendra nath Ashk, Amirthal nagar, Dr. SC Jain, Balraj Sanhi, Prem Paswan of Hindi, Josh Malihabadi, Saghar Nizami, Krishna Chandra, Khwaja Ahamed Abbas, Sajjad Zaheer, Sabir, Ali Sardharijafri, Kaifi Azmi, Qyaddoos etc of Urdu. Dr. Mulkraj Anand, Anil de silva of English. They all were together met in joint meetings and functions and also in separate language groups such as Gujarati and Urdu group. The Bombay Progressive Writers Association asked to the writers to use their pen with all their strength to combat this communalism and to expose the game of imperialists. Though they did not get permission the Bombay progressive writers association contacted the All India radio authorities to make free broadcasts appealing for communal harmony and put across plays, stories for make unity among people. Poems like Kaifi Azmi's Khana Jangi (Civil war), Ask's play 'thoofan se pehale' (before the storm), Abbas story 'Ajantha', Sajjad Zaheer's 'Sundhurst Road', Krishna Chandra's Novel 'Bandargah', and many others were directed against communalism.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> 'Andhra Progressive Writers Association', in Sudhi Pradhan Ed., *Marxist Cultural Movement in India*, Calcutta, National Book Agency, Vol.II.

<sup>60</sup> 'Bombay Progressive Writers Association', in *ibid.*

Like other parts of India Kerala also witnessed the development of a progressive cultural and literary movement from late 1930s. As stated earlier the living literary movement was transformed in to the progressive writer's movement in 1944. It was in the conference which held at Shornur on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1944. The conference was consisted of two sessions; and which was attended by leading poets, prose-writers and lovers of literatures of Cochin and Travancore. To Sudhipradhan, this conference was attended by the representatives of almost all shades of thought and opinion in the intellect life of Kerala. In this conference messages were received from Sajjad Zaheer, general secretary of All India Progressive writers association and from literatures of Kerala. MP Paul presided a session, which defined the role of a writer and in the course of his speech emphasis that, 'the progressive literary movement was not just a communist business, but had room in it for all progressive thinking and artistic expression'.<sup>61</sup> Joseph Mundasseri exhorted the people of Kerala to be proud of their cultural heritage and of their literary masters like Vallathol and Asan.

However difference of opinion were emerged in respect of parts of the manifesto and discussion ensued, but the manifesto when put to vote was unanimously passed. An All Kerala Progressive Writer's committee was elected with Prof. MP Paul as the president. It elected MS Devadas, Editor of Desabhimani, as a delegate to All India Progressive Writers Association committee. It was also decided to publish a monthly Magazine and a quarterly bulletin and to bring out a progressive publication in original or translation once a month.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> 'Kerala Progressive Writers' Association', in *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

The important aspect of the progressive literary movement in Kerala was the rise of a literary movement which was based on a broad humanist cum socialist principles. It should be noted that most of the writers in this category were not directly linked with communist party. Similarly they were not well aware of the debates in the international communist movement regarding culture and literature. They were influenced by writers such as Victor Hugo, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Sholokhov and others. For example recollecting his early literary days P. Kesadev stated that in his early speeches he widely used stories of Maxim Gorky, Nut Harms and Victor Hugo to explain the horrors of hunger. Likewise he also read books like Man and Superman by George Bradshaw, Laughing Man by Victor Hugo and Hunger by nut harms. He added that the first book he read about the Russian Revolution was *Ten Days that Shook the World* by John Riddle. To him, Kesadev got the deeper understanding of America by reading Aptslear's novel *Jungle and oil*. He also attracted by those Russian writers Thargeniv and Chekkov.<sup>63</sup>

During this period the content of the literature had a considerable change. Different sections of the people who were ignored by the previous generation of writers became the characters of this new writing. They include sections like peasants, workers and others. For example P. Kesadev wrote '*Odayil Ninnu*' (from the gutter). This novel tried to depict the life and suffering of a Rickshaw driver called pappu. This job ultimate cost his life through various diseases. In spite of this the main character of this novel showed carriage and determination to help and teach a child whom he saved from a gutter. The novel analyzed the emotions of a Rickshaw worker and the

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<sup>63</sup> P.Kesadev, *Ethirpu* (Mal), Kottayam, Sahitya pravarthaka Co-operative Society, 1960, pp. 76-138.



changing attitude of the society including the same girl whom he had rescued from the gutter.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, Takazhi Sivasankara Pillai also wrote some novels which depicted the life of ordinary workers and cultivators. In 1947 he wrote a novel titled '*Tottiyudemakan*' (*Scavenger's son*). This novel illustrated the deteriorated life condition of the scavengers of Alappuzha. The main character of this novel Chudalamutthu the scavenger's son thought, why he can not lead a decent life by hard work instead of begging for something. He thought people in the houses were leading a happy life because their toilets became clean. He asked himself, 'if there were no scavengers what would happen to them'..?<sup>65</sup> Chudalamutthu wanted to liberate his son from this work. When the scavengers organized as union Chudalamutthu became an instrument of the authority to destroy the union. But later his son Mohanan became the organizer of scavengers union.<sup>66</sup> This works had deviated from earlier themes of Malayalam literature. The day to day life of the masses became a subject matter of writings of various writers during the post war period. Besides this various poems were also written during this period. In 1946, P. Baskaran wrote a poem entitled '*Vayalar Garjikkunnu*'. This poem was written as a response to the police atrocities against to Punnapra-Vayalar appraisal of 1946. In order to propagate this poem he changed his name to Ravi in order to escape the police surveillance.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Idem.*, *Odayilninnu* (Mal), (V.Edn.) Calicut, Poorna Publications, 2004.

<sup>65</sup> Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Tottiyude Makan* (Mal) 1947, DC Books, July, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> P. Bhaskaran, *Jeevithavum Kalayum*, (Mal), Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi Books, 2004.

However, about 1948 the question of the relationship between art and socialism had created much debate within the progressive literary movement. The proposition of art for socialism was rejected by many writers within the movement. Writers like Ponkunnam varky and P. Baskeran were opposed to the application of Ranadive thesis to literature. The meeting of this movement became the venue for ideological conflict. At the Thrissur conference of the association in 1948 the debate became sharper. In this Joseph Mundasseri stood for the formal aesthetics of the literary work. In order to counter this communists especially used a 'scientific literary work' called illusion and reality by Christopher Caldwell. The height of this discussion the communist party came with a proposal for a manifesto of writers. A committee was established under the president-ship of MP. Paul. Other members include; Kuttippuzha krishnapillai, MS Devadas, Achuthakkurupp, VT Induchudan, Takazhi Sivasankaran, Joseph Mundasseri. This move was opposed by certain writers led by P Kesadev and he was supported by C.J Thomas. To P. Baskaran, during that period CPI failed to appreciate the human instinct in the literary production, especially love. In the Kollam conference of this organization of 1949 both P Baskaran and EMS Namboothirippad had engaged a series of debate over the relationship between literature and communist party. In response to this debate, in 1951 he wrote a collections of poems entitled 'Mulkireedam'. One of the poems, called 'Avivandi' (steam vehicle) which depicts the deviation of communist party.<sup>68</sup> About 1this period the difference of opinion was erupted among the rank and file of 'progressive writers' over the question of the literary work. Some of the writers like Takazhi Sivasankara Pillai, P Kesadev, P Baskaran, Ponkunnam Varky were dissatisfied with the communist policy towards art and literature. They thought communist party were excessively interfering in their writings and trying to link with the literature with the party politics. This led to the split of

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75.

the movement and the question between the Art and life was continued for a while.

Like the progressive literary movement Kerala witnessed a progressive theater movement from late 1940s. Men like P Baskaran and C.J Thomas and Jose Philip propagated the idea of shadow play to propagate the idea of the communist party. It was mainly through the Kerala people's Arts club, this theatre movement was developed. It was founded in 1946 by men like G Janardhanakkurupp, Rajagopalan Nair and others. This period had witnessed the rise of a popular culture in Kerala which was free from the Tamil and sans-critic dramas. The day to day life and suffering of the peasants and the workers were largely highlighted in these dramas. Similarly this movement helped to the rise of a popular Malayalam musical tradition which was free from the Kernatic classical tradition.

This movement got a breakthrough in 1951 with the performance of the play called *Ningalenne Communist Aakki* (You Made Me Communist) written by Toppil Basi. Toppil basi was the activist of communist party and accused in the shooranad police firing case. The theme of the drama was around a pauperized landlord family. Paramupillai the aged head of the family is steeped in the feudal illusion and superstitious and cynical about everything. He was hostile to everything modern including even his own son Gopalan who has become a member of Communist party and whom he thrown out of the house. Paramupillai has his illusion about his well to do relative, the village landlord-usurer, Kesavan Nair, the wily tyrant who maintain a goonda gang and a rival peasant organization to fight the growing peasant movement. Ultimately Paramupillai founds that Kesavan Nair spares no one. He not only oppressed the peasants and landless labors of the village but employs the most dirty tricks to deprive Paramupillai of his last parcel of land. Paramupillai's mind was transformed when he find his son Gopalan was beaten up by the hired Goondas of the landlord Kesavan Nair. He sheds his

last illusion and he joined a mighty procession of the people protesting against tyranny and oppression. The whole process of transformation of the old father Paramupillai is summed up in the title '*Ningal enne communist akki*' (You made me communist).<sup>69</sup>To Unniraja, this was the first Malayalam musical drama which was entirely free from the Tamil musical drama.<sup>70</sup>The main actors in this play were; Kambisseri karunakara menon as paramupillai, Vijayakumari as daughter of paramupillai, G Janardhaankkurupp as Kesavan Nair, Toppil Krishnapillai as karumban, Sudharma as mala, O madhavan as pappu, V sambasivan as Gopalan. While playing this they had faced stiff opposition from the authorities. By recollecting these days the actress Sulojana stated that, when they reached Kovalam to play '*Ningalenne Communistakki*' the Travancore government banned it, but they were determined to play this with public support, and actors actresses were came to perform this play by defying prohibition. Similarly, when they went to perform this play at Barananganam many try to disrupt this play by ridiculing them and many were tried throw stones upon them. One stone was hit to the head of KC George's and blood was poured from his head. Without considering this George continued his performance till the end.<sup>71</sup>She continued by stating that her father was afraid of sending her to play dramas but she was determined to go there. At last her father has given a spear to protect herself from any attack. This play was performed in the 11<sup>th</sup> conference of IPTA in 1954. To sudhi predhan, the important aspect of the Kerala theater movement was that a drama could be performed based on a poem. For instance Krishna warrior's "the song in the tram" or Vailoppilli's

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<sup>69</sup> You Made Me Communist, in Sudhi Pradhan, *op. cit.*, Marxist Cultural...

<sup>70</sup> Thoppil Bhasi, *Ningalenne Communist Akki*, (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhath Book House, 1952.

<sup>71</sup> KPAC Sulochana, *Arangile Anubhavangal* (Mal), Thrissur, Current Books, 2007, pp. 30-31.

“in Korea in Seoul” prolonged discussions on their adaptability on the stage. Philosophy, politics all had come up in the course of discussion.<sup>72</sup>

KPAC made frequent tours to outside Kerala helped it to establish contact with similar cultural organizations which existed in different parts of the county. For example Balraj Sahni saw every plays of KPAC and had a critical discussion with Thoppil Bhasi about its plot and presentation. As a result Balraj Sahni was invited to Kerala. In 1959 the government of Kerala issued a notification inviting him as state guest. The discussion with Balraj Sahni persuaded Thoppil Bhasi to write a play called ‘Puthiya Akasham Puthiya Bhoomi’ which was about the martyrs who fought for the county. The theme of this play was the need for the united action of the Indian people for national reconstruction.<sup>73</sup>

The post Second world war period had witnessed the intensification of the struggles of various sections of the Indian people. This period saw the struggle of the royal Indian navy uprising, the struggle against the trial of INA prisoners and the struggle of working class and cultivators. In Kerala the communist party had re-intensified its struggle after the period of people’s war? In Malabar, the struggle was mainly against the colonial domination and agrarian exploitation. But in Travancore-Cochin region the struggle was mainly for the establishment of responsible government in the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin. During this period the main thrust of the communist policy was its support for the self-determination of different nationalities in India. As a part of this the communist party in Kerala supported and advocated for the united Kerala which include the British Malabar and the Travancore Cochin region. This was against the Travancore

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<sup>72</sup> Sudhi Pradhan, Vol.II, *op. cit.*

<sup>73</sup> KPAC Sulochana, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

Dewan's vision for an independent Travancore on the one hand and against a proposed Kerala of the Cochin ruler.

It was in this period the communist party in Kerala became more involved with the cultural activities. They viewed culture as an important tool for propagation. On 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1947 the British government transferred its power to the two independent states of India and Pakistan. This forced communist party to adopt a position on the new independent Indian state and the new ruling class. That will discuss in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5**

### **INDEPENDENCE AND CHANGING DEBATES WITHIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

After the end of Second World War Churchill's conservative party was defeated in the British general election and a new labor government was established under the leadership of Clement Attlee. The post war situation of Britain persuaded the new government to start a negotiation process with the Indian political leadership regarding the transfer of power. This period witnessed the spread of the upsurges of various sections of working class and peasantry that include the soldiers of the Royal Indian Navy, the struggle against the trial of INA prisoners and various agrarian and trade union struggles led by the Communist Party. The interesting factor of this struggle was that the leadership of the Indian National Congress and Muslim League were not in favor of these struggles. They even rejected the struggle of the Royal Indian navy persons and asked them to surrender and return to their barracks. An impression was felt among the masses that the leadership of the Indian National Congress and Muslim League wanted to make a compromise with the British imperialism to prevent the mass upsurges of the people. This notion was also shared by CPI. By explaining these stand, A.K Gopalan stated, after the Second World War Britain realized that the suppression of Indian freedom struggle was not possible, therefore they were forced to make some compromise with Indian bourgeoisie. On the other hand the Indian National Congress was afraid of the raising militancy of Indian national movement. In order to counter this they did two things. On the one side they tried to restrict the militancy of Indian masses in their struggle against British

government. On the other they used this militancy to bargain with Britain.<sup>1</sup> Likewise this negotiation led to the transfer of power in to two independent and sovereign republics of Indian union and Pakistan. This independence and partition created some complex socio-political realities in India which the congress was not able to address properly.

The partition of British India was based on the notion that both Hindus and Muslims were constituted two separate nationalities. Naturally the independence and partition was followed by large scale communal riots which led to the migration and counter migration of people from one republic to another. This fired the religious passion in India and Pakistan. In India, this led to the growing demand for the establishment of Hindu state like that of Pakistan. This intensification of communal rivalry had reached a new point when Gandhi was assassinated on 30 January 1948 by Nathuram Vinayak Godse. Similarly the British transferred the power to the two sovereign republics without completely resolving the question of princes. The Independence Act of 1947 permitted Indian princes either to merge with any of the two republics or to remain independent. After independence many princes wanted to assert their sovereignty. The Indian National Congress started negotiation with the princes. At last many princes agreed to merge with India in return for some privileges. To parties like communist party this was a compromise with the Indian aristocracy. However, the crisis in certain states like Hyderabad and Kashmir was continued. The princely state of Kashmir was not ready to join either in India or Pakistan. But in October 1947 a Pathan tribe raided the Kashmir territory. During that time the ruler of Kashmir sought the help of Indian army. The Indian army agreed to help the ruler in return for Kashmir merging with Indian union. But Pakistan claimed

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<sup>1</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *Entejeevitha Katha* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1980, p. 166.



its right on Kashmir as a Muslim majority province. There was popular resentment in the Kashmiri people against this situation. Similarly in Hyderabad, Nissam was determined to maintain his independence. During this period there were various agitations which taking place in the princely state of Hyderabad to establish a responsible government. The important struggle in this regard was the Telangana peasant struggle. In October 1948 the Indian army entered the state of Hyderabad. But the main task of the Indian Army was to suppress the Telangana upsurge. This created a doubt among the large section of masses about the motives of new Indian state. Many believed the Indian state was trying to preserve and protect the old landlord and aristocratic class in India. The important feature of this period was that many landlords who were hostile to congress were largely enrolled in to that same organization after the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947. Immediately after independence India's food situation became so grim. Food scarcity was experienced in different parts the country. This entire situation had created a sense of anger a core section of Indian people immediately after independence. The communist party's new line should be analyzed in this context.

### **Calcutta Thesis and New Upsurge**

It was in this context the communist party adopted a new line in its second congress in Calcutta in February 1948. CPI was not satisfied with the way in which the transfer of power was taken place. To them, Indian independence was not complete as India was still dominated by the economic and military power of British imperialism. To them, India's independence won't be real if this domination were not over thrown. Writing in October 1947 PC Joshi stated "the lives of the millions of our people, the shape of our own economy, the future of our country depend upon how democratic and sound a food plan does our government formulate and broad and strong

support the people can give the government so the enemies of the people, land monopolist land lords and trader hoarders are successfully routed. It is in the spirit that; CPI proposed some recommendations, urgent measures to tackle the immediate crisis, immediate measures to get hold of surplus produce of winter harvest in the hand of government and its effective distribution, radical measures to tackle the basic problems and to take our food economy out of the hand of selfish feudal and hoarders who have produced and profited the chronic food crisis, and place it in our hands of our food producers- peasants and rely upon the common people, the vast masses of consumers”.<sup>2</sup> Likewise Somnath Lahiri who represented CPI in the Constituent Assembly stated; measures should be taken immediately to affect the withdrawal all British troops, as their retention on Indian soil is incompatible with Indian sovereignty, and to secure the withdrawal of Indian troop outside India. To Lahiri, “conversion and expansion of present Indian Army, Navy and Air force into a real Army, need the commended officers and manned by Indians, owing allegiance to the people and the cause of Indian independence. He also stated that full restoration and expansion of civil liberties. No police or military interference against workers, strike for better wage and living conditions, no suppression of peasants action against landlords and hoarders, Full supports to all mass demonstration against imperialist rule, full support to the struggle of the peoples of the states for democracy and freedom”.<sup>3</sup> To him, immediate handing over of all fallow land of government and the landlords to the landless peasants, reduction of rent and moratorium on debts, prohibition of all eviction and levying of a steeply greedy agricultural income tax, pending abolition of landlordism. To him, immediate enactment of legislation

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<sup>2</sup> P.C., Joshi, ‘Letter to Doctor Rajendra Prasad 25-10-1947’, Archives of Contemporary History (Henceforth, ACH), Jawaharlal Nehru University (Henceforth JNU), New Delhi, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Somnath Lahiri, ‘Freedom and Independence at Constituent Assembly’, ACH, JNU, New Delhi, pp.6-8.

enforcing a minimum living wage, the recognition of trade unions and the penalization of capitalists. To Lahiri, the import of capital goods for planned expansion and reconversion of industries to supply the urgent needs of the people and control of profit to ensure supply of goods at cheap price to the people. To him, CPI calls upon the people to vigilant and report the act of intransigence and sabotage carried out by bureaucrats and officials in the interest of their old masters, so that such cases are speedily exposed and the culprits punished.<sup>4</sup> In November 1947 the CPI Central committee declared that the new Indian state is largely dominated by the bureaucrats and military officials of the former British administration and they controlled the Indian government. Writing in December 1947 BT Ranadive stated while the absence of the crisis in the USSR will be a beneficent influence on countries which are linked economically with the USSR. For the rest of the world capitalism is preparing a path of misery, unemployment and loss of freedom. The general crisis of the capitalism leads to the intensification of class battles. It heralds a period of revolutionary conflict between the oppressed masses led by the working classes and capitalists. To him, “on each occasion the crisis inflicts intense misery on the workers. On each occasion the capitalist attempt to solve it by intensifying exploitation of workers by depriving millions of their jobs and robbing the masses of colonial peasants all over the world. In the colonies the discontent of the workers lead to strikes and later on, the discontent of the entire population leads to revolutionary movements, and demanding immediate freedom and working for the overthrow of the imperialist rule. The ruling class of the imperialist countries, in their attempt to solve the crisis at the expense of the people, suppresses the movement of the working class and the movement for colonial liberation”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> B.T., Ranadive, *Communist*, Vol.I, No. 6, December, 1947, ACH, JNU, New Delhi.

The adoption of the new strategy of the communist party can be linked to the positions taken by USSR and Indian communist party from 1946 itself. After the cabinet mission report of February 1946 the soviet view of the role of British in India became more outspokenly hostile. To John H. Kautsky, 'the mission's plan was regarded as a devise to strengthen the British position and to weaken the national liberation movement. More important, from USSR's point of view, the Indian communist party was now considered as an independent force opposing the plan, and the congress leadership was treated as representing the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie'.<sup>6</sup> As far as Soviet Union was concerned, the Mountbatten plan of 1947 was a British attempt to retain actual power through the Balkanization of India and through reliance on the support of princes and 'definite sections of India's propertied classes' who feared social change. The congress leadership was said to be under pressure from these groups to accept the plan, but was not identified with them, while the congress rank and file was described as opposed to the plan. Following the Soviet resolution the CPI central committee was held between 10 and 20, 1947 adopted their resolution on Mountbatten plan. To the Central committee, the sole purpose of the Mountbatten plan was 'to disrupt the people, strengthen reaction, get in to an alliance with it and thus make Indian independence formal'.<sup>7</sup> The strategy of British imperialism was to forge a new alliance with the princes, Landlords, and Indian big business and British big business was relying on the great influence of Indian Big Business over the extreme right wing of the congress leadership. To John H kautsky, the CPI's strategy after the independence was based on a theory of differences between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Nehru and his progressive wing of

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<sup>6</sup> John H. Kautsky, *Moscow and The Communist Party of India: A Study in The Postwar Evolution of International Communist Strategy*, Westport, Connecticut, Green Wood Press, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

the congress on the other. And Nehru and his wing were to be strengthened against the Sardar Patel wing through the united front from above policy. It should be noted that in the earlier days after independence while denouncing the Mountbatten plan the existing CPI leadership was not so hostile to the Nehru government. Their slogans of that time were “Fight communalism”, “Increase production”, “don’t foment strikes”.<sup>8</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> October 1947 P.C Joshi the then general secretary of the CPI in his speech to a mass meeting in Calcutta (which was reprinted parties organ, under the headline “Nehru must not resign”) could be described as a stirring call to the people to rally behind Pandit Nehru. Writing against the riots and communalists in the same period, Joshi exclaimed: “All support to the government”. Reaction is threatening two governments of India and Pakistan and it is the duty of the communist party to rally whole-heartedly and enthusiastically behind them and pledge them all our support. In an article appearing as late as December 1947 B.T Ranadive, also spoke of Nehru’s progressive foreign policy and democratic aspirations and declared that the people “must rally round Nehru” to support Nehru’s policy and push his government ahead, decisively against reaction.<sup>9</sup>

However, the first indication of a shift in the soviet attitude towards India came in joint sessions on Indian studies held in Moscow June 14-18, 1947, by the sections of history and philosophy, literature and language, economic and law of the academy of sciences of the USSR. At the very same time at which the Indian communist party adopted its Mountbatten resolution praising the congress and offering its co-operation to the congress government, this session was unanimous in sharply condemning the congress. The report of the June 1947 session of the Academy of sciences was distinguished from earlier soviet discussion of Indian affairs by greater

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

reliance on class analysis, they emphasize that class conflicts in India have grown in intensity and that working class has become the leading element among the anti-imperialist forces. About this time the Soviet communist party concluded that India is clearly divided into two camps, the imperialist reactionary forces united in the congress, opposed by a supposedly growing popular movement for independence and democracy led by the working class, the communist party. The report differs only in their class analysis of reactionary forces. Balabushevich and Dyakov include among these the bourgeoisie, which they denounce as having, out of fear of the raising masses, made a treacherous deal with imperialism. Zhukov, on the other hand-and in this he is followed by Melmen- is careful to include only the big bourgeoisie among the reactionary forces co-operating with imperialism, clearly implying that the 'middle' as well as the petite bourgeoisie and the peasantry are at least potential allies of the working class.<sup>10</sup>

Addressing the first Cominform meeting, September 1947, Zhdanov stated World War two aggravated the crisis of the colonial system, as expressed in the rise of powerful movement for national liberation in the colonies and dependencies. This has placed the rear of the capitalist system in jeopardy. The people of the colonies no longer wish to live in the old way. The ruling classes of the metropolitan countries can no longer govern the colonies on the old lines. Attempts to crush the national liberation movement by military forces now increasingly encounter armed resistance on the part of the colonial peoples and lead to protracted colonial wars (Holland- Indonesia, France-Vietnam). Zhdanov also says that "the communist parties must rally their ranks and unite their efforts on the basis of a common anti-imperialist and democratic platform, and patriotic forces of the people, they must take the lead of all the forces prepared to uphold the national honor and independence.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The task of elaborating and applying the Zhabhanov thesis to the colonial areas was undertaken by Zhukov in an important article entitled “the growing crisis of the colonial system”. Zhukov defined that the Indian bourgeoisie is “Comprador and industrial” Bourgeoisie connected with foreign capital. He stated, Communist party in leading national liberation movement to implication, but states clearing that the Communist party, in leading the national liberation movement, unites “not only the peasantry but also the remaining strata of the toilers and in many countries also part of the bourgeoisie, mainly the petite and middle bourgeoisie. At the same time Zhukov declared that Communist party of India, fight for the solidarity of all democratic forces of the people, for the complete liberation of India from medieval survivals, for broad democratic reforms, which were the guarantee of attainment of genuine independence from foreign imperialism”.<sup>11</sup>

From December 7 to 10 the central committee of the CPI met and made some changes. Although the central committee met under the leadership of Joshi, its general secretary, Ranadive later noted that Joshi accepted the statement of the new policy but did not vote for it, since he had not yet made a complete turn. The December 1947 resolution looked upon the Indian bourgeoisie as an enemy along with imperialism and feudalism; “it shed all illusions about national bourgeoisie”. The bourgeoisie was regarded as an ally of imperialism; the Indian bourgeoisie had given up the path of opposition to imperialist domination and had become collaborationist. The Indian bourgeoisie was afraid of the masses therefore it suppressed the mass upsurge. To the central committee, the Mountbatten award gave the people ‘not real but fake independence. Through this award, British imperialism gave the bourgeoisie an important share of state power, subservient itself, in order to

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25-31.

drown the national revolution in blood'.<sup>12</sup> The Mountbatten award was thus not really a retreat of imperialism. To the committee, the government of India was trailing behind the imperialist 'War mongers'. It is collaborating with Anglo American imperialism in order to satisfy the selfish greed of national big business. Since 1947, the leadership of Indian National Congress and the Muslim league, strongly, entrenched in the governments of India and Pakistan respectively, has started making political, economic and military alliances with Anglo-American imperialism. They are strengthening the camp of reaction all along the line. In February 19-26, 1948 a conference named the south, East Asia youth conference held in Calcutta. In this the delegation of the two inter national communist organizations were attended, the world federation of democratic youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS), the meeting was attended by delegates from USSR and also from Europe, America, and Australia, as well as delegates from India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, Burma, Malaya an Indonesia. The conference called on the youth of South East Asia to unite with all democratic and progressive forces in their countries. To the congress, the bourgeoisie was afraid of the revolutionary mass movement, has compromised with imperialism.<sup>13</sup> It was the compensation of the emerging Indian situation and the interaction with the international communist movement which ultimately led to the strategic shift of the communist party position in February 1948.

Between 28<sup>th</sup> February and 6<sup>th</sup> March 1948 the second congress of the communist party was held at Calcutta. In this congress a new leadership was emerged in it. BT Ranadive was elected as the new general secretary of the CPI. This new leadership was highly critical of the earlier leadership especially PC Joshi, the earlier General Secretary. This conference critically

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-37.



reviewed earlier activities of the CPI. As a result of this they adopted a new programme which is generally referred as 'Calcutta Thesis'. The new programme had devised new strategy and tactics for Indian revolution. It had made a new understanding on Indian independence, Indian state and the nature of Indian ruling class and bourgeoisie.

According to the second congress of the CPI, the post war revolutionary epoch has brought the colonies to the path of armed struggle against the imperialist and their allies. The imperialist and the bourgeoisie collaborators are overthrown and power passes in to the hands of toiling people, which assure not only complete national independence but also the liquidation of capitalist social order and building of socialism. To the congress, as in the metropolitan countries so in the colonial old imperialist order or the colonial order were collapsing.

It further stated that in India British imperialist saw the menacing tide of revolution, irrepressible and advancing and realized that the days of the old order were over. The old colonial rule in which the British imperialist was the avowed master and was supported by the feudal retinue, bureaucrats, landlords etc. was an order based on perpetuation of feudalism and opposition to the bourgeoisie. To it, for neither imperialism nor the prices had any social base, while the orders oppressed the entire people alike. The bourgeoisie though drawn by self interest to join anti-imperialist movement always acted as a break on the militancy of the movement and repeatedly compromise at the expense of the people.<sup>14</sup>

To it, imperialism sounds that this struggle would sound the death Knell of its rule. The way to bar the revolution, to save old order, was to

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<sup>14</sup> 'Political Theses Adopted at the Second Congress, 28<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1948', Calcutta, pp. 11-15.

purchase the very leaders who were at the head of the national government and thus broaden the social base of the government, split the revolutionary force and strike at them. Menaced by the revolutionary wave, and the finding the bourgeoisie also frightened by it and there for agreeable to compromise, imperialism struck a deal with the bourgeoisie and proclaimed it as independence and freedom. To it, imperialism was basing itself on a new class 'the national bourgeoisie. Whose leaders had placed themselves at the head of the national movement and who were immensely useful in beating down the revolutionary wave.<sup>15</sup>

To congress, imperialism was to forge a new economic chain to enslave the country and while formally transferring power to bourgeoisie, keep it as a permanent junior partner in operating as a state. Their objective was to install a revolutionary government of vested interest in power in which, while protecting imperialist order would see imperialist designs. This imperialist way out of crisis is the way out of continuing subjection of national enslavement of returning colonial order of its poverty and ruin of hampering industrial development and keeping the feudal frame work intact. Imperialism is pursuing the same objects as it pursues through the marshal plan in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

The congress declared the basis for the post war revolutionary wave and the collaboration between British imperialism and the national bourgeoisie was laid during the course of the war itself when the process of colonial exploitation reached its extreme level. The government made unwritten pacts with the Indian bourgeoisie to make sure for a steady supply of goods in return for huge profit through looting the people. Politically the

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, pp.15-16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.

situation is such that pure British concern like a pure imperialist state cannot run unless the bourgeoisie is won over. The law and order cannot be maintained, strikes cannot be suppressed and British life cannot be protected without the aid of the national leadership which represent the bourgeoisie and control the people. Therefore, both political and economical bargains became necessary to protect the old order.<sup>17</sup>

To the congress, the so-called 'transfer of power was one of the biggest piece of political and economic appeasement of the bourgeoisie, which was necessary to strike a deal with the British imperialism. This power putting the bourgeoisie in control over man power and the resources of the vast territory though as the junior partner was the dream of the bourgeoisie and has realized it. According to the congress the bourgeoisie will guard the colonial order. A new round of state, people struggles this time for the final abolition of the princely autocracy was being heralded by the fighting people of Kashmir and the people of the rest of India were preparing to support them. To the second congress, the establishment of central government headed by Pundit Nehru has not solved a single problem of democratic revolution. Its establishment does not mean that Indian people have won either freedom or independence nor does it ensure that they will be moving in the direction of democracy and freedom for the people. The government was linking itself with the Anglo American block of imperialist power, a block which sees to crush all democratic revolutions and to create a satellite state. It was maneuvering to find an advantages position for itself in the Anglo-American Block.<sup>18</sup>

The model constitution for provinces further does not accept the basic right of linguistic national units to self determination, thus expressing clearly

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-31.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-41.

the reactionary bourgeois interest which seeks to dominate the different nationalities. It does not provide for freedom and self-determination of the tribal and other backward people enabling the formation of autonomous region or provinces, without which these backward people cannot economically and culturally protect and develop themselves. Under the constitution the basic fundamental rights of the toilers such as; right to work, right to living wage, equal pay for equal work, right to old age sickness and unemployment aid, are denied and do not find a place in the fundamental rights which the new state of India was bound by constitution to guarantee and protect. The government was carrying out the plan of Indian big bourgeoisie to oppose nationalization. Suppress the workers and demand more production through longer hours of work. To CP, in the past the bourgeoisie and the national leadership which represent it were in an opposition to imperialism, now they had give up that opposition. This new change brought about by the transfer of power on 15<sup>th</sup> August. The march of the democratic revolution needed to be proceeded directly in opposition to the bourgeois government and its policy and the bourgeois leadership of the congress.<sup>19</sup>

To the congress, the existing correlation of forces, in which every step forward of the popular struggle is to be taken not only opposition to imperialism but in opposition to the bourgeoisie also. Today the entire trend of events which demands a state of workers, toiling peasants, and the oppressed petite bourgeoisie as the only rallying slogan to surge forward to defeat of imperialism and bourgeois allies and the emancipation of people. It means that people's democratic revolution has to be achieved for the completion of the tasks of democratic revolution and simultaneous building up of socialism. This can be assured by establishing firmly the leaders of

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-50.

working class over the section of the toiling people. Communist party must seek immediate agreement with left parties for the joint action for the common understanding of the problems of the democratic movement for building a front against the competitors and their real masters. The party must expose and fight such group especially groups having connection organization or professing policies which were internationally accepted as counter revolutionary. The building of democratic front is a process of struggle. It advance through series of joint campaigns and partial struggle; jointly conducted united fronts between the party and local congress and league masses even committees wherever possible between the left parties and the congress and league masses at other places.<sup>20</sup>The left unity means drawing the unattached people to a common front in to the common fight. The aim of the people's democratic revolution was to bring about those fundamental changes in our political and social structure. Without which there can be no freedom and no prosperity to the common people. The resolution also state the present state will be replaced by a people's democratic republic which consist of workers, peasants and oppressed middle classes. To it, party presented bureaucratic administration will be dissolved and will be replaced by officials elected by the people controlled by their committees and subject to recall. Landlordism will be abolished and land will be given to the tillers. All big banks and factories will be taken over by the state and run in the interest of the people and for the profit of the few. Princely autocracy will be ended and the state people freed from feudal and capitalist shackles. To the CPI, it will be the task of the Communist party to work with untiringly for this aim to make the prospective of the entire democratic movement. It will be the task of the party to conduct and lead all the struggles of workers, peasants and other

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-78.

toilers in such a manner as to develop them as part of a single movement for the realization of this programme.<sup>21</sup>

The government promised the capitalist that there would be no nationalization for five years. It refuses to accept the obligation of living wage. The trade union front there would have to bear the brunt of this offensive and defeat the government moves and capitalists. The working-class right and demands must be defended most decisively, every care should be taken to see that the fight of the workers and the people. The congress asked the Communist Party to expose and unmask the bourgeois plans, resist all attack against workers and boldly put forward nationalization, control of profit, a living wage etc. as our contribution to organizing production Communist Party must wage a consistent fight against the idea that nationalization etc. was not concert proposal.<sup>22</sup> It was necessary to counteract the mischievous propaganda of the national government and the bourgeoisie among people and to win their sympathies, so that the struggle were not isolated and crushed. The central task on the new front was to rise and lead the toiling peasants around the central slogan of 'Land to the tiller' the landlordism in all forms must be liquidating without any compensation to the landlords, the fight against eviction, against rent, against serfdom to the money lenders for commutation of rent in kind in to money. The agricultural proletariat must be specifically organized section for fair wage and regulation of labor conditions. These agrarian movements which unite the entire mass of the poor peasants, middle peasants and agrarian proletarians, will serve to bring about an alliance between the workers and peasants which crux of any successful democratic movement. They are the part of the movement for democratic front against the imperialist bourgeoisie campaign. In order to

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-91.

head these agrarian struggles and unify them in to one single stream of agrarian resistance, centering round the slogan of 'Land to the tillers' the all India Kisan Sabha must be built up as the fighting central organization of India's peasantry.<sup>23</sup>

By criticizing the earlier leadership on their activities during people's war strategy the second congress stated, the leadership of the party refused six months to recognize the changed character of the war from imperialist to people's war. Having separated themselves from the 9<sup>th</sup> august struggle Communist Party were more and more pushed in to position where it was not able to take a clear position on strikes. The strength of the fifth column was an invention of CP's imagination to justify abjuration of struggle against imperialist policy. A food campaign was reduced itself to a near exposure of the bourgeoisie coupled with formulation of general demands lead not to food but to riot. Continuing its criticism on Joshi's leadership the congress stated during the first party congress resolution there is hardly any anti-imperialist slogan except the release of the national leaders. The main classes that keep the people in bondage, the classes that exploit them, the policies that these classes persuaded, the treacherous role of imperialism-all these are absent from document. On the production front CP again rise an illusion that by mobilizing the people and mobilizing the workers without strikes, CP would not only able to raise production but also secure workers demands. It was not wrong for CP to have talked about production in general saying that the workers are interested in raising production for supporting war but CP's main battle for production could only be nurture of on unmasking the existing system of production. CP should have recognized that without strike, struggle the working class demands could not be secured have continued that supple tactics of earlier period when it said that it would only strike where we must

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-100.

to defend the workers interest.<sup>24</sup> To Ranadive, 'Joshi's leadership gave supple position and landed them in to purely anti-strike position which cost CP in many cases the support of the working class movement. Due to the faulty understanding of the role of imperialism the party came out with the most horrible formulation about the socialist party, the forward block and other left groups. They were denounced as fifth columnist groups while in reality it was imperialism that was doing the work of fifth column. While kowtowed and bowed down before the national bourgeois leaders, while they ignored the existence of imperialism, CPI directed fire against these groups whose following was left nationalist following and whom later on CPI had certainly won over'.<sup>25</sup> CPI even refused to note the fact that sabotage and other things were often the act springing up out of the anti-imperialist indignation of the following of these groups. This characterization of these groups as fifth column alienated the sympathy of many people and earned the hostility of thousands. One of the reasons why the left following in the post war period took initiative in launching of anti-communist attacks was CPI's wrong attack against these parties. To Ranadive, the first congress resolution overestimated the danger of fifth column and the most ridiculous formulation about its all-pervading influence were made and it was because of this that CP landed themselves in to this wrong attack against these groups. In the name of grow more food, abjuration of struggle the imperialist land system, of the struggle against landlords. In the name of solving food crisis, helping the iniquitous procurement plan of the government, at least not fighting it out, in the name of having broad movement raising illusions that even the exploitation profiteering class will be in the movement thus leading to class collaborations. To Ranadive, the basic slogan about people's war of winning the war, of national government, of national unity, of national defense, grow more food,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*



all no doubt were correct and CPI alone had correct basic slogans. But the point was that in implementing them CPI followed ways which were 'reformist', which were some time anti mass, which sowed illusion and therefore CP could not leap the full advantage for our people.<sup>26</sup>To the congress, it was not only in the connection with the attitude to imperialism but in connection with understanding of the day to day developments of the war that CPI committed a number of mistakes. Just because CPI had the conception that the final military collapse of Fascism would automatically lead to freedom of the world, it did not care to bother about the changes of the military situation developing during the course of the war, changes would have enable to adjust our political line to suite new conditions. It was about this time even Stalin's report to the 16<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU [B] was corrected by Adhikari by deleting, in a reprint, the references to Gandhi as a liberal commissar in the service of imperialist bourgeoisie against the colonial national revolutionary movement. This should show deep was the subservience to nationalist bourgeois leaders in the mind of same leading comrades.<sup>27</sup>

This congress affirmed that the August resolution was really a revolutionary call to anti-imperialist action and a call to fight against the compromising policies of bourgeois leadership, a call to lead the great mass battle which the party was ignoring and whose revolutionary significance it hadn't understood yet. To Ranadhive, Joshi's understanding on the struggle of the South was that they were 'sectarian outposts' with the result that some Communist leaders began to characterize Punnapra-Vayalar as a private struggle and would not include the Vayalar martyrs in people's age in the August 15. The next result of this struggle in the south was that basis was laid

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-134.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.134-137.

for a mass membership of the party working class, perhaps the only province which can boast of it.<sup>28</sup>

Likewise the second congress had a critical attitude towards the earlier leadership over their position regarding the question of national self-determination especially their attitude towards Pakistan question. By criticizing G. Adhikari the congress stated 'Pakistan and national unity together with the resolution he drafted for the September 1942 meeting of the central committee were not only free from blemishes but in many places contain the 'seed and germs of the opportunist surrender' which the 'CPI' made in the subsequent period'. While Adhikari hits constitution mongering and warns that our path was the path of revolutionary struggle, building of revolutionary unity of the people, still this was not the central idea of his pamphlets, this pamphlet did not expose the bourgeoisie leadership as the obstacle and the disrupter of the struggle for self-determination and as a force by defeating which alone the people can march forward to self-determination. By continuing their criticism on the earlier leadership the second congress stated, in historical review Adhikari misses imperialism completely, a failure quite in keeping with the line advocated forward to freedom. the whole conception of Hindu-Muslim problem arose at different times was non class conception in which classes were not taken in to account and the deliberate policy of imperialism of divide and rule was screened from the leaders eye. To the congress, final bid for power in which again the role of imperialism was screened and genesis of the Hindu-Muslim problem was traced to certain wrong ideas in the head of the leaders of the national movement. Adhikari's pamphlet further fail to attack the league leaders and their cry of Pakistan a weapon of compromise with imperialism, separation being the special form of compromise of the league leaders with the imperialist government. The obstructionist role of Pakistan in dividing the Muslim masses from the

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

common struggle the disruptive role played by the league connection with this was ignored and ground was already elected for drawing the conclusion that Pakistan contains the core of the freedom demand of Muslims.<sup>29</sup>

Thus the Second Congress had developed an understanding on new Independent Indian state and Indian Bourgeoisie. It was highly critical of the earlier leadership which the new congress viewed as reformist deviation. This congress accused the earlier leadership for 'right deviationism' and compromise with the national bourgeoisie. They believed that a new strategy was needed to overthrow the new Indian government which was dominated by the imperialist, capitalist and landlords. The communist wanted to overthrow this government by a mass revolutionary struggle. In a letter to congress leaders in April 1948 B.T. Ranadive stated "the congress ministries, the Nehru government and congress leaders are placing themselves in the company of the most reactionary person- the world Fascist and imperialist and those who sooner or later sell the freedom or independence of their country out of their fear of communism".<sup>30</sup> To Ranadive, the attack against communist party was not on a matter of concern for the members of the party but was a matter of concern to all democrats, all those who really want their country to be free, sovereign, independent and democratic. In the statement of the provincial governments one would search in the vain for any explanation. The explanation copied from the imperialist masters was repeated, saying that the activities of communists were dangerous to the peace and tranquility of the province. To him, it seems that the political exigency to defend the unjustifiable act was causing the collapse not only of truth but also decency in public life. To him, while the party repudiate the charge, that it artificially engineers agrarian struggle or working class strikes, it at the same time, openly admits, and proud to admit, that the party and its members have been

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>30</sup> B.T., Ranadive, 'An Open Letter to the Congress Man', 1948, ACH, JNU, New Delhi, pp. 4-10

courageously defending the interest of the broad masses. The CPI has also demanded, and has every right to demand that if the present government was not able to solve the problems of the people, it must be replaced by a government of the workers and peasants and the toiling middle class.<sup>31</sup>

The second congress asked the communist party to wage a mass struggle in order to overthrow the present Indian government which according to them was controlled by the Anglo-American imperialism, Indian capitalists and the reactionary Indian landlord class. This policy invited a strong response from the union government and they initiated nationwide repressive measures against communist party. To EMS, Namboothirippad, after the Second Congress, communist party both in state and central level functioned as a secret organization, so they were not able to participate directly in the political organization. But their affiliated organizations like that students propagated the new policy of party in Kerala. It was through the affiliated mass organizations many of the later communist leaders were contacted with revolutionary ideas. Even though CPI publications were banned, it was able to secretly circulate publications and was able to politicize its members and sympathizers.<sup>32</sup> In the words of EMS Namboothirippad, many members of the Central committee including the members of Kerala were not happy with the circumstances which led to the expulsion of PC. Joshi from the politbureau during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress. Among the three central committee members of Kerala P Krishnapillai was not able to attend the second party congress at Calcutta. The other two members EMS Namboothirippad and KC George were opposed the expulsion of PC Joshi from Politbureau. In Kerala, there was a slow transition from the earlier approach to the new approach of the

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Communist Party Keralatthil* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, pp. 362-364.

second congress. Likewise, there was no move against the earlier line from the Kerala leadership during the preparatory period of the Calcutta congress. The Travancore leadership of the communist party was supportive of the Calcutta thesis and the Malabar leadership was supportive to the earlier position. Though KC. George and Krishnapillai were included in the Central committee nobody from the Kerala leadership was inducted in the politbureau. After the Calcutta congress, there existed a three member secret committee of CP in Kerala. It consisted of men like P. Krishnapillai, KC. George and EMS. Namboothirippad. After the death of Krishnapillai the committee was reconstituted including EMS. Namboothirippad, N.C Shekar and K.C George. This committee was continued till the arrest of Rama Varma Tampan and the subsequent dissolution of this committee in 1950. During that period many party cadres were suspicious of the effectiveness of the new committee and the central leadership was very vigilant on this committee. Majority of the Central Committee members from Kerala were not ready to oppose the general secretary PC. Joshi. After the Calcutta congress the CP in Kerala boycotted the election in the princely states Kochi. It was decided without the permission of central leadership. EMS Stated this was a policymistake as far as communist party was concerned. One month before the Calcutta congress the party contested election in Travancore based on adult franchise.<sup>33</sup> But because of the Calcutta thesis the communist party boycotted the election of Kochi. This according to Namboothirippad, led to a situation where the communist party kept away from its responsibility by boycotting the election. In Kerala there emerged a situation in which the party forced to abstain from the Kochi election in order to follow the Telangana path. In Travancore the Communist party contested the election by stating that, it was the party which conducted the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle. To

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351.

EMS Namboothirippad, if CPI contested the Kochi election it could make its political presence even though it did not get a single seat. The secretly functioning Kerala leadership approaches the Cochin election to practicalize their then slogan “Telangana path is our path”. The state leadership reached a conclusion that participation in the Cochin election was not accordance with the Telangana model so they gave emphasis to armed organized mass agrarian struggle instead of participating the election. To him, this decision was taken without the approval and acceptance of the central leadership. Even though the central leadership tried to rectify it, it was not succeeded. The situation was out of control as the election process had proceeded further. To him, by boycotting the Cochin election the communist party lost an opportunity to use this election as an occasion for expanding organizational base in the princely state. Even though the large uprisal like Punnapra-Vayalar did not take place in Kochi many communists were actively participated in the Cochin Congress and Rajaya preja mandalam in the cause of their struggle for responsible government.<sup>34</sup>

The Madras government had promulgated the public safety ordinance in order to deal with the communist activities. Due to this the public functioning of Desabhimani and other publications were difficult. So they tried to publish it in different names. Those leaders who played a major role in the functioning of Desabhimani between 1943 and 1948 were secretly trying to publish the party press in public. They include MS. Devadas, VT. Induchudan, NVS Varior, DM. Pottakkad et al. though Communist party was directly participated in the struggles their affiliated organizations were publicly active. Though Communist party was not directly involved in the crisis of Travancore, main communists were active in the demonstration against the Travancore Pattam Thanuppillai government.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 352-355.

During the period of the Calcutta thesis Kerala had witnessed a mass upsurge of the peasants and workers. It was the landlord exploitation and the deteriorating food situation which intensified these agitations. In Malabar, there developed an alliance between the landlord class and the new administration. To Cherukad, after the independence many British loyal Janmies and landlords had joined congress by wearing Kadhar.<sup>35</sup> This allowed the landlord to freely evict the tenants at their will and to hoard food grains during the famine situation. At the same time the congress ministers asked the people to adjust with low grade food grains like Javara and maize till the Nehru government manage the famine situation. It was in this situation the mass peasant agitation developed in Malabar during the period between 1948 and 50. As reflected in the Cherukad's novel 'Mutthassi' the teachers unions felt that in post independent period the congress government protect the interest of management. After the independence many early officials and school managers joined congress and started anti-communist propaganda. To Nani (the leading character of the Cherukad's novel), the new independent government even tries to take the dignity of teacher to get her suspended certificate. In order to hide this fact they invoke the fear of communist anarchy.<sup>36</sup>

The earlier agitation following the Calcutta thesis in Malabar was in Korom, the Local leadership of the communist party in Korom held a secret meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1948. They planned for the forcible seizure of rice kept by a local Janmi and on the next day the decision to seize was carried out. The house of a local Janmi Puthiaveetil kunjambu nambiar was attacked and some rice was seized and distributed freely. When it was found that the rice

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<sup>35</sup> Cherukad Govinda Pisharadi, *Jeevithapatha* (Mal), Thrissur, Current Books, August 1974, p. 485.

<sup>36</sup> *Idem.*, *Mutthassi* (Mal), Thrissur, Kerala Sahitya Akademy, p. 384.

would not be enough to distribute among those who assembled there, they seized more rice from the Janmie's house again. The next day the police arrived there and retrieved some of the rice and the police went in searched for those who seized the rice from janmies house. But the armed MSP men keeping the rice were attacked and wounded. Their rifles were also seized by the agitators. The police men somehow field, and they were pursued agitators of about 200. When the police saw this they encountered the agitators. Firing ensues killing one on the spot. One was killed in the police lockup; two of the accused later were died in jail, due to lockup torture while in custody. Another accused was killed Salem jail firing in 1950. Thus the total death from this incident and connected development was five.<sup>37</sup> Another incident was in Thillankeri, on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1948 about 300 of the peasants seized paddy stored in the house of a local Janmi and later on, when the police arrived on 15<sup>th</sup> April, they attacked the police with local weapons like spears, swords etc. however the police opened fire resulting in the death of 7 persons. This was followed by a reign of police terror, and when the trial started, 11 of those involved in the incident had already died. Five more should be added this figure. Another five died while in the firing of Salem jail in 1950. Thus the total number of those who died would come to 16. Such paddy lifting case occurred elsewhere at kamballoor near Nileswaram, kodakkad, vadakkara etc. but none of them had resulted in the tragic deaths like korom and Tillenkei. The total number of the dead in both cases was come to 21. Another incident had taken place in Manankunnu. This place is a border area of south Canara district. P. Kannan Nair, a communist who had participated in the incident has acknowledged that Manayankunnu was a camp organized by communist party as a part of the armed resistance to the police. There were about 40 insurgents in the camp while the agitators had been sleeping on the hill, a police arrived

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<sup>37</sup> E.Balakrishnan, *History of the Communist Movement in Kerala*, Ernakulam, Kurukshetra Prakashan, 1998, p. 207.



and fired at them. Six people were killed on the spot, sixteen were arrested and the others were escaped.<sup>38</sup> Another place was at Onchiyam near Vadagara, 7 communists were killed in police firing on the early hour of 1<sup>st</sup> May 1948, when they resisted against the arrest of two communists, on later succumbed to the injuries, raising the number of total death to 8. The tragedy of this incident was that there were no clear reasons of the police search. It was one of the several illegal activities done by the police. Except the few cases of the direct encounter between the police and communists, most of the cases were simply fabricated cases to justify police atrocities. In this period human lockup torture was a common occurrence, and nobody spoke against it. In the beginning in 1950, two communists who had been imprisoned at the central jail kannur under trial prisoners Rairu nambiar and kuttiappa were taken on bail by the police. Another communist Gopalan Nambiar was arrested by the police elsewhere. All of them were taken to Padikkunnu and were shot on 4<sup>th</sup> may 1950. However the story given out was that they were killed in encounter with the police. As part of this repressive policy Moyarath Sankaran was arrested on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1948. After arresting him, he was brutally tortured in the police lockup; as a result he died in the jail hospital on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1948.<sup>39</sup> Those were the times when the santisena of the congress, and the police had joint hands to hunts down communist leaders and workers. The congress workers pointed out their targets, and the police moved in for the kill. On his decision to travel to his wife house Chembilod, he set off on the morning on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1948 and took a train to Edakkad form Thalasseri temple gate station. Getting of Edakkadu station, Moyarath Sankaran walk towards his wife house, he had barely covered some distance when a whistle sounded from somewhere. Members of the Santisena surrounded him and beat him up. After the Santisena finished their Job, they altered the police out

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 208-210.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

post. They hauled Moyarath Sankaran into the jeep and took him to Valapattanam police station. On the way, the police picked up Elakkunni Kunhiraman, a friend of Moyarath Sankaran while he was sitting in a tiny shop at Nadal. He saw Moyarath Sankaran inside the vehicle, he was thoroughly beaten up. Both were taken to the Valapattanam police station. While they proceeding to the station they were beaten and Moyarath Sankaran fell down. It was a policeman from Payyoli who beat him. Later, there was a phone call to the police station. The conversation was about Moyarath Sankaran. After that phone call a police man came up to confirm his identity. Kunhiraman later understood that the police been instructed to be very severe. None of his friends or relatives were permitted to speak to Moyarath Sankaran, later he was taken away from their sight for questioning and torture. Then they saw him lying on the floor in exhaustion. After that Moyarath Sankaran was taken from Valapattanam to Kannur police station. His father in law reached Kannur police station and esquired about Moyarath Sankaran. The response was received from a policeman was “no Sankaran has been detained here..!”. The helpless father in law looked around to see if he could spot any familiar face. Sometimes later he found a police officer and on his recommendation he got permission to see Moyarath Sankaran. He saw Moyarath sankaran as in bloodstained clothes, sitting on the floor of the lockup; his back was resting against the wall. His face as well as body was caked with blood, and his head drooped. He was struggling hard to breathe. The same day he was produced in the court and sent him to the central jail. He was not detained there for a long. He was taken to the hospital on a structure. By then he was nearing death. While he was in bed he said to the neighboring bed that “i am about die, but don’t feel sad about it, my death will save the lives of the other comrades who will get caught”.<sup>40</sup> When his father in law

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<sup>40</sup> Moyarath Sankaran, *Autobiography of a Freedom Fighter and Martyr*, Radhika P. Menon (Trans.), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2016, pp. 298-301.

reached the jail, carrying a fresh pair of clothes, the authorities sent him back by saying “every-thing's over”. The dead body had already been buried by then. Neither did they not inform the family of his death immediately nor did they hand over the dead body to the relatives. The burial was done somewhere in the jail premises, and what the authorities did was to suppress the news.<sup>41</sup> During the period between 1948 and 50 the police had organized a massive repressive campaign against the member of the communist party many leaders had to go underground to escape from police actions.

In Travancore the situation was somewhat similar. Recollecting that days in the region of Mavelikkara Toppil Basi stated in his Mavelikkara taluk except one, all active members of congress had left that party in 1948. They include; Kambissery Karunakara menon, Punnkya kulangara Madhavan unnithan, K. Kesavan potti, Chamavila Kesavapillai, Panthalam PR Madahvan Pillai, kaleekka thakkethil sukumara Pillai, Chellathu sreedharan Pillai, Kayamkulatthu TA Moideen kunj et al. The important factor was their alliance with PK. Kunj, who was earlier, supported the demand of independent Travancore and tried to oppress those who opposed the independent Travancore. Other important factor was that, those local rich man who earlier opposed the congress was now became the Kadhar dress holders and accused the leaders like Toppil Bhasi for not giving reception to the ministers.<sup>42</sup> They also protested against the government decision that not to release the Punnapra-Vayalar prisoners. They publically questioned the arrest of communists by using the preventive detention act immediately after the formation of the ministry. During this period, in order to suppress a protest the government brands the protesters as communists. To Thoppil Bhasi, the

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41 *Ibid.*

42 Toppil Bhasi, *Olivile Ormakal* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhath Book House, pp. 5-9.

Ayurveda college officials and police branded him as 'communist'. He was not ashamed of it; instead he considered it as honor.

Like Malabar, Travancore also witnessed the mass upsurge of the cultivators and laborers during the period of Calcutta thesis. In Ennakkadu, the agriculture laborers defied the local landlord and resisted their attempt to evict an agricultural laborer called Kutty. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> time in that region an agricultural laborer rejected his landlord. These captured laborers were publicly transported like cattle's taking to slaughter house. This situation was repeated in places like; Shuranad, Koothattukulam, Vallikkunnath, Karthikakkunnath, Idappalli.<sup>43</sup>

During this period police has initiated a massive repressive measures against the communists. In 1949, four police men were killed in the encounter with the communist party members in Shooranad. As a result the police began to search the houses of the communist party members and massive arrest and torture were followed. Toppil Basi's play 'you made me communist' was written after getting inspiration from the Shooranad incident. He was also targeted, and he went underground after this. Many women were molested in the name of Anti-Communist operations. For example, Kutthattukulam Marry, a communist activist was subjected to a severe molestation, the police made her nude and a Lathi was hit to her secret organs. Likewise a woman called philomina was also subjected to the same as above. She was tied and made her nude by the police in front of her son. In Munayam Kunnu, many prisoners were shot by the police in a remote hill area after pretending their release from the prison. If anyone tried to arrange bail for a communist

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

prisoner, that person also be arrested soon. Likewise, it was difficult for them to get a lawyer.<sup>44</sup>

The situation was very similar in Cochin region. Recollecting this period payyampilli Balan stated, the prisoners of Idappalli case were not allowed to meet their relatives and they were completely isolated from the outside world. As a part of the Calcutta thesis communist party made an adventurism by attacking the idappalli police station to release Communist leaders like NK Madavan. To Payyampalli Balan police officers of Aluva police stations were worried about a possible communist attack on the station. But he added that this concern had no basis at all, communist party members and distant sympathizers of nearby taluks like Paravur, Kunnathunad, Kochi, and Kannayannur were arrested. During this time in the Ponekkara region of Idappalli their existed serious complaint against Achukutty, a local wealthy person. Communist members decided to distribute pamphlet against him. About this time communist party had established shelters in Ponekkara, Elamakkara and Vattekkunnu region of Idappali. Those police officers who were transferred to idappali were under the control of Achukutty. Party cadres were convince that, it was only through exposing the deeds of Achukutty CPI can be build up in Idappalli. Communist cadres had entered in to different trains from the Aluva railway station and throw the pamphlets through the windows of the trains. Achukutty was horrified by these pamphlets.<sup>45</sup>

The important party leaders of Ponekkara were Aravindaksham and KA Krishnan. A tailoring shop of that region was acted as 'CPI's post office of that region'. Generally the party meetings were held in the tailoring shop at night. It was in the house of Kannan an 'untouchable' laborer were the

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>45</sup> Payyampalli Balan, *Aluvapuzha Pinneyumozhuki* (Mal), Kottayam, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Limited, 2001, pp. 40-93.

Communist party found a new shelter. In different shelters, different meetings of communist party were held; like DC secretariat, trade union fraction, local committee meeting, sympathizers meeting, and upcoming rail way strike meetings of the rail way workers. The Communist workers this region was concentrated among the railway workers of Ponekkara. The Communist Party squad members were divided into different squads and reached to the houses of the railway workers they wanted to explain the importance of March 9<sup>th</sup> railway strike 1950 to the workers. They organize a meeting in elamakkara in 25<sup>th</sup> 1950. The Aluva local committee meeting held at Vattakkunnu during the night of 26<sup>th</sup> February 1950. The main Ajanda of this meeting was to discuss the various aspects of the various railway strikes. It decided to convene an enlarged meeting of the workers, the members and sympathizers at Ponekkara in the next day night. The meeting aimed to select the action committee for rail way strike. But the next day two communist leaders, NK Madavan and Vardhukkutty were surrounded and subsequently arrested by the police. After that the Idappalli police station was attacked in order to release NK Madhavan. During this period police found that Ponekkara was a place of Communist hideout, so they conducted a massive witch-hunt against the communist party in Ponekkara.

The Communists in Kochi Believed that the Communists were liberated Malaya through Guerrilla warfare. They thought Idappali became the Yanan of Kerala and they envisaged a joint front of the railway workers and students in the proposed railway strike. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1950, about a dozen of Communist leaders met at Kariparambath purayidam near Ponekkara. In this KC. Mathew suggested to release prisoners like N.K. Madavan by forcibly entering the police station. Nobody opposed in it, everybody especially the youth were interested in doing heroic activities. During that period, if anybody opposed this suggestion by citing its practical difficulties he would be regarded as a covered. To Payyampalli Balan, in

Idappali they followed a Chinese model. Their slogan was that 'Come on boy and fight'; it was led by KC. Mathew. They used the term 'suicide squad' to characterize those communist leaders who engaged the police station in Idappali.<sup>46</sup>

After the Calcutta thesis, the communist leaders in Travancore like; CO. Mathew, Solaman, Spencer, PO. George was absconding. To Thoppil Bhasi, the important lesson he learned from the shelter life was that able to interact with the diverse sections of the people and understand their feeling and problems. Both Tech-man and Courier had a major role in the secret organizational activity after 1948. They were responsible for transferring a party member from one place to another. If there existed any problem it will affect the two organizations. Therefore, only the hardcore party members were deputed for this. To Toppil Basi, the main slogan during this period was; "To know less and work more". Each unit had adopted specific type of organizational political activity in accordance with special character of the region in order to escape from government prosecution. During the period of absconding they decided to form the organizations of the working class and peasants. Likewise, they decided to propagate the party paper and literature. During this period the only Marxist news paper which was functioning in Travancore was Janayugam.<sup>47</sup> These Communist leaders who reached shelters and workers homes were received with beedies and Match boxes. It was through broom communication was done between political prisoners of different cell of the prisoners.<sup>48</sup> By recollecting the third CPI state conference Thoppil Bhasi stated when he was in Kayakulam as absconding, they got a Bunch of letter asking them to be prepared for state conference. After that

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-112.

<sup>47</sup> Toppil Bhasi, *op. cit.*, *Olivile Ormakal*, pp. 69-90.

<sup>48</sup> Payyampally Balan, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

they tried to study all party documents related to the conference. Hereafter, they got information about the exact date, place and time, where the conference will be conducted. All district committee members were asked to reach there in the stipulated time. Here after the party vehicle and Courier had taken them to the place where this party conference was supposed to be conducted. It was in the house of Kumarappanikker (a communist member) where the conference was held with a petromax, in Vayalar.<sup>49</sup> About 1950 the inner party struggle was increased and the distance between the party cadres and leadership had widened. To Toppil Basi, while disguise they were tried to reach out to the people and organize various social classes under their leadership. Along with the changing party line they decided to change the organizational structure of the party. The state committee was dissolved and a regional committee was constituted. Kerala unit was made fewer than three units. Between Alappuzha and Kanyakumari there was a southern region. Its secretary was MN Govindan Nair.<sup>50</sup> Many communists who were in prison during this period believed that even though there had a much police repression the communist party will emerge stronger again. To Payyampalli balan, “even during the period of mass police repression they still believed that communist party will re-emerge from this oppression. However, he added that this perception was not based on any objective reality instead a firm believes in the party.

The Calcutta thesis as also created some frictions within the progressive literary movement in Kerala. The difference within the progressive literary movement was started way back in 1946 itself; the split in the movement took place during the Thrissur conference of the movement in December 1947. The important dispute was over the question of the Indian

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<sup>49</sup> Toppil Bhasi, *op. cit.*, *Olivile Ormakal*, pp. 219-229.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 300-301.



Independence, one section argued that with the departure of colonialism, take over the power by India, the struggle for national independence is over. Besides congress other socialist supported this argument. The socialist advocated for renewed struggle for socialism on the other hand the congressmen wanted to utilize the independence for the new socially economic modernization. The communist argued that the freedom struggle was partially ended with the transfer of power the congress was forced to accept the demands of British imperialism and princely reactionary. So the independent is not completed. After the Calcutta thesis, the dispute over the state of Indian independence also affected in the literature, many of the literary figures who were sympathetic towards the communist movement gradually moved away from the movement because of the stand of the communist party. For example, Joseph Mudasseri who was earlier sympathized with progressive literary movement had joined the congress and became the MLA. Takazhi Sivasankaran Pillai earlier joined in KSP. Kesadev and Kesari Balakrishnan were had left the organization.<sup>51</sup> As stated in the previous chapter, controversy regarding the relationship between art and socialism had aggravated after the Calcutta thesis. The proposition of Art for socialism was rejected by many writers within the movement. Writer like Ponkunnam Varky and P BAskaran were opposed to the application of Ranadive thesis to literature. The meeting of this movement became the venue for ideological conflict. Like Ponkunnam Varkey and Baskaran, Takazhi and Kesadev opposed the intervention of Communist party in the literature. At the Trissure conference of the association in 1948 the two arguments were clashed. In this Joseph Mundasseri stood for the formal aesthetics of the literary work. In order to counter this communists used a scientific literary work called “*illusion and Reality*” written by Christopher Caldwell. The night

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<sup>51</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralatthil...* pp. 332-334.

of this discussion the communist party came with a proposal for a manifesto for writers. A committee was established for this under the president ship of MP. Poul. Other members include: Kuttippuzha Krishnapillai, MS Devads, Achuthakkurupp, VT. Induchudan, Takazhi and Joseph Mundasseri. This move was opposed but certain writers led by P. Kesadev and CJ. Tomas. To P. Baskaran, during that period CPI was failed to appreciate the human instinct in the literary production, especially love. In the Kollam conference of this organization of 1949 both P. Baskaran and EMS Namboothirippad had engaged. There held series of debate over the relationship between literature and communist party. In 1951 P. Baskaran wrote a poem Mulkireedam, a collection of poetry. One of the poems called Anavandi (steam vehicle) which depicts the deviation of the communist party.<sup>52</sup>

The second party congress of the CPI was an important truing point in the History of communist movement in India. The basic aspect of this congress was that the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress did not recognize the attainment of Indian Independence. Instead this congress declared India is still controlled by the British imperialist bureaucracy, the Indian capitalist class and the landlord class. In order to over throw this regime the congress asked a mass wild agitation. This led to more adventurous struggles. This gave an opportunity to the new Indian government to take various suppressive measures against the communist party. For example, immediately after over throwing Nizam the Indian army went to suppress the Telangana peasant struggle. Likewise various struggles of communist party and its affiliated organizations did not succeed in getting desired results. This led to various debates within the communist party which persuaded them to rethink their strategy.

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<sup>52</sup> P. Bhaskaran, *Jeevithavum Kalayum* (Mal), Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi Books, 2004, pp. 74-75.

## **Debate on Indian way of revolution**

In 1948 there emerged two divergent opinions regarding the revolutionary path following India, the Andhra unit of Communist party supported a revolutionary path based on the strength of rural peasantry and the central leadership supported the struggle led by the urban proletariat. The central leadership argued that through the peasant guerrilla activity play major role in the revolution, the capture of power, the Crust of revolution will be the organized trade union. On the other hand the Andhra leadership believed that as the leadership of the revolution in Telangana was copied by the peasant guerilla. The revolution is possible without the participation of the trade union. This debate was started months after the adoption of the Calcutta thesis in March 1948. In June 1948, three months after the second congress, the secretariat of Andhra provincial committee submitted an important document to the central leadership of the CPI. The programme stated being engaged in armed clashes in Telangana region and leaning on peasant support mobilized through a programme of agrarian reform, the Andhra unit which was searching for a theoretical basis for activities, tuned to the Chinese path. The Andhra document proposed that the programme of the second congress be realized through a strategy based on Ma Zedong's new democracy, that the path followed by Chinese communist party. According to them, it is the path which Indian communist must adopt in the present phase. Arguing that Russia had been industrially developed in 1917, this document stated, Indian revolution in many respects differ from the classical Russian revolution; and it to a great similar to the Chinese revolution. The perspective is likely not that of general and raising leading to the liberation of rural side; but the dogged resistance and pronged civil war in the form of an agrarian revolution culminating in the capture of political power by democratic front. To the Andhra leadership, therefore, was to concentrate on the task of unleashing the militant struggle of the peasants for the urgently needed agrarian reforms.

According to the Andhra document, the middle peasants too is the firm ally, the rich peasants can be neutralized, that is, at least not antagonized, and, where feudalism is very strong, a section of rich peasantry can be drawn in to the anti-feudal struggle. Quoting Mao Zedong the Andhra committee made clear that the main enemies of the Indian people were the Feudalism and Imperialism.<sup>53</sup>

By replying to the Andhra leadership BT Ranadive stated, ‘the present revolution is a ‘people’s democratic revolution’ which emphasis its extreme nearness to the socialist revolution and, at the same time, sharply demarcates it from bourgeois democratic revolution’.<sup>54</sup> To Ranadive, in India the immediate stage will be a block of proletariat with non-proletarian sections, a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants. But this state, arising in the context of world socialist revolution, and in the course of direct struggle against the rural capital, will quickly pass into the dictatorship of the proletariat. To Ranadive, only the proletariat will lead the delayed democratic revolution ripening in to the socialist revolution. Its firm allies will be the rural proletariat and poor peasant; the middle peasants and the petite bourgeoisie, and the intellectual vacillate, but some may be won over. Quoting Zedhaniv, he argued, the people’s Democratic government as a bloc headed by the working class- a block of peasants, people etc. i.e. one in which the bourgeoisie has no place. Taking a different position from that of the Andhra communists, who looked upon their fight as anti-colonial and national liberationist, and from that of the political thesis of the second congress, which still spoke of the ‘colonial’ order in India, since it become independent a primarily a capitalist rather than a colonial country. Criticizing Andhra leadership he stated, “firstly we must emphatically that the communist party

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<sup>53</sup> John H. Kautsky, *op. cit.*, *Moscow and the Communist...*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

of India has accepted Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as the authoritative sources of Marxism. It has not discovered new sources of Marxism beyond this. Not for that matter is there any communist party which declares adherence to the 'so-called theory' of 'new democracy' alleged to be propounded by Mao zedong and declares it to be a new adoption of Marxism".<sup>55</sup>

On between 7 9, June 1949 Pravda published Liu Shao Chi's 'internationalism and nationalism'. This pamphlet devoted to a discussion of Bourgeois nationalism and proletarian patriotism and internationalism, was occasioned by Tito's expulsion from Cominform and had been witted as early as November 1948. To Liu Shao Chi, the communists in other colonial and semi colonial countries such as India, Burma, Siam, Philippines, Indonesia, Indo-China, South Korea etc. must for the sake of their national interests similarly adopt a firm and irreconcilable policy against the 'national betrayal by the reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie according To him, which has already surrendered to imperialism if this were not done, it would be a grave mistake. On the other hand the communists in these countries should enter in to an anti-imperialist alliance with that section of the national bourgeoisie which still opposing imperialism and which does not oppose the anti-imperialist struggle of the masses of the people. Should the communist failed to do so in earnest, should they to the country, oppose or reject such an alliance must be established in all sincerity even if it should be of an unreliable, temporary and unstable nature. Addressing the soviet academy of science Zukov stated the deepening crisis of colonial system and the fact that the national liberation movement has 'entered a new and higher stage of its development' as indicated by the use of armed struggle in a number of colonial and dependent counties. To Zukov, the bourgeoisie has finally gone over in to the camp of imperialist reaction. To Zukov, in the struggle of

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64-74.

people's democracy in the colonies and semi-colonies are united not only the workers, the peasantry, the urban bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia but even certain sections of the middle bourgeoisie which is interested in saving itself from cut-throat-foreign competition and from imperialist oppression. Zhukov report was following by the report of Maslennikov; the experience of the revolutionary struggle in Russia was and still is tremendous significance for the national liberation movement of the colonies and semi-colonies and the dependent countries. Their success of the above all historical victory of the Chinese people...are most striking demonstration of the triumph of the 'Leninist, Stalinist' teaching on the national colonial revolution.<sup>56</sup> Writing in 1949 Mao Zedong stated in his dictatorship of the people's democracy at the present stage in China the people are working class, the class of peasantry, the petite bourgeoisie and define that internal enemy the lackey of imperialism the class of landlords and bureaucratic capital. In an editorial on the communist victory in China in the journal of the Cominform declared that the Chinese communist party, equipped with the teaching of Lenin and Stalin and based itself on the experience of the USSR and CPSU (B), had rallied all sections of Chinese people. Its victory will inspire the people of colonial and dependent countries the national liberation struggle. The people's republic of China will be their loyal friend and reliable bulwark in the struggle against imperialism. In later half of 1949 a number of reports were presented to the Pacific Institute of Soviet Academy of Science in the crisis of colonial system that are strikingly similar to those given at the academy's June session. Again the head of the institute Zhukov submitted a general paper on subject entitled "Sharpening Crisis of the Colonial System After the World War Two". Were as in June he tries 'he now draw a distinction between South East Asia and India, a matter that was seen, destined to be of considerable importance during the next period of the CPI's history. Zhukov stated that armed struggle in the colonial countries has assumed the broadest sweep in

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87-89.

Burma, Vietnam, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines, but of India he says that the toiling masses are organizing themselves to defend their rights. The usual statement including part of the bourgeoisie in the united front again makes its appearance; it goes without saying that in the east, in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, it is possible to have a broader national front against imperialist forces than in the west. It certainly includes those strata of the bourgeoisie which have suffered from the ruin of local industry as a result of the flooding of the market by goods from the metropolitan country. As in June, he makes the distinction between the European and the Colonial people's democracies, with the latter further removed from socialism and concerned with bourgeois democratic that is anti-feudal and anti-imperialist task, and again asserts that the main enemy of the national liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies is aggressive American imperialism.

The report on India was presented by Dyakov, like Balabushevich Dyakov's main emphasis on the agrarian revolution and the armed struggle aspect of Marxism. To Dyakov, in Telangana, a people's power was created for the first time in the history of India. In Telangana it was communists who stood at the head of the peasants and the national movement. Thus the alliance of the working class with the peasantry has been established here with the leading role of the working class. It is the most characteristic feature of the new stage and as a result of this it can be termed as an agrarian stage with complete justification. From November 16 to December 3, 1949, there met in Peking the trade union conference of Asian Australian countries of the world federation of trade unions(WFTU). In this Liu she chi, who sounded the keynote, in which he presented a four point formula, the important components of this was; the working class must unite with all the other classes, parties, groups, organizations, and individuals who are willing to oppose the oppression of imperialism and its lackeys, to form a broad national wide united front and ready to wage a resolute struggle against imperialism and its lackeys. To him, it is necessary to set up wherever and whenever

possible a people's liberation army which is powerful and skillful in fight enemies as well as strong points for the operation of these armies and also co-ordinate the mass struggle was the main form of struggle in the national liberation struggle in many colonies and semi-colonies.<sup>57</sup> On February 22, 1950 the CPI politbureau has met, and made a statement: the statement speaks the "resolute struggle" under the leadership that were 'assuming new and higher forms in many cities and districts' and that indicated the party was raising to the leadership of the national liberation movement; and it still hails the second congress as a great step in the parties life. Ranadive claimed that, during the past year the CPI had considerable success in mobilizing tens of thousands, but that "certain errors in a dogmatist and sectarian direction" had prevented the mobilization of tens of millions. However in June, the politbureau admitted that a 'Trotskyite Deviation' in the party's analysis of the nature of Indian society, the revolution and strategy. It admitted that the CPI had ignored the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal nature of the revolution and had attempted to skip over the present stage of the revolution and resorted to the strategy of a socialist instead of a democratic revolution.<sup>58</sup>

The main cause behind the inner party struggle was the political position which was taken by CPI after 1947. Many of the cadres were not ready to accept party's stand towards Indian independence and the general conditions after August 1947. As a result of this violent tactics were almost uniformly disastrous for the party. Not only did communist party fall to seize power in any urban areas but also several provincial governments now took such strong measures against them that thousands of communist leaders were either in detention or underground. To John H Koautsky, Far from development of mass movement or upsurge the new tactics led to the widespread loss of support for communists. They alienated from the

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p 87-96.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p 107-110.



supporters, an important factor of the strength for the party. The communists lost much of what power they had maintained since the war years in the organized peasants and labor movement. As a result of this strategy, the all Indian trade union heavily lost to the labor organizations led by the congress and socialists. To P.C. Joshi, even in the party's old strongholds, every strike call proved a 'complete fiasco' and that the party has become dissatisfied from our own class. This rapidly increasing isolation only drove the CPI into further adventures that brought further repression and further isolation. To P.C. Joshi, its failure, "only wiped it in to such blind furry as to go in for terrorist acts. Not only become the party separated from its former sympathizers, and its own rank and file. According to a self critical report of the Bangle provincial committee, many asked, is it correct to attack railway stations, to throw bombs in Trams and Buses, to set fire to the congress offices, if it is right why are the rest of the workers not participating in it..?"<sup>59</sup>

The important event which intensified a debate within the communist party over the Calcutta thesis was the proposed Rail way strike of March 1949. As a part of the Calcutta thesis an attempt was made to organize a Rail way strike on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1949. They planned this struggle as an initial step to overthrow the existing congress government which according to communist party was isolated from the masses. The communist party thought, after the Rail way workers struggle the other sections of the workers, students will work together along with the peasant masses. This would give a united revolutionary movement to overthrow the government. Even though the Communist party's affiliated workers conducted their strike the majority of the rail way workers were kept aloof by the strike. Likewise, other sections of the working class did not conduct a strike for support the railway workers. This initiated a new inner party discussion regarding the strategy of the central leadership. To EMS Namboothirippad, the central leadership was not

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

ready to accept this criticism; instead they viewed these differencing voices as 'Revisionism'. As a part of this many communist were subjected to strict disciplinary action. Many leaders were transferred from one state committee to another. This struggle was also spread to different prisons. For example the Salem prison, some prisoners were died due to police firing. This created some form of unhappiness among the cadres.<sup>60</sup>

The important factor which intensified the dispute within the communist party was the difference over the continuation of Telangana people struggle. As stated earlier, in Telangana, their occurred a rapid struggle developed against the Razakars and Nizam's government. Village squads with about 10000 members and regular guerilla squads with more than 2000 members were formed; in innumerable struggles and heroic deeds, nearly 2000 militants, fighters and leaders laid down their lives but took a heavy toll of the Nizam's armed personnel, police agents, Razakars, landlords and there goondas; they drove them away from villages: 3000 villages were administered by village panch committees or gram, rajyam land distribution, education and health, and all rural service were organized by these fighting people's committees. But this situation had begun to change after October 1948 when the Indian Army entered in to the state of Hyderabad. The congress government which had ordered the entry of the Indian armies into Hyderabad to end the Razakars menace and also dynastic rule of Nizam, but the union government not only permitted the Nizam to continue as Rajayapremuk, keeping intact the feudal state boundaries of the Hyderabad state, but also directed its main attack against the hard won gains of Telangana peasantry and the communist party and the Andhra mahasaba which were leading Telangan struggle. In this situation, the crucial question that was posed before the fighting Telangana people and the communist party

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<sup>60</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralathil...*, pp. 376-378.

was whether to continue the armed Guerrilla resistance against the attack of Indian union's armed forces, in defense of the peasants land and the other democratic gains, or to surrender arms to the congress government's armies and betray the trust placed in CPI by the fighting people of Telangana. Over the life and death question, two sharply opposed views amongst the leaders of the communist party had emerged. One section of the Communist leaders were sympathetically put forth by Ravi Narayan Reddy in his document entitled "Naked truth of Telangana". In this he began to advocate that the abandonment of 'partisan armed resistance' against the armed attacks of the Indian union armies, and for the adoption of the open and legal forms of struggle and agitation. The main argument of those who advocated the slogan of abandoning the 'partisan resistance was that a large section of people, including the rich peasantry and the liberal landlords who were supporting the Telangana armed struggle till the entry of Indian armies, would turn hostile to the partisan struggle, The people would be looking upon the armies of the congress government as liberators, not as oppressors, the armed struggle in a small area like Telangana cannot defend and sustain itself, until all-India-wide armed struggle breakout, and there were no such possibilities, our armed squads were either poorly armed or virtually unarmed, and hence could not resist the well equipped Indian armies and their superior numbers. At the same time the Visahalandhra Communist Committee opposed this view point. It advocated the slogan of armed partisan resistance against the attacks of the union armies on the gain of Telangana peasantry. To them, the big gain of the Telangana peasantry and in particular the 10 lakh acres of land that was distributed among the peasantry, had to be defended and those gains should not be allowed to be snatched away by the class enemies, without bitter resistance and fight. To the supports of Telangana struggle those who supported the continuation of the struggle, the national and international situation was favorable for the armed partisan struggle, and the Telangana

struggle was the beginning of the armed liberation struggle against bourgeois landlord government of congress party; the Telangana armed struggle was demonstrating that the Indian revolution was more akin to the Chinese revolution than to the classical Russian revolution.<sup>61</sup>To Sundarayya, in 1948 Andhra secretariat document our revolution in many respects differs from the classical revolution of Russia, but to a great extent is similar to the Chinese revolution. The perspective likely is not that of general strike and armed uprising, leading to the liberation of the rural side, but of dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of agrarian revolution, culminating in the capture of political power by the democratic front. The thesis of the Andhra secretariat further stated; keeping all this in view, in areas where they are a good proportion in the masses as in certain parts of Andhra, Kerala, Bengal, the time has come to think in terms of guerrilla warfare (Chinese way) against the military onslaught of Nehru government which is bent upon mercilessly liquidating CPI. the Andhra thesis also advocated a united front, which included the rich peasantry and the middle bourgeoisie as the allies of proletariat in the people's democratic revolution, and asserted that such a wide front of armed struggle could take shape under the leadership of communist party, and the objective constitution for materialization of these aims were rapidly maturing. But a prolonged armed resistance like that of Telangana alone would bring about such favorable condition. The politbureau that was elected at the second party congress had rejected the entire thesis of the Andhra secretariat as 'gross reformism', and launched an attack on the concept of Chinese path, characterizing it as a deviation from Marxism and Leninism. The politbureau maintained that there was only one path and that was the path of Russian way of revolution, namely the political general strike

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<sup>61</sup> P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons*, New Delhi, Foundation Books, 1972, p. 294.

and armed workers uprising in the cities to capture power. But the politbureau advocated the slogan of armed resistance in Telangana, as it might hasten the working class general strike and armed uprising, in the anticipated post-war revolutionary crisis.<sup>62</sup>

To Sundarayya, the situation in the rest of the country was no better. The CPI and the communist movement faced a severe police attacks of the congress government on the one hand, and the 'sectarian policies' pursued by the then all India leadership on the other, had been extremely weekend and disunited, besides a large number of cadres and leaders being arrested and detained in jails.

In March 1950 the Cominfom through its mouth piece expressed its reservation of the situation in India. It suggested for a new strategy for uniting all democratic forces instead of Telengana model.<sup>63</sup> Following the editorial and the subsequent inner party discussions and struggle, there took place a drastic reshuffle of the central committee and the politbureau. A new politbureau with C. Rajeswar Rao was elected as general secretary by the reconstituted Central Committee.<sup>64</sup> This re-intensified the debate within the CPI regarding the two years their activities between 1948 and 50. Between May and September 1950 three major documents were submitted and approved by the central committee. These documents reflected the continuing debate over the correct revolutionary strategy in the country. Firstly between May and June 1950 some central committee members of Andra submitted a document regarding the Left sectarianism in the politburau between 1948 and 50. By criticizing the politbureau the three Andhra leaders stated; the anti-party organizational methods of left-sectarianism together with its policies,

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-297.

<sup>63</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralatthil...*, p 378.

<sup>64</sup> P. Sundarayya, *op. cit.*, *Telangana People's Struggle...*, p 297.

especially as pursued by the Politbureau, have worked havoc with the party and mass organizations during the last two years since the 2<sup>nd</sup> party congress and have disrupted them and brought them to the 'Point of liquidation'. By quoting communist international they stated; the organic unity in the communist party organization must be attained through democratic centralization. All the other organization principles of the party and the style of work emerge from the above mentioned main organizational principle of the democratic centralization. To them, Democratic centralization in the communist party organization must be real synthesis, a fusion of centralism and proletarian democracy. This fusion can be achieved only on the basis of constant common activity, constant common struggle of entire party organization. Centralization in the communist party does not means formal and mechanical centralization but a centralization of a strong leadership, ready for war and at the same time capable of adaptability. A formal or mechanical centralization is the centralization of the 'power' in the hands of industrial bureaucracy, dominating over the rest of the membership or over the masses of the revolutionary proletariat standing outside the organization.<sup>65</sup> Neither any rivalry for power nor any contest for supremacy within in the party at all compatible with the fundamental principle of democratic centralism adopted by the communist international. In the organization of the old revolutionary labour movement, there has developed an all pervading dualism of the same nature as that of bourgeois state, namely the dualism between the bureaucracy and the people. Under this baneful influence of

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<sup>65</sup> 'Report of Left Sectarianism in the Organizational Activities of the Politbureau and the Main Organizational Task Before the Central Committee and Directives for the Proper Functioning of the Central Committee and the Politbureau in the Future, Submitted by Andhra Central Committee Members Before the Central Committee Meeting in May-June 1950', cited in MB Rao Ed., *Documents of The History of the Communist Party of India-1948-1950*, Volume VII, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1960, pp. 669-670.

bourgeois environment there has developed a separation of functions, a substitution of barren, formal democracy for the living association of common endeavor and the splitting up of the organization into active functionaries and passive masses. Even the revolutionary labour movement inevitably inherited this tendency to 'dualism and formalism' to a certain extent from the bourgeois environment. To the document, the communist party must fundamentally overcome these contrasts by systematic and preserving political and organizing work and constant improvement and revision. In transforming a socialist mass party in to a communist party, the party must not confine itself to merely concentrating the authority in the hands of its central leadership while leaving the old order unchanged. Centralization should not merely exist on paper, but be actually carried out, and this possible of achievement only when the members at large will feel this authority as fundamentally efficient instrument in their common activity and struggle. Otherwise it will appear to the masses as a bureaucracy within the party and therefore likely to stimulate opposition to all centralization, to all leadership, to all stringent. To them, anarchism is the opposite pole of bureaucracy.<sup>66</sup>

By criticising the then existing politbureau this resolution stated the politbureau did not met regularly and did not follow the early directives of the communist international instead it gone exactly the opposite way to the Comintern directives. It tried 'bureaucratically' to carry centralization only in in the name and to merely concentrating the authority in the hands of central leadership while leaving the old order unchanged. It refuses to help and direct such work (Practical activity of the rank and lower committees- central committee), systematically and with practical knowledge of the business with a precise orientation in regard to special conditions' and to endeavor to find out any mistake committed in their activities (ie., leadership's- Central

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 671-672.

Committee). On the other hand it refuses to make any self-criticism and dubbed everybody who dared to raise any doubt as cowards, betrayers, saboteurs etc. and brought ruin on the party. It completely lost the confidence of the ranks and lower committees, betrayed the trust reposed on it at the time of the second party congress. To the document, 'Left sectarian' deviation was rampant in the majority of the present Politbureau Members by the time of 2<sup>nd</sup> congress itself. While right reformism in the name of not disrupting the democratic front liquidated the conception of the hegemony of the proletariat, trailed behind the bourgeoisie and sabotaged the mass struggles; Left sectarianism under the plea of upholding the conception of the hegemony of the proletariat from its allies in the democratic revolution and sabotaged and disrupted the mass struggles from the opposite end. While right reformism sabotaged the revolutionary democratic movement by trailing behind the bourgeoisie, left sectarianism disrupted it by running too far ahead of the movement by its adventurist calls and actions. While right-reformism followed the organizational methods of a liberal-bourgeois party, ie., of allowance for factional groups and the top leadership in power manoeuvres to keep its hold over the party machine through maintaining balance of power between different groups and practicing formal democracy, left sectarianism followed the bourgeois authoritarian methods, ie., suppression of the opposition of balance of formal democracy through the 'iron discipline' of the automations.<sup>67</sup>

To them, these are the methods similar to those used by the Fascist Tito Clique inside the Yugoslav Communist Party which were described by the communique of the information bureau thus; 'this type of organization of Yugoslav communist party cannot be described as anything but a sectarian bureaucratic organization. It leads to the liquidation of the as an active, self-

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 675-676.



acting organism, it cultivates military methods of leadership in the party similar to the methods advocated in his day by Trotsky. To the documents, the Central committee must take conscious and consistent efforts to root out all old anti party bourgeois organizational ideas, methods, habits and style of work- both right reformist and left sectarian. It must install Bolshevik organizational ideas, methods, habits and style of work, basing itself on the teaching of the Lenin and Stalin on the same and the organizational principle laid down in the 'theses on organizational and structured of the communist parties. The Central Committee must make conscious and consistent endeavour to discard the old practice of the Central Committee to be virtually the foundation of provincial unit and politbureau to be the co-ordinating committee of the federation. The Politbureau must improve its functioning as a subordinate body of the Central Committee and work under political guidance of the Central Committee.<sup>68</sup> During the same period another report was submitted before the Central Committee entitled report on left deviation inside the CPI which was submitted by a group of central committee leaders in Andhra unit. To the document the starting point of a number of deviations on the part of Politbureau is its Mechanical, subjective, and sectarian interpretations of Zhedanov's report to the nine party's conference at Warsaw. The politbureau document finds fault with the Andhra secretariat for its alleged reformist understanding of the international situation in the post second world war period. While doing so, it seeks support of Zhedanov's analysis of the world situation from his historic report at nine parties conference, in which he stated "the more the war recedes into the past, the more distinct become two major trends in the post war international policy corresponding to deviation of political forces operating in the international arena in to two major camps the imperialist and anti-democratic camp on the

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 700-720.

one hand and the anti-imperialist and democratic camp on the other”. To them, the politbureau categorically stated that in the present day world , no section of the bourgeoisie- whether big, medium, small or peasant, in no country whether imperialist, independent, capitalist, medium developed capitalist, colonial or semi-colonial at no stage of revolution-whether national-liberationist democratic or socialist can have a place in the revolutionary front. This in essence is its interpretation of the formation of Zhedanov, the two major trends’ and the two major camp. To them it is a gross distortion. The Politbureau sees from the mighty growth of world revolutionary forces the growing unity of the world bourgeoisie imperialist, big, medium, colonial, including rich peasantry into a counter revolutionary block, but not the intensification of all the inter-imperialist contradictions and of the contradiction between and to colonial world, which are of no small significance to the camp of world socialism and democracy. By quoting Stalin the document stated; “Lenin called imperialism moribund Capitalism” as imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins. Of these contradictions there are three, which must be regarded as the most important. The first contradiction is the contradiction between labour and capital. The second contradiction is the contradiction among the various financial and imperialist powers in their struggle for sources of raw-materials, for foreign territory. The third contradiction is the contradiction between the handful of ruling ‘Civilised’ and hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent people of the world. ‘Such in general are the principle contradictions of imperialism which have converted the old ‘flourishing’ capitalism into ‘moribund capitalism’. Thus it is evident that the three contradictions as described by Stalin are the ‘principle’ ones and the ‘most important’ ones. It is sheer nonsense to speak

of only one as 'revolutionary' and the other having no bearing on revolution, and the one important and the others unimportant.<sup>69</sup>

It is this already existing grip of British imperialism on India and the increasing penetration of American capital that signify the essentially colonial status of India. Precisely because of this position a possibility of broad anti-imperialist united front comprising of workers, all peasantry and even the middle bourgeoisie exists, but the politbureau refuses to see this truth. The politbureau at one stroke upside down the whole analysis of Mountbatten award as made out in the theses whereas in the political theses the award is characterized as "not really signifying the retreat of imperialism but its cunning counter offensive". In the tactical line the collaborationist bourgeoisie acting within the frame work of the Mountbatten plan, has been able to bargain and advance its own interests" visa vis imperialism. While in the political theses the collaborationist bourgeoisie is described as the 'junior partner' which has shared power, in the imperialist, feudal, bourgeois compaign, in the tactical line it has become the most fighting active partner and leading force in the combine. To this document, thus it is the politbureau which revised the political theses and not the Andhra secretariat as is alleged by the politbureau. It is the politbureau with its discovery of the discredited theory (that the collaborationist bourgeoisie has advanced its position bargaining within the frame work of the Mountbatten plan) "that has taken the party back to the 'Mountbatten resolution' (which characterized the Mountbatten award as national advance) and repudiated the line adopted by the second congress and not the Andhra secretariat as the Politbureau alleges.<sup>70</sup> To the document, this conception of precise stage and strategy is not merely vague but wrong. It has been characterized in this document that the

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 770-773.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 774-780.

struggle for democratic revolution gets intervened with the struggles of revolution. It is the same type as in Yugoslavia. That is the aim of the CPI. That there is no conception that the bourgeois democratic revolution must be built first and then the socialist revolution and in between something else will happen. It is one single revolution based upon the broad class of the workers, peasants the toiling middle class and the progressive intelligentsia. That constitutes the class alliance of this revolution which begins by the ending all the old remnants of the old feudal order and straight forwardly goes towards the building up and establishment of Socialism.<sup>71</sup>

In September this year three members of the Politbureau Ajoy Ghosh, SA.Dange, and S.V. Ghate circulated a note before the Politbureau. The people's democratic front is the fighting front of the anti-imperialist democratic forces, ie., the workers, peasants, petite bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie with parties and groups and individuals representing them. It is based on the firm alliance of the workers and the peasants led by the proletariat and its party, the communist party. The working class and its party the communist party are the leader, guide and the architect of the people's democratic front. If the party has to fulfill such an historic task it must have a thorough understanding of the scope and nature of the democratic front. To them, beginning with the second party congress during which a definite swing towards the discredited Titoist concept of monolithic front was observed (it persisted until the first resolution of the information bureau exposing the activities and policies of the Tito Clique was published and circulated) the struggle to be correct this right- opportunist attitude towards united front has ended in a crude sectarian approach to the entire problem. While correctly breaking away from taking up an irreconcilable opposition to the collaborationist bourgeoisie, CPI made a present of some of the democratic

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.. 785.

sections of the people and our allies such as the middle bourgeoisie and the rich peasantry to the class enemy, thus curtailing the scope and disrupting the formation of a wider united front against the united front against the imperialist- bourgeois-feudal campaign which was absolutely necessary and quite possible at this stage. The party leadership failed to fight the mechanization of the big bourgeoisie and the socialists and others to disrupt the working class unity and to destroy the organized working class movement.<sup>72</sup> Not only the failure to fight out these disruptive moves of reaction and its lackeys but also the insistence on the sectarian organizational and mass front demands and launching of struggles by hurling in the vanguard sections had only resulted in helping the enemy and failed to achieve the desired working class unity. The forms of struggle that CPI has advocated during this period in the cities were 'putschist' in their nature, which failed to take note of the growing white terror, with the result that the party failed to unite its class in its struggle on the day to day demands not to speak of a broader unity with other sections of toiling and democratic masses. In the rural side, besides the disruption caused in the present front by the sectarian strategy, the forms of struggle the party leadership advocated were mass frontal clashes with the police and military. This resulted in giving the upper-hand to the enemy and facilitated a speedy smashup of CPI's own forces. Instead of attacking the enemy from different angles and at different times, harassing, wearing out and delivering deadly blows, in short, instead of adopting guerrilla partisan warfare as the main form of struggle, the adventurist methods of mass frontal clashes were resorted to, which has not only failed to unite the toilers and other sections in the rural areas against the armed offensive of counterrevolution but only helped the vanguard of the

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<sup>72</sup> Ajoy Gosh *et al.*, 'A Note on the Present Situation in Our Party', in *ibid.*, pp. 1082-1083

fighting people to get smashed quickly, resulting in the disruption of the existing fighting unity of the people. By the time of the second party congress of 1948 the party organization, with a standard of party membership reduced to mass level, completely corroding its revolutionary position and fighting capacity, was with a total membership of 90000, the new leadership which came out the helm of the party leadership had fared no better with the party organization. The second party congress which was held five years after the 1<sup>st</sup> congress of 1943, there neither a party organizational report neither submitted to the party congress nor was the serious inner party position at all understood then. The fight against reformism was so shallow and single tracked as to satisfy with the political side of it and on the organizational side removal of joshi from the central committee was thought to be a complete remedy.<sup>73</sup>

The moment CPI corrected their formal grossly reformist line and put the line of struggle, a good section of alien class elements who came into the party in the reformist period began to slowly quit the party faced with the intensification of partial struggle of workers, agricultural labors and the tenants one hand and the ferocious attack by the police and military on the other. Almost half of the party membership that was recorded at the second party congress had left the party. The sectarian politbureau did not draw any lessons. On the other hand it was issuing slogans of reactionary assertion of legality. While already the party under virtual ban in the territories where there was three forth of total membership. The party organization which headed the most militant mass struggles during this period when faced with the increasing ruthless retaliatory attacks of the government –had lost, by the end of 1948, nearly half of the membership recorded at the second congress. The Politbureau had then worked out a full sectarian line in its new

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p 1085.

documents on 'strategy and tactics', 'Agrarian question' and 'peoples democracy' and pushed through the new adventurist line with authoritarian and Titoic methods of organizational discipline throughout the year 1949. It neither cared to country, nor took steps to guard the party organization against the annihilating attacks of the ruling class.<sup>74</sup>

All of these documents were critical of the two years 1948 and 1950. They wanted an alternative revolutionary strategy for India. For this there aroused a dispute within the CPI, One section advocated for a Russian model and the other section advocated for a Chinese way of revolutions. In this situation communist party send a delegation to Moscow to discuss the Indian situation. This delegation consisted of four leaders. They were; Ajoy Ghosh, SA Dange, Rajeswar rao and Makineni Basavapunnaiah. In their discussion with Stalin, he asked the Indian Communists to adopt an Indian way of revolution. That will be separated from both Russian and Chinese path. When this delegation visited Soviet Union Stalin stated; Soviet Union had limited knowledge on Indian situation, so they are not able to suggest a comprehensive and concrete plan for Indian revolution. He added, Soviet Union only have a perspective based on Marxism and Leninism, and certain experience from the world revolutionary movement. The only thing that Soviet Union can do to India was to suggestions which were only based on some information which they got from Indian leaders, the leadership of India can accept, reject, change or modify these suggestions. Stalin asked the Indian leadership that they should report these suggestions to Indian communist party when they reached India. Stalin also asked to Indian delegation to do larger consultation before adopting a final programme. In this delegation both Ajoy Ghosh and Dange supported the Russian path and Rajeswar Rao and Basavappunnaiah supported the Chinese path. The new programme of CPI

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1085-1090.

was based on this notion of an Indian path of revolution. Commenting on by critically assessing this situation EMS Namboothirippad stated, the Indian leadership was not able to accept the spirit of the Soviet advice and failed to draft an Indian revolutionary path.<sup>75</sup>

Between 9 and 15 October 1951 a conference was held in Calcutta. The conference adopted two documents, the programme of the CPI and the statement of policy of the CPI. An earlier draft of the programme of CPI had been adopted by politbureau in April 1951; and the statement of policy of the CPI was the legal version of the document, tactical line drafted leaders, Ajoy Ghosh, SA. Dange, C. Rajeswar rao and Makineni Basavapunnaiiah, who visited Moscow secretly in 1951, in consultation with J.V Stalin and other leaders of the CPSU, and adopted by the CC in April 1951 and circulated illegally. To Bipan Chandra, the three documents settled several basic questions. Above all they decided the question of the basic character or the stage and strategy of the Indian revolution.<sup>76</sup> The programmatic understating was put in a popular form in the election manifesto and pamphlet. The 1951 documents declared that India was a dependent and semi-colonial setup. It was like all colonial countries, it was essentially a colonial country. They also talked of 'the colonial nature of India's economy' and of the backward and the basically colonial economy. In His pamphlet, 'on our programme' Ajoy Gosh wrote that; British capital control our economy' and that a country with a backward Semi-colonial economy can never be really free, moreover, according to the programme, because of British control of Indian armed forces, 'the key part of our independence is still left in the hands of British imperialism. The election manifesto declared that India was not a 'really free

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<sup>75</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralatthil...*, p 384-385.

<sup>76</sup> Bipan Chandra, 'A Strategy in Crisis- the CPI Debate -1955-56', in Bipan Chandra, Ed., *Indian Left – A Critical Appraisal*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1983, p 264.



country'. It referred to the continued colonial status of India and to the regime of colonial slavery. The 1951 documents developed the theme that the congress leadership had made a treacherous compromise with British imperialism out of fear of the masses. Hence, no real transfer of power or transition from a colonial state to a sovereign Indian state had occurred. The post colonial state was not free or Independent. To the programme, the Independence of 1947 was a fake independence. The national liberation movement had not been victorious; it had been betrayed. What had actually happened in 1947 was that the British imperialist had covered their rule 'with the mantle of new congress government' in order to perpetuate the colonial order. The programme added, Indian society and social order were feudal and the Indian state was committed to defending landlords and princes, in addition, to defending foreign capital and colonialism. There was structural link between landlords and imperialism because landlords were the main props of imperialism and the latter was the feudal masters.<sup>77</sup> This programme reiterated its earlier stand on Nehru government. It stated 'this government of landlords and princes, this government of financial sharks and speculators, and this government was hanging over the will of British Commonwealth, the British imperialists' or more succinctly, and in a better known characterization as 'this government of landlords and princes and reactionary bourgeoisie, collaborating with British imperialist. According to the statement of policy the Indian government was mainly serving 'the interest of feudal landlords and big monopoly financiers and hidden power behind them all, the vested interest of British imperialism.

The 1951 documents claimed that the government of India was 'pledged to the protection of preservation of foreign British capital in India. It was tied to the chariot wheel of British capital. The navy worked under

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*,P. 264-265.

British command and the Indian army was controlled by British. India has been made a member of the commonwealth. The British controlled India's mines and plantations, oil wells and refineries, jute mills and large number of other factories, workshops and other concerns. They also controlled India's foreign trade and shipping, banking and finance. They held the Indian economy in their death grip. They loot India of millions of rupees profits and drain it of its wealth. They keep the Indian economy backward and dependent, refusing to supply India with capital goods. To all this Nehru government has been a willing party. It had permitted the British imperialists to hold sway over Indian economy. More over its policies were leading India to the imperialist penetration of its economy and life and affairs of the state. Consequently, 'to this subservience to British capitalism was being added 'slavery to American capitalism. The programme declares, as far as the classes within the country were concerned, the government represented two social classes or strata. Firstly, the government was pledged to the protection and preservation of the parasitic landlords and the wealth of the princes. Secondly, the government represented the most reactionary classes- sections of big bourgeoisie who were collaborating with British imperialism. To Ajoy gosh, our revolution at this stage is an Anti-feudal, Anti-imperialist revolution. It is a people's democratic revolution of the first stage as in China.<sup>78</sup>

On industrialization the programme stated that the country was making no headway because of the government policies. The existing industries were in a perpetual crisis because of the restrictions of the internal market which was according to them the result of heavy taxation of the peasantry, failure to protect them from the foreign capital and its competition outside as well s inside the country and the refusal to introduce land reform. The programme

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 265-268.

declared that the development policies of the government relating to irrigation, power, industries etc. were 'floundering' except those which feed war purpose. They were nothing but the means of looting the state budget by the foreign firms of experts and suppliers, by high placed bureaucrats in charge and big speculators on the stock exchange. Nationalization of some industries being used 'to swindle the state budget' because the government either acquired 'bankrupt or worn out units' or 'invested bogus schemes' which failed and were then sold to private capitalists or the governments henchmen.

This document was also critical of the agrarian programme of the Nehru government. According to the programme, the agrarian reform efforts of the government were also hypocritical. Its schemes for the abolition of landlords were really ways of enabling the landlords 'to indirectly realize their rent through the state. According to the 1951 documents, though India was not yet ready for socialism or the struggle for socialism, conditions should be created for the replacement of present Indian state by a people's democracy like that of China. And the replacement of the present government by a government of people's democracy which would achieve national independence, make India really free, completely liquidate feudalism, and in general carry out the task of the bourgeois democratic stage of revolution and of national regeneration.<sup>79</sup>

The document declared, the people's democratic state and government would be created on the basis of all democratic Anti-imperialist and Anti-feudal forces. The broad united national front of all these forces would be formed under the leadership or hegemony of the working class, firmly based on the workers-peasants alliance, and consist of all anti-imperialist and anti-

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270-272.

feudal classes, including the national bourgeoisie and other sections, groups, parties and elements who were willing to fight for democracy and for the freedom and independence of India. This broad national front would be a four class alliance consisting of working class, the entire peasantry, including the rich peasantry, the middle classes, the toiling masses and national bourgeoisie, thus giving the front a broad-base making its struggle a virtual all class struggle.<sup>80</sup>

The immediate impact of this new line could be seen in the withdrawal of Telangana armed peasant struggle. In 1951, just after the adoption of a new line, the CPI central committee Rajeswar rao was replaced by Ajoy gosh as the General Secretary of the CPI. The Central committee also directed party units and members to concentrate on the work of forging unity “announced that the party would participate in the coming elections”, and once again stressed that communist cannot have anything to do with the tactics and methods of Individual and squad terrorism. During that period the Telangana struggle was still going on. The May 1951 resolution of the CPI central committee passed a resolution on Telangana struggle. The resolution began by stating that, while the party had to make suggestions on Tactics, it could not decide on or call of the peoples struggles, that the decision was up to the peoples of Telangana, and the party wanted to protect them and their hard won gains. At the same time the Central committee stated that ‘it is prepared to solve the problem by negotiation and statement intended to preserve and protect the interest of the peasantry and the people and to restore peaceful conditions in the area’. To pave the way, it asserted that the fighting which had begun before the Nehru government was in existence, had not been, intended to overthrow that government but to end feudal oppression, a

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

distinction that had not been drawn in the past when the government has described as representing and serving the feudal interests.

The Communist party had withdrawn the struggle on October 22 1951, in a press conference. The statement announce “the central committee as well as Andhra committee have decided to advise Telangana peasantry and the fighting partisan to stop all partisan struggle and to mobilize the entire people for an effective participation in the ensuing general election to route the congress at the poll.

On August 1951 CPI had issued its election manifesto. The manifesto not only does it define “the people democratic government” which it favor as a government consisting of all democratic parties, groups and individuals, a government representing the workers, peasants, and middle class and the national bourgeoisie which stands for genuine industrialization of the country, for the freedom and the independence of India. It also includes in many promises it makes to various groups the following; the people’s democratic government will develop India’s industry..., cooperating with private industrialists who will be guaranteed profits stipulated by law and worse interest will be guaranteed.

The second document is a long article by the CPI general secretary Ajoy Gosh, in the Cominform journal of October 18-1951. Ajoy gosh was highly critical of the early strategy of BT. Ranadive. To him, this to a great extent, was due to the failure of the party leadership to evolve a correct revolutionary line, “the prevalence of the ‘left sectarian’ outlook, policies and methods, the attempt to skip over the democratic stage of the revolution and refusal to see the semi-colonial nature of our country which demanded the unification of all anti-imperialist classes and forces for carrying out the anti feudal and the national liberation tasks, the attempt to run ahead, the failure to build unity.. the revolutionary phrase mongering and the issuing, in many

classes, of calls and slogans unrelated to the realities and the existing relations of class forces, minimizing the role of consciousness and organization, the attempt to draw mechanical parallels with other countries and failure to take in to account the specific features of Indian situation- in brief, to our failure to master and correctly apply the grate teaching of Lenin and Stalin, our failure to learn from the rich experience of the international communist movements, from the great victory of Chinese people under its leader, Mao-zed-tung, from our history and from the masses of our people”.

Making clear that the Andhra as well as the “left’ period is including in his condemnation, Ajoy Gosh stated; it is only recently that, with the adoption of a new draft programme and policy by central committee, the mistake of past began to be corrected. It was confirmed by the replacement of Rajeswar Rao by Ajoy gosh at the central committee meeting of May 1951 and was finally officially ratified by an All India Conference of CPI held in October 1951. This conference unanimously elected a new central committee, which selected new politbureau with Ajoy gosh as its General Secretary, and also unanimously approved the party’s new policy programme and statement of policy. The politbureau hailed these events as setting all disputes and differences that had existed in the party over the past few years.<sup>81</sup> When we look at the Kerala situation, it is interesting to note that no much debate and discussion had been taken place on the question of Indian way of revolution. But some man like EMS Namboothirippad tried to participate in this discussion. The documents of 1951 helped CPI to overcome their inner party disputes which were existed from 1948. CPI got its benefits in the first general election of 1951-52. Till then CPI did not have a document concerned with the Indian way of revolution. Till 1951, CPI did not have a common method to interpret the Indian situation in the changing circumstances rather

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<sup>81</sup> John H. Kautsky, *op. cit.*, *Moscow and the Communist...*, pp. 143-146.

than the general frame work of Marxism and Leninism. The documents of 1951 in certain extent helped to overcome these shortcomings. To EMS Namboothirippad, there existed the fundamental questions of Indian revolution include; the nature of Indian society, state, cultural life, economy and its role in the general global transition and these groups who makes an obstacle in the way of transition, to whichever section they can make alliance and to whichever they should oppose. These questions cannot be answered only with the help of the general principles of Marxism and Leninism. On these issues each country had its own peculiarities. As a part of this it is necessary to determine the particular factors which existed in India. Based on the Indian circumstances there was a necessity of formulating a fundamental revolutionary strategy based on this there needed a tactics according to the day to day changing realities. To Namboothirippad, the documents adopted the fundamental revolutionary strategy and tactics based on the above mentioned factors. While stating this he made it clear that the delegates (both Indian and USSR) had some mistakes in adopting this strategy and a new plan. Because of this new differences were emerged later days, even though a temporary unity was achieved.<sup>82</sup>

Writing on the revolution in colonial countries he stated, the colonial countries should adopt a different way of revolution than the industrialized countries. To EMS Namboothirippad, socialism will grow only in a particular Socio-economic system, ie., the growth of mechanized industry as a result of industrial revolution, as a result of this, the production relation will be more centralized, they centralized organizations of workers in the factories, and only in these conditions the public ownership of the means of production will be possible. As far as Europe was concerned this pre-condition was possible only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At same time imperialist powers of Europe and US,

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<sup>82</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-391.

there tried to forcibly prevent the emergence of this conditions in the colonial countries like; India, China and Egypt. The colonial powers wanted to maintain the colonial countries as a source of Raw materials and the market of their fished goods. In order to do this the colonial powers wanted to retard the independent capitalist developments of the colonial countries. These powers also tried to maintain these colonies as agrarian counties in order to protect the imperialist interest. No industries were established except in sectors like the Transport. For achieving these goals they tried to support all reactionary elements in these countries. It was in this context the national bourgeoisie was emerged in these countries much before the rise of socialism. Under their leadership a national united front was built which include workers and peasants. To him, the socialist movements were emerged in the colonies when certain preconditions were emerged in these countries. They were; the phenomenal rise of the national united front with the participation of workers and peasants and its brotherly alliance with the international socialist movements, as a result of the above mentioned alliance the mass support to the socialist movement. To Namboothirippad, the main difference of the colonial socialist movement was that while it remained as a primary anti-imperialist movement its main objective was the gradual transformation of these colonies in to socialist societies after their independence. To him, the fundamental of Indian revolution is bourgeois democratic, if India remains an economic colony of Britain its most internal enemy is feudalism, and this feudalism exploits all sections of Indian society. To EMS, the immediate task of the Indian revolution is to destroy the imperialist and feudal elements that prevent the bourgeoisie and their production relations. By quoting Marx and Engels he stated “the Indian working class was not trying to destroy their class enemy (bourgeoisie) but destroy the enemies of their class enemies (imperialism and feudalism). Though the official British domination over India was ended on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, the iron grip of the British monopolistic



capital on India still remains. Though the majority of military and British officials left India the British capital still controls the key sectors of the Indian economy. Britain imposed certain plans like Colombo plan by using tide of Indian rupees with British and imposed condition on trade. The main parts of the income from agriculture were taking by the Janmies and money lenders in the form of rent and interest. The technique of agriculture was as backward as using capitalist technology in the agriculture was very limit. Under People's democratic revolution both rent to the Janmies and interest to the money lender will be abolished and the condition for an independent capitalist development will be emerged.<sup>83</sup>To Namboothirippad, the development in India was revolved around two historical stages; the first stage include the completion of democracy, the total agrarian revolution, ending of industrial backwardness, eradicating the remnants of foreign domination and the democratization of administration from top to bottom. For this there should be a people's democratic government consisting of all sections who want to achieve this objective. Only after this objectives were achieved the second stage will arrive that is socialist revolution. To Namboothirippad, those organizations who advocate a socialist revolution without undertaking the first stage cannot be considered as working class party; instead Namboothirippad termed them as "petite bourgeois revolutionaries".<sup>84</sup>

It was on the basis of this formulation the communist party understood the agrarian question in Kerala. To CPI, the cultivators of Kerala had both immediate and long term demand and the agrarian situation is different in Malabar Cochin and Travancore. It advocated a comprehensive programme to deal with the problem of Kerala's agriculture. In 1951 EMS Namboothirippad

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<sup>83</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Janakeeya Janadhipatyavum Socialist Nirmanavum' (Mal), in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika 1948-1952*, Vol.X, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1999, pp. 145-152.

<sup>84</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Communist Party Keralathil*, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-395.

published an article entitled “the Agrarian Question in Kerala”. But author’s name was given as S Parameswaran. After analyzed the economy and rural differentiation of Kerala, EMS Namboothirippad stated, the important task of the Kerala society is to solve the agrarian question in Kerala. To him, the food situation in Kerala will remain grim as long as the agrarian structure was in the line with the imperialist desire for imperialist war tools and their source for raw materials. As long as the Anglo American imperialism controls the international agrarian market the pauperization of the Kerala peasantry will be continued and intensified. The agrarian situation will also be worsened as long as the economic policy of Indian government will serve the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie. Likewise the peasant situation will remind to be grim till the jannies and money lenders continue to extract money from the peasants. Therefore it is necessary to make the basic changes in the existing relations. These issues cannot be resolved within the broad frame work of colonial feudal agrarian system as the complexities within the system are intensified.<sup>85</sup>

To CPI, there should be a fundamental solution to the agrarian crisis that include; the abolition of Janmi system and redistribution of the land to the land less cultivators, to waive the Agricultural loan and the agrarian system by releasing it from the yoke of imperialist system. This reform will not only help of the poor cultivators but the entire section of society including the Rich and Middle cultivators on the one hand and the industrialist on the other hand. To EMS Namboothirippad, even the younger generations of the big jannies were engaged in a struggle to overthrow this system as it affects their own life through various means of exploitation. The major impact of the Agrarian movement was that agrarian reforms become the important political agenda to

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<sup>85</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, ‘*Keralthile Karshika Prasthanam*’ (Mal), 1951 November, in P. Govindapilla, *op. cit.*, *EMS Sanchika*, Vol.X, pp. 285-28.

the most of the political parties. In the early stage of peasant agitation “abolition of landlordism” was mere a propaganda. However the war, Famine and post war upsurge had changed this situation. To CPI, the coming of peasants and the loss of petite bourgeois illusion the land reform become a slogan under which the peasants and middle class can be united. Even the bourgeois leadership of the congress was forced to talk about the land reform at least as a talkenism. Even the Cochin state was forced to appoint an agrarian relation committee. This committee recommended the government to take over those lands which was not cultivated by giving compensation to Janmies. The new Thirukkochi government also appointed an agrarian relation committee. He stated, even in place like Kochi were there was no organized peasant movement the agrarian reform became an important element in the democratic politics. To CPI, a question, whether to accept or reject the demand of the cultivator is closely connected with the question whether to allow congress to continue its power or not. This opened possibilities for a united front of cultivators and other toiling masses against the imperialist feudal exploitative system. The step in this direction includes; to prepare a list of immediate demands of the agitation, the peasant’s organizations units should be established ensure the broader peasant unity. To EMS Namboothirippad, a discussion and debate should be organized among the cultivators and activities regarding the need for the basic agrarian reform, there by create a clear perspective on agrarian reform. Even though the immediate and broader issues were closely related, there should be some differentiation. Otherwise it will affect the basic unity to solve the immediate issues.<sup>86</sup>

Commenting on the Malabar tenancy act EMS Namboothirippad stated, the Malabar tenancy act had given some kind of fixity to the

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 296-298.

occupancy right of the cultivators. But they were restricted through certain condition. For example: if the Verum Pattakkar failed to pay one year rent as a deposit he could be evicted. He could be evicted if he failed to pay rent in a certain date. This will affect the poor cultivators. Other important weakness of the act was the Janmi can evict the tenants if the he construct a house or direct cultivation. The main problem of the act was it gave power to the Janmies to evict the cultivators in certain condition. The united front against this bill cannot be strengthened without a popular slogan. In order to counter the protest the Janmies are partitioning their land. Due to this many Janmies families became poor. In the name of this reason many congress leaders were not ready to prohibit eviction. To EMS Namboothirippad, therefore, during the cause of agrarian reform the communist party should try to isolate the main enemy by minimizing the conflict with small and middle cultivators. To him, the eviction of all Janmies cannot be a simple solution. If that happen the government and Rich Janmies will use the 'Poor and middle Janmies' peasants will have to do some sacrifices. If the organization failed to convince this to peasants the opponents will use this discontent to divide the struggle. The Janmies should divided in to Rich, Middle and Poor. That is annual income more 1000 Rs, 300 to 1000 Rs in one year, less than 300 per annum respectively. Beside this that include; the total rent collected from the tenants, the income from commerce and salary. According to compromise proposed the communist party, the middle Janmies can evict 5 acres in a year by giving 15 time compensation to tenants. The poor Janmies can also do this by giving 10 times compensation rent also need to be fixed. The rent should be reduced at 50 present. The important feature of the land tenure system in Cochin and Travancore region was Pandaravaka land (state owned land). In Travancore it is 75 percentages, in Cochin it is 501 percentages and besides this there had some waste land. In the Pandaravaka land, theoretically the cultivators are the tenants of the state. But in reality they were the owners of the land, but

majority of the tenants have occupancy right, so they could be easily evicted. In this context the need for a legislation regarding the Pandaravaka land and Janmies assure significance. To communist party, the rent of the Pandaravaka land should be fixed on the basis of tax by considering the land holders of pandaravaka land as Janmies and cultivators. Presently the rent from the Pandaravaka land is higher than that of the Janmi land. The struggle should be organized to end this difference. All cultivating tenants and sub tenants regardless of their states needs to be given occupancy rate. Like Malabar, some conditional eviction may be allowed to the poor and middle Janmies in the Thirukkochi region. In order to redistribute the waste land committees should be constituted by including landless and land needing cultivators. This will unite all sections of the cultivators against the Janmies and land holders. To CPI, the absence of such programme which was prevented the rise of peasant's movements in this region. There is a possibility of organizing a mass of cultivators if the peasant association takes up the issues like the paddy procurement and the falling price of agriculture products. But it should be done with at most care otherwise it may divide the agitation.<sup>87</sup> The communist party, the Agrarian question of Kerala can only resolved through analyze of broad section of cultivators against the government and land lords. To CPI, there main objective was to isolate the main enemies even through making alliance with the smaller section of land lords. They asked the peasant organizations to adopt proper strategy and slogans in line with the particular agrarian situation which existed in different parts of Kerala.

Between 1948 and 51 there did not have any organization and leadership change in the Kerala unit of CPI. When the Central committee was organized in June 1950 many were expelled from CC because of their strong inclination of Ranadive's line. Many were also exempted as a part of reducing

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.301-305.

the number of committee members to effectively coordinating the secret functioning of the party, KC. George including in this. Between 1950 -51 the Kerala unit of the CPI did not have a much role in implementing Ranadive and Andhra line. To Namboothirippad, in early 1950, communist party was the only party who had denied the freedom to contest the first general election.<sup>88</sup> But the new programme allowed communist party to use parliamentary activity as an opportunity for expanding their political organizational work.

### **New strategy on Indian Revolution**

After 1950s the communist party had to find new revolutionary strategy in the light a new bourgeois constitution. In the new document mentioned about the using of election as an important tool for the political activity. It was in this context AK Gopalan's case had come before the Supreme Court. Some communist detenus who were imprisoned after the 1948 approached the Supreme Court pleading for their release. The important among them was AK Gopalan. He argued himself before the Supreme Court without the aid of any legal expert. The Supreme Court rejected the legal validity of their detention. This case had important significance in the political and legal history of Modern India. To EMS Namboothirippad, this enable the communist party to tell to the public that the anti-imperialist congress government was using those same instruments which were used by the British government to oppress its political advisories and its legal validity was rejected by the Supreme Court. The communist party declared, they oppose the existing constitution as it was created out of a compromise between the British Government and the Indian national bourgeoisie. While opposing this they declared they will work within the limited freedom which was given by

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<sup>88</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralathil...*, pp. 396-415.

the constitution and will try to make structural change in the constitution. For this they will try to send those representatives to the parliament who was capable in this regard. After the Supreme Court verdict many communists were released.<sup>89</sup> During this period they emerged various political parties who were opposed to the congress in Thirukkochi and Malabar regions of Kerala. Earlier many leaders of the parties were associated with congress through freedom struggle and struggle for responsible government. Many of these parties did not have many difficulties in working with communist parties in the first general election. As a part of this in the first general election communist party contested along with two left-wing parties, Kerala Socialist Parties and Revolutionary Socialist Party in the Thirukkochi region. In Malabar, Communist party prepared the list of candidates jointly with Kelappan's faction congress, Kisan Masdoor party led by Acharya Kripalani, and some independents. They also drafted a statement about their plan of action regarding the day to day suffering of the people. Besides this, anti congress stand of Muslim league helped the CPI, KSP alliance in some seats of Malabar. On the other hand this alliance also helped Muslim league in some seats. After the general election Communist party became the main largest opposition party in Kerala. In Thirukkochi region they were able to claim the right form of government as the leader of the largest opposition alliance. During this period Desabhimani has resumed its publication. During this period many communist leaders were hiding and many were in prison. Many communist party candidates had submitted their nomination either from the prison or from the secret places. After the general election the ban of CPI was lifted. In Thirukkochi and Madras communist party and its alliance had reached near to power. Before the first general election communist party had published its election Manifesto, Manifesto had two objectives; the first one

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p 415.

was to defeat the congress through a united opposition, other one was to uphold the principles of communist party without any compromise. It also stated about the nature of the class relation in India, the various social economic struggle in India and the direction which Indian society should be led. This manifesto talked of a 'people's democratic front' by including sections like non-monopolistic bourgeoisie. It also envisaged a strong alliance with those sections who were aiming to the transformation of agricultural and industrial relations in India. The main crux of the 'people's democratic revolution' was that each class should achieve its own strength through its class organization and make alliance with other classes who were interested in this revolution. Along with this manifesto the communist party and its alliance had formulated a minimum programme which was applicable to all parties of the alliance.<sup>90</sup> The relationship between communist party and other socialist parties like PSP, RSP, and KSP had made a decisive impact upon India. According to the socialist parties like RSP and KSP, on August 1947 the period of people's democratic revolution was over and their after the period of socialist revolution will begin. But the opinion on communist party differ from this, to them the people's democratic revolution was not over. Even though this differences were existed both the communist and socialist parties decided to co-operate on certain issues which they have common position. But in Kerala the leadership between communist party and socialist parties were much more complex. Communist party was the largest left-wing party in Kerala. But other parties have their own influence in certain region. Therefore the relationship with these parties was ups and downs.<sup>91</sup>

To EMS Namboothirippad, after the 1952 general election congress classified their political advisories in to two categories; one category include

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417-420.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 436.



parties like communist party and socialist party who wanted to interrupt the congress policy in leftist perspective. Other categories like Jansank, Akalidal, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Ganathantre Parishath and so on. These parties had represented a particular section of the society like cast, religion, language etc. some parties like Ganathandre parishath followed a right wing policy. He added, congress believed that only through the adoption of a leftist policy congress can counter the attack from two sides. It was on this basis congress adopted a foreign policy based on international peace and a resolution of a socialist pattern of society in the Avadi conference of 1956. Congress had a calculation that this programme will enable them to face the political rivals of the two spectrum at the same time. As a part of this they could project that the right-wing parties are reactionaries, at the same time they could also establish that as the congress adopt the leftist line, so the left-wing parties have no relevance. This plan was based on a new strategy of congress after their defeat in the states; Thirukkochi, Madras, and PEPSU. As a part of the congress strategy to counter the left and right opposition they adopted a left-wing approach to the foreign policy. In accordance with this congress tried to create an impression that congress is the only party which capable to implement those programs which was advocated by communist party. To them, as small party communist party cannot implement their programs, but congress can implement these programs of communist party. By doing so congress propagated that by implementing this programme they can expose the right-wing more effective than the Communist party. Immediately after the independence the congress believed that the main task of the Indian foreign policy was to make alliance with US led block. The congress leaders calculated that the Soviet Union does not have the capacity to help India for capitalist development if India makes a political alliance with them. On the basis of it India government decided to make India as member of British common wealth. But they were mistaken; instead of helping

India's capitalist development these powers were hindering the developments of India. Likewise, as opposed to the calculation of Indian leaders the Soviet Union regained its economic possession about half a dozen years after the end of the war. This led to the gradual improvement of the relationship between India and USSR. This initiated a discussion within the communist party. A section argued this help to protect India's independence and will enable the common people to get its benefits, other section believed that it will only help the ruling class of India.

It was based on this strategy Congress party faced the Andhra election. In the 1955 Andhra election congress made a strategy to defeat the Communist party. There they don't form an anti-communist alliance like that of Thirukkochi. Instead they declared that they were the real front of Indian national communist movement. As a part of their election campaign they were highly propagated the picture of Soviet leaders like Khrushchev and Bulganin with Indian leaders when they visited India. This was aiming to create an impression that they were not opposing Communism instead they were against the Indian Communists. This enables the congress to confuse the rank and files of Communist leaders in Andhra.<sup>92</sup>

After 1953, differences within the CPI widen once again regarding the attitude to be adopted towards government policies, the nature and role of Indian bourgeoisie and the leadership of India and its government with British imperialism. To John H Kautsky, unlike the second congress of the CPI held six years earlier, its third congress did not mark the adoption of new strategy. Its approach as S.A Dange said in the debate on the political resolution was the same that of 1951. This conference was attended by foreign delegates like Harry polit the then general secretary of CPGB. The party congress did so with a single amendment to paragraph 29 of the party programme relating to

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 431-463.

the question of Hindi. It also passed a political resolution. The main issue of debate at the congress was on the question that constituted the main enemy against which the anti-imperialist struggle was to be waged. Was it Britain or United states..?. 'Was the pivot of all our activities' to be the British domination or the raising United States menace?<sup>93</sup> To Ajoy Gosh, the basic struggle in Indian Communist party's case was the struggle against the British domination and feudalism. To him, India has to win full freedom from British, but we have also to defend our existing freedom from the increasing menace of the United States. The only area in which the party congress made some changes in the formulation related to the foreign policy. Some of the government's foreign policy moves, it said, were 'factors helping the course of peace' and such should be supported. At the same time the party should not give the overall support to the government foreign policy for it was not a consistent policy of 'Peace and democracy' and was subject essentially to the influence of British imperialism and is not averse to making concessions to them and also to the American practice. In a secret document, published by the democratic research service, the Andhra faction of the party, led by Rajeswer Rao, who championed the view at the third congress 'that British imperialism is the chief enemy of our national progress and therefore our national independence'. So when talk of Anti-imperialist revolution it specifically means, in the present setup, a fight against British imperialism for national independence and freedom, but not against Anglo-American imperialism or world imperialism in general.<sup>94</sup> In September 1955, the Central committee adopted certain amendments to the programme which were also thrown open to discussion. It also took the unprecedented steps of permitting the Central Committee and politbureau members to freely criticize resolutions

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<sup>93</sup> Bipan Chandra, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>94</sup> John H Kautsky, *op. cit.*, p 170.

in the lower units and conferences of the party as well as in the pages of the forum.<sup>95</sup>

To Somnad Lahiri, despite India's connection with British Imperialism India had "acquired political independence and sovereignty" "won state sovereignty and independence".<sup>96</sup> To P.C Joshi, "the old frame work has not been Broken asunder" and the shift in the government policy had occurred "within the old frame work".<sup>97</sup> To Bhovani Sen, "the objective still was to struggle for the victory of colonial liberation and for the completing the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks, because the main enemy of Indian people remains, in this phase as before, imperialism, feudalism and their allies among the big Bourgeoisie. Still the party's task was to realize the hegemony of the proletariat over the national movement."<sup>98</sup> Somnad Lahiri took note of the relative weakness of the position of British imperialism Vis a Vis Indian capital; but he too maintained that imperialism was still the main enemy of the Indian people. He too saw the political movement in India as primarily nationalist in character. These leaders asserted that the strategic objective of Indian revolution continued to be the establishment of a government of people with the view that advancement along the capitalist path was not feasible because of the strong position of British capital in the economy, the feudal agrarian relation and the epoch of general crisis of capitalism. Somnad Lahiri argued that very few of Indian Big bourgeoisie being of a comprador character, the class has a grater contradiction against imperialism; it was therefore to get its limited support for the four class alliance 'when the national attack is concentrated against imperialism'. This development

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<sup>95</sup> Bipan Chandra, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-288.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

according to them had also led to a development of contradictions within the big bourgeoisie itself, with one progressive section opposed to imperialism and interested in independent economic development and the other reactionary sections favoring collaboration with imperialism and not interested in such development. Somnath Lahiri disagreed with this view. He did not believe that such a progressive reactionary divide had occurred or could be distinguished within the bourgeoisie as class. The conflicts within the class did arise, he said, but they had not matured for enough and were settled 'within the framework of the class itself'. On the basis of its analysis of the character of the government policies, the right held that the party should basically support the second plan and its 'main essence', popularized its targets, oppose the reactionaries' effort to change it in retrograde direction, struggle against the vacillations, compromise and back sliding by the government and fight for the plans final adoption, consistent execution and full implementation. At the same time the party should resist its negative, anti-people features, suggest alternative measures and fight for raising its targets and for remolding it in a positive direction.

To Ravinarayan reddy, they should recognize the class nature of government has been wrongly understood by them. After contrasting the basic assumption of 1951 programme and Madurai political resolution with economic and political reality, he came to the conclusion that it is clear that their fundamental political line, policies and assessments have led the party to failure and setback. According to them, earlier the Nehru government was the government of collaboration with imperialism; it had changed only later. All the right leaders were agreed upon the need for a transitional political programme which should involve a new, cooperative approach towards an alliance with progressive national bourgeoisie and its political representatives, Nehru and other progressive congress men. They argued that in line with P51 the main political blow of party should be directed against pro-imperialist and

pro-feudal reactionaries particularly those within the congress and the government. So as to expose and defeat them and isolate them from the people and the national bourgeoisie, with secondary objective of preventing Nehru from vacillating and compromising with the reactionaries which the progressive bourgeoisie always like to do because of its limitations, winning the support of patriotic and democratic elements within the congress and winning concessions for the people. To Bhowani sen, “the party should not play in to the hands of reactionaries by opposing Nehru and attacking his internal policy as reactionary”.<sup>99</sup> The American and British imperialists were also waiting for an opportunity to attack Nehru. To him, failure to support Nehru, making him the object of attack and asking the people to replace his government would amount to ‘throwing the patriotic sections of the bourgeoisie into the arms of the reactionaries’ and would lead to the reversal of Nehru’s progressive policies, especially as Nehru was weak, as was his base ‘in his own class to withstand the pressure of reactionaries.’<sup>100</sup>

A different out look was maintained by leaders like; P Sundarayya, M. Basavappunnaih, M. Hanumantha Rao, N. Prasad Rao et al. They were ready to accept two minor corrections or rather introspection of 1951 programme. One that India ceased to be a colony, after 1947 ‘attained her state independence or achieve political freedom’. Second, the Indian state was not to be characterized as a satellite and government as puppet and therefore those characterizations which created this impression should go. These leaders fully agreed with other party trends that the 1951 understanding of the stage and strategy of revolution in India and the task that followed from them continued to be valid. They said that, the basic objective of Indian people’s struggle still was “the liquidation of British imperialist stronghold and feudal

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 289-298.

landlordism” and achieving complete freedom. The key task of Indian revolution so far as freedom was concerned still was that of “fighting against British imperialism and its native collaborators for complete liberation movement” and in order to be able to do so, it is necessary to identify the cause of national liberation with the agrarian revolution so as to draw the peasant masses in to the revolutionary struggle. To them, the contradiction between the peasantry and feudal semi-feudal landlordism was the principle contradiction of Indian society which played the leading role in the process of social development. They continued by stating the direct political role by British had ended, the national big bourgeoisie had shifted from opposition to imperialism to collaborating with and “the national government had assumed the role of defending imperialist and landlord exploitation. This means that the Indian revolution was neither in the stage of national united front nor in the socialist stage but in the agrarian stage. Hence the edge of revolution is directed mainly against the internal enemy and primarily against feudal landlordism. These leaders accepted its argument of the P51 that the national bourgeoisie would be a part of united democratic front but aware of the pitfalls of this formulation in view of the nature of congress government and its policies and programmes declared that the national bourgeoisie in India included both big and small bourgeoisie. They started out by saying that the term ‘national bourgeoisie’ as used in the programme should not be confused with the term as used by Mao Zedong. Mao, they said confined them to mainly the middle bourgeoisie in contradiction to the big bourgeoisie which was comprador, but in India by the national bourgeoisie was generally designated the whole of bourgeoisie, that is both big and small. To them, the Indian national bourgeoisie was however, split in two sections; one would oppose imperialism and other collaborate with it.

According to these kinds of leaders, at present, ‘the entire big bourgeoisie followed by middle bourgeoisie is defending the compromise and

collaboration with British imperialism and is heading the government'.<sup>101</sup> To them, as the world capitalist crisis developed and conflict between the Indian bourgeoisie and imperialism grew acute and the revolutionary movement advanced, a split would occur within the big bourgeoisie with its greatest part moving into opposition to imperialism.

Commenting on foreign policy, they said, the governments foreign policy, being the policy of big bourgeoisie, was still on the whole and basically a policy of play and maneuvering between the camps of socialism and the camps of imperialism and of playing upon and taking advantage of the contradiction between United States and British imperialism which was the main contradiction in the imperialist camp. To them, while the Indian government no longer essentially carried out the foreign policy of British imperialism, it was wrong to suggest that this policy was 'essentially important' and 'not under the decisive influence of any foreign power. These leaders were believed that the government's internal policies were in general reactionary. So far as economic policy and policy of planning and development was concerned, the frame work for analysis was provided by the view that they were basically some aspects of Nehru's efforts at 'deceiving the masses'. They treated the government policies regarding the second five year plan, public sector, schemes of rapid industrialization, agrarian legislation etc. as a part of the government's ruling classes ideological offensive and efforts to slow 'the new and fresh illusions' among the masses regarding the existence of a 'path of progress' different from the proletarian path. According to the left leaders, the strategic four-class alliance, laid down in the programme, could not be brought in to existence at the time because the big bourgeoisie has not yet split into anti- and pro imperialist sections and the entire big bourgeoisie followed by the middle bourgeoisie was

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*



collaborationist, and there could be no question of forming a united front with it. At the same time, to the left, the struggle to replace the congress government by a government of people's democracy was not a distant goal but an immediate tactical need. If the party was to mobilize the people, develop mass movements and built a united front, or even fight for peace.<sup>102</sup>

Some leaders like Ajoyghosh and EMS Namboothirippad supported by SA. Dange, approached it differently. Ajoy Ghosh fully accepted the basic conceptions of P51 that India was in the stage of anti-imperialist and Anti-feudal revolution and the task was to make the people's democratic revolution on the basis of four class alliance. The events since 1951, To Ajoy Ghosh, before the CC in June 1955, have confirmed that the correctness of the basic formulations made in the programme; and these formulations 'remain correct for the entire stage'. In his report to the June Central committee he said, India's states had undergone a basic change, India has acquired the status of a free country, is defending her national Independence. To Gosh, no longer India can consider as a colony. No longer can Indian freedom be considered as something formal. Therefore India has already acquired the character of a free and political sense. In a second major speech in the central committee meeting, Gosh reasserted his position and argued that Indian foreign policy was not directed by British, and France, the classical land of national freedom, was less independent in relation to the United States than India was in relation to Britain. To Gosh, he proposed that the characterization of India in the last paragraph of the programme. 'The last dependent Semi-colonial country in Asia still left for the enslavers to rob and exploit' should be deleted and the entire sentence recast to include the formulation; the people of Asia in their battle for freedom have already won the great victories and are marching forward. The free and sovereign republic of India is playing a great role in the

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 303-319.

cause of world peace and Asian unity. Ajoy Ghosh Suggest, the weakness of the big bourgeoisie was not so much that it desire to preserve Feudalism, which it did not, but that it could not wage a consistent struggle against it and destroy it completely and that it followed the path of concession to and compromise with it. Even though it curb feudalism, modified it, and try to transform semi-feudal landlords into capitalist landlords. To start with, Ghosh introduced in June, a major revision in the big bourgeoisie relationship with imperialism. While the 1951 documents had accused the reactionary section of the bourgeoisie of betrayal of their country to imperialism, Gosh accused the big bourgeoisie of collaborating and compromising or maintaining links with or allying with imperialism. He asserted that the Indian state was basically controlled, and the government led by the big bourgeoisie which had distinct interests of its own. Though this class conciliated land lords and allied with them and though it collaborated and compromised with imperialism. The decisive factor in determining the main direction of its policies was 'its own class interest'. Ghosh elaborated his views on the subject at the length of his November speeches before different state committees of the party which were published as the pamphlet, some questions of the party policy and circulated to the party members. The part of the pamphlet dealing with this question was also published in a slightly modified form in the new age monthly of December 1955.<sup>103</sup>

In early 1956 the forth congress of the communist party of Indian was held at Palakkad. This congress can be regarded as a turning point in the history of the communist party of India. It made a substantial change in its attitude towards the Indian state. Initially it recognizes India as an independent state and accepted the institutions of this government. This congress recognized the Indian constitution and decided to use the

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 329-339.

parliamentary system for the transition towards socialism. Likewise, it believed the Nehru led congress government had done some progressive steps their by trying to break its early links with Anglo-American imperialism.

Commenting on the international situation the congress stated the defeat of the American imperialists in Korea drastically changed vitally the correlation of forces in Asia. It was further changed by the victory of the people in Vietnam. The Nehru government, which in 1949-50 was moored in the ideas of Anglo-American invincibility and wealth, got a serious jolt in its appraisal of the international situation. In foreign policy, it retreated from line up with Anglo-American camp to a position of serious neutrality. After Vietnam, Nehru went further and adopted Pancha Shila, a positive platform of peace and not mere negative neutrality. This introduced a platform of principle in Nehru's foreign policy. Earlier, it lacked any statement of principles, by which one could hold him. Now Pancha Shila gave that platform, and it came on the basis of friendship with china and Asian solidarity.<sup>104</sup>

China and the Asian solidarity signified in the minds of the masses, feeling of intense Anti-imperialism, not only against war but for peace, but Anti-imperialism for freedom, directed against Britain and America both (viz Iran, Burma, Indonesia, Egypt, etc.). Hence by that single step, Nehru won over the anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses, especially town middle classes. This single step won him new intellectual patriotic cadres and masses. Those who had remained neutral or voted independent in the 1951 elections began to do rethinking in their political allegiance in 1953 and 1954. The

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<sup>104</sup> 'Notes on Foreign and Internal Policy of the Congress and Our Attitude Towards Them, Fourth Party Congress, Issued by The Central Committee of the CPI', Document No. X, F.7, April, 1956, Archives of Contemporary History (ACH), Jawaharlal Nehru University(JNU), New Delhi.

Panch Shila in 1954 became the culminating point in this process. The congress stated, though the pro-British section of the big bourgeoisie remained quite strong in the government, the national bourgeoisie as whole supported the new foreign policy initiatives of Nehru. To the congress, its position was on the basis of the weakness of imperialism revealed by the Korean and Vietnam defeat. India as the biggest country after china took the lead in this. This was a very new vital element in the situation as it developed in 1953 and 1954. The congress party as the ruling party led by the national bourgeoisie came forward once again as an Anti-imperialist leader of the other Asian countries for peace and for friendship with China and the USSR. The most reactionary monopolist group of the national bourgeoisie which was pro-American retreated politically and later on changed over Nehru's line, at least in show. CPI stated the result of Andhra enable Nehru to tell this wing that his line was more paying than theirs in containing communism. The decisive strength of the socialist camp thus shook the national bourgeoisie in India from 'flirtations' with the 'war mongers' and the threat to its own independence at the hand of the USA., made it declare for Panch Shila and close relations with China and the USSR. To the congress, the people in India with their national pride naturally give the greatest credit for it to Nehru. To the congress, the Nehru government has detached itself enough from those moorings as to permit the positive adoption of Pancha shila, a denunciation of the SEATO and the European armament pacts, etc., all of which introduced an element of consistency in the peace policy. This element has to be strengthened and developed. But the government has not yet taken its place right inside the united front of the peace loving countries against the warmongers. Though it generally helps this united front, is not yet a part of it. The risk follows from the monopolist who holds the keys of the government in its internal setup and economy. The congress stated, the developments in the foreign policy shows that Indian republic is free and sovereign enough to

follow this policy which is objectively anti-imperialist both in relation to USA and UK. And that the exercise of freedom and sovereignty was made possible by heavy defeats that the imperialist suffered in Asia during 1950-1954 and the strength that the socialist camp and anti-colonialism gathered in this period. Thus the freedom won in August 1947 moved a step higher. The republic rose higher in the estimation of the people and got greater allegiance from the people in the pride nationalism. The party lagged behind the recognition and exhibition of this pride, which should have been its own pride also because it's not the success of bourgeois nationalism alone but the success of proletarian internationalism and socialist camp also.

On the internal situation of the country the congress stated, the two decisive changes that we have to bring about in the internal situation in the matter of economy are abolition of landlordism and the nationalization of British capital which controls the key points of production and distribution. The constitution of India as representative of a new state coming in to existence on the basis of sacrifices and struggles of the toiling masses did not eradicate the outmoded semi-feudal landlordism that is keeps our economy backward. As a result of the pressure of the peasant movement, the government and the congress party did adopt anti-landlord resolution. But the operation of these acts was held up by the reactionary courts of law in the name of constitutional guarantees of rights of property and compensation. In the postwar years, the agrarian movement gathered tremendous strength, its highest expression being in the Telangana struggles. As a result, the leadership of congress, led by the bourgeoisie, began seriously to think of the land problem. The problems of agricultural production engaged serious attention of the bourgeois circle by the additional fact that following the partition of the country, its supplies of raw material for its big sectors of industry like cotton and jute were disturbed. Changing the pattern of production with a view to finding its own base of raw materials became its

urgent task. Thus the peasant struggles and short supplies made the problem urgent. The congress asked does the bourgeoisie in India know that abolition of landlordism is necessary for its own growth? it knows it and has known it for a long time. But the rent accumulated by the landlords and princes formed the basis of capital formation of Indian bourgeoisie in the historical period of its rise and growth. Even today that position exists to a certain extent. But having got the state power now in its hands, it certainly wants to use it to change the situation from above in its favor, without rousing the forces of agrarian revolution from below. CPI asked is this possible theoretically? In their opinion it is possible and can be done. To them, history does show that a national bourgeoisie, while refusing to lead a bourgeois democratic revolution to abolish feudalism and opened the way to capitalist development. The example in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe is Bismarckism in Germany. In a different context and setting is the example of kemalist in Turkey of 1920. Bypassing abolition of landlordism act, abolition of Jagradhari and Inam acts, by putting limitations on rents, and keeping large self cultivated estates with the landlords, the government has forced vast landlord tracts into capitalist farming. A small stratum of rich farmers has been brought into existence in many areas. By the forced phase of injecting heavy subsidies of capital in the form of supplies of manure, irrigation, tractors, etc., this type of development has been helped, in order to increase raw material supplies. This however has not been enough and has not changed the basic semi-feudal culture into capitalist farming in the major sectors of agricultural production. The promise to put a ceiling for holdings, the redemption of rent to one sixth gross produces in the traditional Ryotwari areas. By the formal curbing of feudal landlordism, which despite its formalism in many areas, is being resisted by the feudal entrenched in the congress party, by heavy state subsidies and traditional Ryotwari, the national bourgeoisie has strengthened its peasant base both economically and politically. The overcoming of shortages of the

war period in food has been its greatest claim to support from the towns. Within the ruling circles the decisive voice belongs to the bourgeoisie, yet in the ruling party in the composition of its economic and legislative strongholds it is the semi-feudal landlord elements and the reactionary monopolist in the partnership with them, who dominate in a large part of the country (viz Bihar, Bengal, PEPSU, Orissa, Andhra, UP.). to congress, there was an economic and political conflict between these elements and the national bourgeoisie as a whole which want to develop the economy of the country in its favor. In order to solve this contradiction the national bourgeoisie tried to buy over landlordism in to the ranks of the bourgeoisie by compensation for abolition and secondly by tempting landlords to take capitalist farming on this land and to become partners in other lines of capitalist development. To CPI, it was a step forward in so far as it develops capitalist production in our backward semi-feudal conditions. To CPI, it is a process of struggle first between the different sections of the ruling classes and secondly between the peasantry as whole and the semi-feudal and third allies. CPI cannot forget, that this transformation the mere existence of contradiction between the semi-feudal and the national bourgeoisie alone is not enough, that contradiction can work up to its logical conclusion, even from above, only if the peasant struggle from below-not otherwise, the relation of Telangana to the Hyderabad land reform act showed this. To CPI, the only way to help this process is to press onward for abolition of landlordism by direct action of the peasantry, where the state law helps it formally, to use the law to full in realizing the abolition in fact and content. In this we can see the realization by the national bourgeoisie of the need to accelerate the process of the abolition of landlordism form above if the peasantry is to be kept from below, and if it's national recourses are not to be jeopardize by being mortgaged to imperialist loan in times of scarcity which impedes its growth. But the realization is not enough for CPI to think that congress party has become truly bourgeois

democratic, deserving a coalition with it by the proletariat for carrying out its anti-feudal tasks, condition for partial co-operation have been created but their main driving force is still the peasant struggles. The forth congress declared that the congress party has made the upper and middle strata peasantry really believe in its programme of abolition of landlordism. This new constitution amendment is the culminating point in this programme. The peasantry certainly would like give a trial to that promise. It is after all a propertied and does not take to the path struggle so easily. This situation therefore calls for a change in the tactics of the struggle against landlordism, but does not call for any fundamental revision of the party programme. The new constitution amendment can wielded as our big ally and instrument in the struggle against landlordism. It does not exist before. The greater and more thorough the implementation of this amendment, the less will be remnants of landlordism, easier and less painful the transformation and greater the real gains to the peasantry.<sup>105</sup>

Commenting on the five year plan it stated, which relied a lot on the war boom profits and on capital goods and help from U.S.A. and U.K. got into difficulties. So much so that at Avadi congress in 1955, Nehru admitted that 'the first five year plan was not a plan in the real sense of the term.' They were mainly continuing to build what had already been laid down in the British period. After the election results of 1952, the national bourgeoisie learned the lessons of the election and started to change its line, both in foreign and internal policy. Mobilization of internal resources of capital supplemented by deficit financing; seeking capitalist supplies from the socialist market also, while not giving up the links with the imperialist sectors; a curb on the exclusive operation of the foreign monopolies and their allies in the country; a curb on feudal landlordism; and making state capital

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1-10.



predominant in the development of industry; were the new features that it introduced in its policy on national economy. These features used to be talked about as a theoretical platform by the congress and its governments but they began to be seriously planned, discussed and applied from 1953 onwards. To the CPI, in 1955, the national bourgeoisie as led by Nehru declared its new platform in a very decisive way. The new platform of the bourgeoisie in its formulations, imitates the economic and social objectives of people's democracy and is putting it forward in an ideological form, which it describes as socialistic pattern and socialism, but a socialism 'suited to the special conditions of India.' To the fourth congress, the new economic policy Nehru cannot be treated light-heartedly and his claim to socialism cannot be brushed aside just as hoax. That policy has some important positive features, on the basis of which a certain stride forward can be taken by the national bourgeoisie and the country as a whole. And if that stride has to be taken without hardships to the toiling masses, the CPI has to be clear about its part in it.

The most important feature of the fourth congress was that the communist party formally recognized India's independence. It stated, 'the congress party approaches the people's in India with some cogent arguments. It says it has achieved independence from British imperialism. We have now our own sovereign state run by our own people. Everyone admits that we have been kept a backward country by the British. We are now politically free and sovereign, but economically dependent on the industrial products of the west. The task, therefore, is to achieve economic independence. It means industrialization, building particularly steel and heavy engineering industries. It says that the second five year plan proposes to do just that. As a result of the first five year plan, the masses were left with poverty and unemployment, while the big rich walked away with profits. Not only that, they impeded our progress too this dissatisfaction of the masses was very well expressed in the

general elections of 1952. Learning from experience, the congress party adopted the slogan of socialism as a final objective. Immediate steps however, needs to be taken, which will give the Indian people, not socialism, but socialistic pattern of society.

The middle class, the peasants, and even the section of working class do believe in these professions of the congress. The key note of building industry and becoming economically independent is welcomed by the people and they express some readiness to even bear sacrifices for this objective. Now the question is not whether what congress calls socialism or socialistic pattern in the manner of people's democracy is really so or not. The question is to understand the positive side which coincides with people's desire. Then to see whether and how these professions can really be fulfilled and whether and how the national bourgeoisie is really intending to fulfill, whether the means it is adopting are capable of such fulfillment. On that basis can CPI then decide their approach? Whatever the name, what are they really out to build by the second plan?

Judging by the broad features of the new plan, the congress resolution and declaration of the leadership and certain concrete steps they have taken, it is clear that the national bourgeoisie is planning to build state capitalism, which, however, it presents as socialistic pattern or socialism. Having got state power, the national bourgeoisie, true to its class nature, must aspire to develop capitalism with full force in the whole economy of India. And if it were to do this by clearly wiping out feudal relics and foreign imperialist capital, it will take the country forward. The opposition of the big rich circle does not mean that the plans are not for capitalist development. The opposition springs from narrow sectional interests of the various factions of the big bourgeoisie and its monopoly sector. The opposition does not also arise from the mere fact that the state sector of capital is taking a predominant

part in the development of capital. It arises from the desire of the monopolies to limit the sphere of state capital to certain lines and not allow it to encroach on private capital in certain spheres. The opposition of these springs from certain circles of foreign capital who see the few features a desire of the national bourgeoisie to curb foreign, especially British and American capital and to grab their holdings by forcing them to part with them by using the means of state legislation. (ICI, Imperial Tobacco, Kolar Gold, Tea, etc.). Therefore, the mere fact that opposition is expressed by capitalist circles should not mislead anyone into thinking that what is being done is not capitalism, but some type of socialism. The congress leadership, however, uses this opposition to sow the illusion that its doings are socialistic. Even though there was a state capital, it was limited to spheres of private monopolist capital at the expense of the state budget and saved the big bourgeoisie from many risks. The activities of the state capital in the spheres of Transport, Irrigation, fertilizers, helped the big bourgeoisie to secure cheap transport of goods, quicker supply of raw materials to overcome shortages and high prices. The state found huge capital recourses and the monopolies reaped the profits. The activities of the finance corporation, lending huge some to needy concerns, having enough proof to show in what way private monopolists would like to use or swindle state capital raised from taxes on the people. But the first plan and the role of state capital though very important, were not aimed at large scale development of industry. In that sphere, in that sphere the dominant role was played by the private monopolies and their foreign partners of supporters. The results were not every optimistic, though production increased and showed encouraging induces, the real branch of capitalist industry that a country should have in order to become economically independent, were not developed even to the meager extent visualized by the national bourgeoisie and its plan. Both the British and American and the monopolists relying on them had failed them either in raising capital or

supplying capital goods, hence the change in the line of the national bourgeoisie. The big monopolies had opposed the state control over industries because of certain reasons; initially, they do not want the state to build heavy engineering and such other branches as part of state ownership and management. The monopolists want the state loan but not the state ownership, supervision and management. Any honest national minded officer can puncture their swindles, if there a direct supervision of the legislators and government management. The monopolists do not want the state capital to enter where profits are higher, the turnover quick and risk of losses very little. They want state capital in those spheres where turnover is slow, where profit rate is not high,(viz. railways), where capital risks are big and the volume of investment too big for a backward bourgeoisie like that of India. They do not want, even as a matter of tactical pressure on the Anglo-American bloc, any big deals with the socialist camp, particularly the Soviet Union. According to them political losses by such an alliance would be far more serious than the material gains. Predominance of state capitalism can be made a jumping ground by a working class led by its militant wing to strengthen its positions. Large scale state-owned industry may bring in to existence a large scale centralized trade union movement and politicized working class, which may easily be tempted to think of changing the whole thing to a new pattern just through political power or political pressure. To the monopolists, the state capitalism can breed the ideology of socialism and prepare the ground for it. At the same time another section of the bourgeoisie of the same bourgeoisie sees the advantages of state capital, as stated above in the matter of capital sources, turnover, risks, subsidies, profit rate and national independence. One wing of it, as led by the congress leadership, can argue that in the present phase of capitalist crisis, it is the armour of state ownership that can save monopoly capitalism from revolutionary attacks of the working class. It is state ownership that can be presented as a form of “socialism” and can

persuade the working class to reform or use it through the parliamentary machine. In a country like India, where class relationship was precisely demarcated, where large scale monopoly capital is still new and not fully developed, where the relics of feudal ideology persist to a great extent in the working class, state capitalism can be easily palmed off as real socialism. It can play a successful role in adulterating the ideology of scientific socialism and thereby disabling the working class. This reasoning is not dividing of reality. The way petite bourgeois socialist parties and groups are collapsing before this offensive since Avadi congress and considering Marx really out of date is enough proof to show the big dividends that this line can pay.

The national bourgeoisie has taken some significant steps in implementing its new policy. Its declaration to take over the imperial bank, the stronghold of British commerce and trade, has been linked by the masses, though not by the big monopoly circles, who are directly in league with the British. Its decisions to call for soviet aid to build a steel plant have served two purposes. It has pleased the democratic masses and it has made the financiers of the imperialist bloc move quickly in offering some kind of aid which they had avoided formerly. Its decision to ask for engagement of Indian personnel in all foreign concerns has pleased the intellectuals and revived for the congress reputation of being anti-imperialist and provided it with new cadres from the intelligentsia. Its determined pronouncements not to allow narrow vested interests to stand in the way of development are being the direction of anti-imperialist, anti-landlord and hence socialist objectives. To the congress, “just as panchshila was the culminating point in the foreign policy; the constitution’s fourth amendment is the culminating point in the internal policy. Curb on the hold of British capital in our internal economy, gradually leading to its elimination, Curb on the collaborationist monopolists,

and gradual link up with the economy of socialist camp and development of heavy industry”.<sup>106</sup> According to CPI, “it may quarrel with the speed of it and the ambiguities of it, but the direction has shown not merely shown by resolutions, but by concrete steps to realize them. Are they not a step forward? And if they are, what is our support to them or our opposition to them? ownership by the state alone does not make a sector of socialist”.<sup>107</sup> The main thing missing in the question is who own the state, which class does the state ownership develop and weaken, to which class mainly does the surplus of the produce of labor go under state ownership. The answers to these questions determine whether India is following people democratic road or only state capitalist road. Has the character of the state changed in India? What class owns the state despite adult franchise and elections, what classes are aggrandize by the state sector of industries and agriculture? To the forth congress, “earlier India had formally a state run by British imperialists and their military dictatorship, a colonial dependent state. That is now gone. India is now a politically independent sovereign state; it is a landlord bourgeois state. Neither the resolutions of the congress nor the amendment to the constitution, or the various Land Acts, no elections have made the state either bourgeois democratic or people are democratic. The classes in power in the state remain landlord-bourgeois classes”.<sup>108</sup>

Commenting on Nehru the fourth congress stated, the personnel role of Nehru cannot be denied. His positive and concrete steps in the direction of peace and progress have to be supported. He is the single outstanding leader in the ruling classes who by himself is a big force in the events in shaping today. But just because of that we cannot forget the classes on which he relies.

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.10-20.

He leads the masses and think of them. But he does not think them capable of thinking, acting and becoming the ruling class. It is the leader-led pattern of organization that he likes. This follows from his inherent make up. In the framework of the classes in power, and the links of some of his own ministers with Anglo-American camp and in the undemocratic structure of the state organs, there is grave danger of Nehru himself falling a victim to reactionary conspiracies. Therefore CPI cannot save the situation by calling for a coalition or 'save and strengthen Nehru' campaign. To them, CPI themselves run the danger that Marxism being substituted by Nehruism and proletarian class ideology by bourgeois ideology.<sup>109</sup> The fourth congress while supporting some progressive aspects of the Nehru's policy stated that this policy changes did not change the existing class relations in India, therefore it asked for the continuation of the struggle for socialism. This congress recognized India's independence, but it reiterated that India was still under the control of monopoly capital mainly British and American. This formulation intensified the debate within the communist party. This was over the question of supporting the steps of Nehru government.

When the inner party discussion was taken place before the forth congress, there did not exist a Kerala state committee for the CPI. Instead, there existed two different state committees for Thirukochi and Malabar region. Therefore the state conference which preceded the fourth congress was taken place in Thirukochi and Malabar separately. In Thirukkochi region the majority delegates were in supportive of the central committee. But in Malabar the situation was different. These differences were reflected in the two state conferences. In Thirukochi conference they approved the majority view in the central committee, but just opposite happened in Malabar. Naturally, those delegates from the two states who were elected to the central

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

party congress had reflected these differences. In the fourth conference of Palakkad, there emerged two sets of opinion regarding the attitude towards Indian National Congress. One sections of opinion demanded the communist party to become an opposition by mobilizing the people against congress. But the other section wanted to make a common front with congress and make a coalition ministry with it. Many communist leaders who later became the members of the CPI took an anti-congress stand in the Palakkad Conference. At the same time those leaders who later became the members of the CPI'M had a pro-congress stand in the Palakkad conference. For examples, M.N Govindan Nair, and P.K Vasudevan Nair from Thirukkochiand, C.H Kanaran from Malabar.<sup>110</sup> Even though the Palakkad conference adopted a unanimous resolution; this conference did not resolve the inner party dispute within the CPI. The debate was continued in the subsequent period.

It was one year after the forth congress the election to the first Kerala legislation assembly was taken place which led to the assumption of Communist party led government in Kerala in April 1957. In 1957 election even Ajoy Gosh the then general secretary of the CPI was not optimistic about the victory of the communist party of Kerala. Congress believed that the situation was easy for their victory. Many early leaders of the Kerala socialist Party and Preja Socialist party were friendly within communist party. But the Kerala communist leaders were optimistic about their victory. To Namboothirippad, during the 1957 election the communist party tried to expose the “political pauperism” of the congress leaders especially in Thiru-Kochi region since 1952. They also told the people about the ‘immoral political activates’ which was done by congress between 1952 and 1957. In Malabar, Muslim League contested as an independent political party. There did not have anti-communist alliance. In Thirukochi region, the two

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.486-488.



communities Nairs and Ezhavas accusing it of Christian domination. Though the communist party did not have an alliance, many were contested as independent candidates with the support of communist party. Five were won in this. It was not the communist government instead the left-wing government led by communist party.<sup>111</sup> Commenting on the new Kerala situation EMS Namboothirippad stated the problem of Kerala should be seen as a part of larger democratic problem of India; he added, the communist party was trying to form a government in Kerala which will free the people from starvation and eviction. According to Kerala state committee of the communist party, at the present moment there is a necessity of an alternative government in Kerala.<sup>112</sup> The major factor which contributed to the victory of the communist party in Kerala in 1957 was its consistent support for to the demand for a united Kerala. The Communist party welcomed the re-organization of Indian state on the basis of language. According to them, it was the end of Rajyapremuk was the feature of this new development. To CPI congress had feared the democratic movements in the princely states if they supported this movement the place of the princes would have been in the waste basket.<sup>113</sup> After the assumption, there emerged two divergent opinions regarding the possibilities of communist government in Kerala. On section viewed it is in the context of the new soviet policy of peaceful transition. But others viewed it negatively by stating the violent and autocratic character of communism, these difference of opinion not only visible in India but outside the country. In the 21<sup>st</sup> congress of the Soviet Union the development in Kerala became a matter of debate especially among the soviet academics who

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 512-514.

<sup>112</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad., 'Keralatthiloru Badal Government'(Mal), in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika 1954-1956*, Vol.XVI, , Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, pp. 330-333.

<sup>113</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Rajavazhchayum Janadhipathyathinu Vendiyulla Samaravum' (Mal), in *ibid.*, pp. 335-348.

were interested in the eastern countries. While talking to the Soviet academicians EMS Namboothirippad stated, on the one hand is a member of communist party who fight against bourgeois system on the other hand he is heading a government and it is the instrument of the bourgeois system.<sup>114</sup> It should be noted that it was in this period USSR had adopted a new line of peaceful co-existence. Likewise, some soviet intellectuals formulated a new path called the non-Capitalist path of development for the liberated colonial countries of Asia and Africa.

### **Debate on the non-capitalist path of development;**

It was during this period a new debate was emerged within the International communist movement regarding the correct path which the newly independent countries should adopt to escape from the grip of imperialism. To some soviet scholars, a specific revolutionary process by which the material and productive, Socio-economic political conditions are created for the transition to socialist development in countries which were characterized by great economic and social backwardness (for example, many former colonies and semi-colonial countries). According to them, “The non-capitalist path of development” makes it possible to a country to avoid subsequently shortens, or even interrupts the capitalist stage of development. During the transitional period of national front of progressive, revolutionary democratic forces, including peasants and the urban petite-bourgeois bourgeois strategy-even patriotic circles of the national bourgeoisie besides the workers carries out anti imperialist and anti-feudal socio-economic transformations, laying the foundation for the countries subsequent development towards socialism.

Some Soviet scholars called this as a non-capitalist path of

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 514-520.

development; it was Modest Rubenstein who played a major role in formulating this concept. In July –August 1956, *New times* (the English language journal published from Moscow), printed a two part article by him, Entitled “A Non-Capitalist Path for Under Developed Countries”, the article primarily dealt with India. Rubinstein cited with evident approbation the Indian National Congress’s Avadi resolution which, in January 1955, committed it to the goal of a ‘Socialist pattern of society, describing the Indian government’s ownership of electoral equipment factories, steel, and fertilizer, He said, these steps to develop state industry are not, in themselves, of a socialistic character’.<sup>115</sup> However in India, as in other economically backward countries that have recently embarked on the path of independent development, state capitalist enterprises assume a special character. State capitalist enterprises in India, under present conditions, play a progressive part. Thus he concluded, “given close cooperation by progressive forces of the country, there is a possibility for India to develop along socialist lines. The economic plans now being evolved in a number of under developed countries can be carried out only with the active participation of their workers and peasants, their young technical intelligentsia, scientists and students etc”.<sup>116</sup>

The Rubinstein’s article was received by Indian communist party with profound Shock. Their line was that the Avadi resolutions was a ‘Hoax perpetrated by the big bourgeoisie’ to deceive the masses, but here was an article in a Soviet journal implying that under congress leadership the country was moving towards socialism. Worse than that the Indian communist were being told to cooperate with the congress towards this end-a course which

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<sup>115</sup> Gane D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, Bombay, Perennial Press, 1960, pp. 325-326.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

would be tantamount to the proletariat's accepting the leadership of the bourgeoisie in the march toward socialism.

Ajoy Gosh expressed CPI's opposition in the October issue of *New Age* (monthly) Referring to Rubinstein's Non-capitalist path as astounding. He asked: which class has profited most from the economic policies of the government – this is the question which any Marxist, any student of economics has to examine in order to determine whether the path taken by a government is the path of socialism or even of democratic planning. Unfortunately, Modest Rubinstein does not even pose the question. But Ajoy Gosh made it clear that the real cause of pain lay in the implications for the CPI. He quoted the report of the central committee of CPSU to the twentieth congress, saying: what is virtually ignored in the article is the profound truth that “whatever the forms of transition to Socialism, the decisive and indispensable factor are the political leadership of the working class headed by its vanguard. Without this, there can be no transition to socialism. The bourgeoisie no matter how radical and progressive cannot build socialism which based on new property relations. Power in the hands of the democratic masses led by the proletariat – this is the essential condition for the building of socialism. The replacement of bourgeois landlord rule by the rule of people headed by the working class- without this Socialism is inconceivable. Ajoy Gosh concluded that, there undoubtedly exists a non capitalist path of development for the under-developed countries like India. But it would be an illusion to think that the present government, headed by the bourgeoisie can advance on that path. The communist party of India does not suffer from such illusions. To Overstreet and Windmiller, although Ajoy Gosh did not use such a powerful word as ‘revisionist’, it would surely have been appropriate in attacking Rubinstein's article. By implication the article so contradicted

classical Marxism-Leninism as to repudiate the most fundamental principle of communist strategy and tactics.<sup>117</sup>

EMS Namboothirippad was also participated in this debate over the path of development which India needs to adopt to overcome the colonial backwardness. Though he did not mention about Rubinstein, he made a different interpretation of this argument in regards the Indian situation. He did not agree with the Rubinstein proposition that the policy of the congress government will lead India in to a Non-capitalist path of development. Earlier Commenting on Nehruvian socialism He stated; the congress plan of socialism did not touch certain basic questions, that include; the abolition of Janmi system without compensation; and subsequent land redistribution to the cultivators; the reduction of debt burden to the cultivators and ensuring a minimum price for their produce; the ensuring of permanent job and better working condition for the workers and the salaried employees; to adopt a national industrial policy which aim to restrict the profit of both native and foreign monopolies; to foster the basic industries like mining by preserving the existing medium and small scale industries. By quoting Stalin he stated; after the war even the same progressive nature of bourgeoisie had gone, now capitalism is entirely trying for maximizing its profit. To Namboothirippad; Nehru is ignoring these facts while criticizing the communists. To him, Nehru's socialist pattern is the maintenance and survival of the native and foreign capitalist, on the other hand; and the landlords and the princes on the other.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>118</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Nehruvinte Socialist Pattern Muthalalitha Margam' (Mal), in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika* Vol.XVI, 1954-1956, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 1999, pp. 254-255.

By addressing the Delhi Malayali association in 1956 he stated; by comparing to other states Kerala has less number of people who were depended on agriculture, the land become so thick. To him, the second five year plan is so important for Kerala, as it had a high possibility for rapid industrialization. The main responsibility of the new Kerala government to solve the problem of unemployment and migration, this cannot be solving only through the government as Kerala is not an Independent country. Its economy is not an isolated economy; it can solve their problem only through an all India collective effort to reform the Indian economy.<sup>119</sup>

In order to provide employment to unemployed and under-employed, there is an urgent necessity of the rapid development of mining industry. For this the malayalees should welcome the Second five year plan and at the same time it was inadequate. The plan should be formulated on the basis of certain objective, in the all India level; the one third of the job seekers should be facilitated to get a job in the mining industry. Half of the cultivators should be accessible to employment in the industrial and transportation sector. On Kerala Two third of the population should be allowed to get employment in the mining and transportation, industrial sector while lifting the other one portion out of it. To him, Mahalanobis did not take in to account the relationship between changing land relation and industrialization. Reforming land relation was closely connected with employment, opportunity, production, standard of living, capital formation. This was necessary to free the cultivators from the Janmies and money lenders. But Mahalanobis did not take this in to consideration while formulating the second five year plan. The immediate way to a temporary solution to the rural unemployment was to fix

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<sup>119</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Keralatthinte Sambathika Prashnangal' (Mal), 1956, in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika* Vol.XVII, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers. 1999, p. 72.

a ceiling limit for land holding. Those land above the ceiling along with the government owned waste land should be re-distributed to the unemployed rural people. To him, Janmi system does not economically justified itself. It is basically a parasitical system as it receives rent without giving any service to the society. Therefore any economic plan should resolve this issue. The Janmies of Malabar receive around two and half crore rupees in a year. But the cultivators do not received any benefits out of this. To EMS Namboothirippad, it was the abolition of the Janmi system that is the main pre-condition for ending poverty. The communist party demanding the complete re-structuring of the existing land relations, they demanded the stopping of eviction and giving occupancy right to the tenants and it should be given without any price. The tenants should only require pay tax to the government but any rent for the landlord. Those exist land above the ceiling limit should be re-distributed to the landless and those who had a very small amount of land. If any janmies lost their livelihood due to this programme they should be given maintenance allowance. The relationship between the poor Janmies and the tenants should be dealt through mutual compromise. Likewise attentions also been given to those landlords who were forced to give their land in lease. The issue of agricultural dept should be resolved by writing off of the debt of the poor cultivators, unjust debt should be reduced and by allowing paying their debt as installment. For this a moratorium should be declared immediate. This was done to achieve certain objective; to create a progressive environment for industrial development by expanding the industrial market and to increase the capital formation, to reach a temporary solution which permanently resolved only through industrialization and their by help the overall national economy. Besides restructuring the land relation the cultivators should be provided with every amenities in the fields like; irrigation, crop rotation, and modern machinery. The government should fix certain areas of land for cultivating food crops; exportable cash crop, and

those products which are used for industrialization. If the new Kerala state fails to formulate a new plan to eradicate poverty, unemployment and food scarcity, the new Kerala state will have to face certain problems. This plan cannot be implemented through isolation, for this there should develop a co-operation between centre and state on the hand and between different states on the other. Linguistically based state re-organization allows the masses for a direct participation in the administration. Likewise, this enabled the state to organize a comparatively peaceful administration. There should be a balanced approach between the shorter objective of protecting the small scale industries and the long term objective of fostering large scale machine industries. To him, if Kerala try to foster the machine made industry by destroying small scale industry, it will increase the unemployment. If this plan implemented across India it will increase the unemployment across the country. This will affect the employability of malayalees in other states. EMS Namboothirippad emphasized the importance of nationalizing the foreign owned plantation.<sup>120</sup>

This shows that he took a middle position regarding the development path which India and Kerala should adopt to overcome its backwardness he neither supported nor opposed the Rubinstein's idea of Non-capitalist path of development instead he tried to interpret it his own way. While supporting the second five year plan he stated the plan which was proposed by Mahalanobis was so inadequate for the future industrial development of India in general and Kerala in particular. So his main thrust was to accelerate industrialization and a proper re-distribution of land.

### **Communist ministry and the government experiment in Kerala**

As mentioned earlier, communist party got an opportunity to administrate the state of Kerala in April 1957 under the leadership of EMS

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-100.



Namboothirippad. The victory of the communist party should be situated in the context of their relentless support for the demand for a united Kerala from 1946. In this period the Indian National Congress had deviated from their demand for a linguistic state. In 1927 the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution had declared their support for the formation of Indian states on the basis of language. Similarly the congress's action in the post independent period showed that they were not sincere about the linguistic states. The congress appointed JVP Commission had rejected the demand for the linguistic states. It was only after the fast and death of Potty Sreeramulu the congress was prepared to accept the formation of the linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh. Similarly in Kerala some congress leaders like K. Kelappan were not in support of the unite Kerala. Instead he proposed a multi-lingual South Indian state.

Another factor which led to the communist victory was the political instability which had existed in the Thirukkochi region between 1951 and 1956. This was mainly occurred by in the infighting within the congress and the caste rivalry. Many felt that communist party will be an alternative against this political instability.

The important challenge which the communist party was faced during this period was to implement their programme within the frame work of bourgeois constitution and a judicial system. Likewise, there existed a hostile central government which was very reluctant to accept the Communist victory in Kerala, this was visible when the then Kerala Governor Burgula Ramakrishna Rao asked the five communist supported independent MLAs for a separate meeting to prove their support to the communist party. In the words of EMS Namboothirippad, in 1957, the communist party has to face dual contradictions. On the one side it has to fight against bourgeois system, on the

other they had to lead the government within the existing bourgeois system.<sup>121</sup> During the period its assumption their existed a debate within the communist party regarding the nature of this government. To K Damodaran the dominant view held by central leaders including Namboothirippad was that the workers had captured power by peaceful means, by winning a majority in elections, and that Kerala would become the best example of the peaceful road to socialism. It was the first time that this had happened anywhere in the world and it showed the way to future for communists throughout the world. This was the initial reaction of the leadership. Damodaran did not agree with this view. He argued that the state remained a capitalist state despite the communist victory and that it would be wrong to spread illusions to the contrary.<sup>122</sup> The programmes of the first communist ministry in Kerala should be situated in the broader context of the inner party debates within the CPI regarding certain issues like the nature of Indian bourgeoisie and the attitude towards the Nehru led government. Likewise Kerala communist leaders like EMS. Namboothirippad had accepted and interpreted the non-capitalist path of development in a different way. The debates on industrialization should be seen in this context. Likewise the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU had adopted the concept of peaceful transition in to socialism. This also had some impact upon the Indian communist party. This also influences the debates within the CPI. Before becoming the Chief Minister, Ems Namboothirippad stated that the communist party was not going to implement communist programme, but some good programme which were promised by congress which was not been

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<sup>121</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralalathil*, p. 520.

<sup>122</sup> K. Damodaran, 'The Tragedy of Indian Communism', in Tariq Ali Ed., *The Stalinist Legacy*, England, Penguin Books, 1984, p. 358.

implement. It was in this situation the activities of the communist government should be examined.<sup>123</sup>

Immediately after assuming the power the Communist government in Kerala decided to reform the administration. For this they appointed an administrative reform commission under the chairmanship of Chief minister EMS Namboothirippad, besides him, the commission included, Joseph Mundasseri, VK Nandan Menon, PS Nadaraja Pillai, Harsha Deva Malavya and KS Menon. The important parts of this report included; decentralization of power, efficient administration, the relationship between bureaucrats and employees. The committee examined all issues aiming to change the administration in line with the modern democratic system by removing the elements of foreign and princely state administration. The thrust was given to the local self government, it recommended for more decentralization of power. In order to implement the commission's recommendations on decentralization of power the government prepared a draft bill called the district council bill (even though it was not able to implement at that time). This bill proposed to increase the power of Panchayats and make the district council as a link between Government and Panchayat. Commenting on reservation the committee recommended that the Other Back Classes that exceeding a certain amount of income should be exempted from reservation. This amounted to much heated discussion in Kerala, both supporters and opposers of reservation were opposed to this recommendation. For the supporters, the entire OBC section should be included in the reservation, others wanted to fully eliminate caste based reservation and should be replaced with economic reservation.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Kerala*.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 554-556.

Besides constituting the administrative reforms committee the first communist ministry took several steps which can be regarded as 'progressive'. The important intervention the communist ministry has done during that period was in the field of education. About this time Kerala education was subjected too much criticism. Joseph Mundasseri, the first educational minister in Kerala was also a victim of this corrupt educational system. He was a teacher at St. Tomas collage Thrissur, where he had refused to accept the tyranny of the private management (Roman Catholic Church). The private management often saw their schools as a profitable business concern. Fee kept raising unusually fast with frame of the school and appointment became a sort of auction, the job's were going to the highest bidders, who, anyway, would lend up in a disgraceful situation in which they were treated as servants of the management.<sup>125</sup>

To Lieten, profit motive in the realm of education was directly related to the economic structure of the state. Since there was no industrial bourgeoisie, 'the alternative source of power and position was getting in to seats of state services' and the moneyed classes recognized the opportunities of trading in educational institutions instead of industrial enterprises.<sup>126</sup> The injustice towards teachers was facilitated by raising educated unemployment, a direct consequences of the educational structure. As early as July 7, 1957 the Kerala educational bill was introduced. The divided opposition started with delaying maneuvers. The government at first refused to circulate the bill in order to elicit public opinion and ordered the assembly select committee to report back by 20<sup>th</sup> July 1957. The objective and reasons of the bill were 'to provide for the better organization of general education' and more specifically

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<sup>125</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *The First Communist Ministry in Kerala-1957-9*, Calcutta, K P Bagchi and Company, 1982, pp. 30-33.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

to provide for a check on payment of salaries to and securing service of teachers on the administration of Institution. The bill stipulated that all payments of wages should be done to and by the government directly and that teachers could be appointed by the managements only forms a district panel of qualified teachers, who, after appointment, could not be suspended on flimsy grounds. The most important clause related to the takeover of aided schools: for a maximum period of five year, when necessary “in the interests of the pupils of the school, the government may, under the bill, without notice take over the management of the school against payment of an objectively fixed rent. To the bill, within three months, the educational agency may apply for a resolution. The bill gave government the legal ground for takeover of school ‘for standardizing general education in the state, or for improving the level of literacy in any area or for more effectively managing the aided school institutions in any area or bringing the education any category under their direct control’”.<sup>127</sup> However, “no notification shall be issued unless supported by a resolution of the legislative assembly and compensation should be paid on the basis of market value. The bill also specified that the administration of the education should be carried on by management, while inspection, control and supervision of their school should be done by the education department. The church alleged that the bill was a planned attempt to break the private managements, and that such as it was contrary to the rights of the minorities as guaranteed by the constitution”.<sup>128</sup>

Another important feature of this government was its attitude towards police. Reviewing the first six months of office EMS Namboothirippad wrote; “it is not enough to put and end to the hitherto existing practice of using the police against the activities of the trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and other mass

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-43.

organizations... it is necessarily workout a relatively longterm basis for the settlement of those questions which have strained...the relations between the capitalist and workers”. Another innovation, the neutralisation of police in labour dispute, already resulted in mounting lawlessness in the state, and thus deserved closer scrutiny. The inspector of police in taluk was easily the most powerful and hence the most influential person in that area. Receiving more than adequate compensation, the police officer invariably used to serve the power and interests of the rich man of that place. This sort of things used to create a reign of semi terror in towns and villages. The CPI had come to the same conclusion, but since the state power was not in its hands, the powerful state apparatus could not be used for the defense of the working class. The solution therefore was to change the conduct of police in the sense that their interference in labour disputes and land disputes would be curtailed.<sup>129</sup>

Other significant intervention the Communist led government done in Kerala was in the field of industrial development. As said earlier the thrust of the Communist party’s plan of industrialization was the rapid industrialization. According to two Soviet scholars, Reisner and Shirkov have classified Kerala in the group of least developed Indian state. The cottage industry which is extremely backward and inefficient is to a great extent controlled by trade and usurious capital. Its development in to higher forms of enterprises is extremely slow, although quite a number of big factories existed in the state, initiated by entrepreneurs from the more developed states, by for foreign capitalists or by government. To Lieten, it was on the basis of this inhibited, predominantly traditional and lopsided industrial structure that the CPI judged it tactically and strategically unwarranted to bar the private sector from operating in and contributing to the economic activities in the state. The foremost objective was to haul the whole economy out of its stagnation and

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p 107.

pre-capitalist inefficiency. It was the accepted policy that neither the material nor the social and political pre-requisites for radical social restructuring had matured, a part of cause from the fact that one state government could not go beyond the limits set by the bourgeois landlord state power operating from the central power structure. Therefore, instead of coming down drastically on private capitalists interests, the Kerala State communist party led government opted for a policy which would allow it, within the given restraints and possibilities, to give an impetus to harnessing all forces of production in the expansion of industrial activities, productivity and employment.<sup>130</sup>

The achievement of the rapid industrial process was one of the most important targets the communist led government of Kerala had set before it. Ajoy Gosh the then national secretary of the CPI described it as “the task of rebuilding Kerala, and therefore we want the cooperation of workers and capitalists”. But even before the government could start along this path, a controversy between central government and state government had developed. The Communist Party announced that if it came to power, it would nationalize the foreign owned plantation in Kerala. This was immediately opposed by Indian National Congress more particularly by the prime minister who declared that the honor of India was its stake; ‘I am not going temper with honor of good name of India just to gain a few cores of rupees. In his press conference the day after the announcement of victory of his party CPI state secretary MN. Govindan Nair accepted the objections of the centre, stressing that it was not his party’s intention to do anything beyond the constitution. Some days later EMS Namboothirippad declared; “our proposal with regard to taking over foreign plantations is so reasonable and so essential for the development of the economy in Kerala that we have every hope that we can, through consultation convince the centre of the necessity for the

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

same". He however continued that it's found in the cause of actual implementation that provisions of the constitution do not allow the implementation of a particular item in the manner in which had been formulated, we would hold further constitution with the centre, do our best to implement as much as it possible within the frame work of the constitution. EMS Namboothiroppad declared that business man and traders would be encouraged, but at the same time he would curb their tendency to excess profiteering. He stated, government was not against industrialist making reasonable profits, and promoted the coming in of any capital, including American capital, provided it came in on a reasonable terms. The new minister for industries KP Gopalan added that, the industrialists would get reasonable profit, the workers should get a reasonable share of profit.<sup>131</sup>

The government accepted a number of industries spring up in the private sector, and was prepared to offer maximum credit facilities, and if example, a Japanese cable factory which got a 20 percent of government investment, although the main bulk of the shares was subscribed to national firms investing in Kerala. The nationalization of industries was limited to the establishment of water transport cooperation, which took over the ownership of the passenger and cargo motor boat services, with some 1500 workers. This action was attacked by the opposition as a dubious deal which gave owners of 'worthless junk of rotten timber and broken engines profit without risk, authority without responsibility and dictatorship. The important entrepreneur who decided to invest in Kerala was GD Birla, one of the biggest Indian industrialists. Its decision to invest in a communist ruled state was expected to act as a forceful example for other Indian industrialists. After five days of office KP Gopalan informed that the Birla house has proposed to open a pulp factory in the state. The initiative however had been taken before the

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-58.



communist election victory by the union government which suggested to Birla to start a factory in Nilamboor forest area. In June 1958 more than one year after, the first negotiation between GD Birla and Communist government, Birla announced that a complete agreement had been reached with the government on the right and possibilities of the movement. Before long, the content of agreement leaked out and the communist ministry came under attack for its "anti-working class agreement with private capital" in which the management had been alleged to have been given blanket power. "The firm has the right to hire and discharge laborers, and the right to plan, direct and control the operation, of the plan and to make rules and regulations for the purpose of maintaining discipline, order, safety, effective operation of companies work, wage on scientific basis are to be prepared by companies and bonus will not be related to the company's profit but only to efficiency and production. The CPI itself came out openly disapproval with some of the provisions in the agreement, so did AITUC react strongly to the harmful provisions.

Generally the government was quite successful in the industrial policy, as is shown in the fulfillment and in the increase in industrial enterprises. When communist government took over office, the second five year plan was already in its second year. Whereas the state had got a share of Rs 87 crores, the CPI in its election manifesto demanded for a minimum of 200 crores. It was later brought down to 130 crores. When this was realized to be unattainable, the government decided to shift as much recourse as possible from non productive to productive sector. Due to the planning priorities of the previous administrators in Kerala only 8 percent had been allotted for industries, compared to 18 percent of the all India figure.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

Another important intervention which the CPI led government had done was in the field of agriculture relation. In reality the communist led government had tried to implement the land reforms which were earlier promised by Indian National Congress during the period of Indian national movement. About this time their emerged different ideas to end the land question like that of 'Boothan movement'. To Lieten, the government had opted for an anti-feudal, not for a Socialist reconstruction of Agrarian system. Its limited purpose was to shatter the parasitic domination of the Janmies, landlords and intermediaries who in connection with the usurious money lenders made any reasonable forces of production impossible. Directly through rent alone, on account of the parasitic land tenure, tens of crores of rupees wasted every year in unproductive consumption by the upper caste of the feudal structure. Moreover, the money lending structure with its entailing mass indebtedness kept the peasants suppressed by feudal bondage. In solving the structural problem the CPI had decided to implement the guidelines of planning commission, but was not inclined to adopt 'piecemeal legislation, plugged with loopholes and nullifying provisions' as the Indian National Congress was doing in the other parts of the country. Immediately after coming to power the communist led government made the governor promulgates the ordinance No-1 staying all the eviction proceedings for occupiers of land (Kudikidappaus). When one month later a bill with same preview was presented to the assembly, the opposition wanted its reference to a selected committee with sufficient time to suggest modification. Expecting that the landlords, in anticipation of the proposed land reform legislation would take resources to large scale eviction of tenants in order to prevent them from getting such rights as would acquire to them under new legislation, the government imposed a statuesque through an effective law to stop the spate of evictions so much witness in other states despite legislation. Soon after the assumption of office, EMS Namboothirippad also announced the

decision that all available government land would be assigned to the landless and peasants. It was expected that it would be possible to settle thousands of families on the cultivable waste land. However only in November 1958 the Chief Minister could hand over the 493 deeds of land, with an apology to his peasant audience 'for delay in distributing government waste land. 7000 thousand acres has been found to be available throughout the state for such distribution. It is to be distributed to the landless people through committees with representation from all parties setup for especially for the purpose. On 21 August 1957, a Kerala compensation for tenant's improvement bill was published. Although it mainly sought to unify the similar laws existing in Malabar (1899 act) and Travancore Cochin (1957 act) it reflected a new approach. For the definition of tenants under this bill included 'a person who, lessee, sub lessee, mortgagee, sub mortgagee or in good faith believing himself to a lessee, sub lessee, mortgagee, sub mortgagee of land, in possession thereof. A bill provide for the abolition of Janmi Karam was published on 23 November two after agricultural debt relief bill, the enactment of which gave a relief of 2 crores to 21733 agriculturists by the end of 1958. The Kerala agriculture relations bill, after being examined by the planning commission was published in the Kerala gazette of 18<sup>th</sup> December 1957. After its introduction in the state assembly it was circulated for eliciting public opinion. It was submitted that "the bill did not go beyond the programme of planning commission". Even that the analysis of the provisions of the bill will show it nevertheless for reaching implications in three major respects; fixity of tenure, ownership rights, ceiling. In the case of Fixity of tenure, the Bill provided that no holdings by permanent cultivating tenets would be subjected to resumption except in certain restricted cease. Specific references were made to the Kudikidappu and cultivators who in the document held by the land lord were described as servants, agents or mortgagees, but in fact could prove that they were real cultivating tenants.

Resumption would only be possible for the extension of any place of public religious worship, for the cultivation of building for resident purpose, and for self cultivation. The land could resume only 20 percentages for building process, if the tenant's possession was below one acre, and the tenants should be left with at least 20 cents. Self cultivation in the Bill meant cultivation by oneself, by family members or by hired labor. However the landlord would not be able to resume land for starting big scale capitalist firms. If the tenants possessed a holding in excess of the statutory ceiling, the owners could resume land up to the extent of making their total possession 5 acres of double cultivated land. In no case could he resume more than 50 percent surplus land of the tenant. If the tenant possess less than the ceiling area, the landlord holding less than 5 acres was free to resume a portion not exceeding half the area of the peasant not raising the extent of land in the possession of landlord above 5 acres of such double crop paddy land. However, when the tenants of small holder had as owner or as tenant more land than the small holder, the constitutional land tribunal was given the right in Travancore-Cochin part of the state to order that the entire holding could be resumed by the small holder. The bill reduces the fair rend drastically, depending on the fertility of the soil, to between one fourth and one twelfth of the gross produce. All the areas of rend by a tenant to his landlord should be deemed to be fully discharged on payment of year's rend in the case of tenants holding between 5 and 15 acres and six years rend in the cases of above 15 acres.<sup>133</sup>

The bill vested all rights of landlords in landlords in land held by the tenants in the state. The tenant got the right to purchase from the state ownership of holding he possessed at a price, the aggregate of 16 times yearly installments or in a lump sum of 12 times the rate fixed. The dispossessed lands or intermediaries were entitled to compensation in cash or bonds, at a

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-83.

rate ranging from 16 times the fair rend in the case of first five acres to six times for the area above fifty acres. In the case of land ceiling the upper limits of land holdings for ceiling purpose was fixed at fifteen acres for double crop wet land and thirty acres for single crop dry land, owned land as well as proposed land. Since certain types of transfer were allowed, for example partition and gifts, the extant would be reduced accordingly, but the government reckoned that nevertheless the ownership rights overcome lacks of acres could be transferred to aspiring agricultural households. The surplus, surrendered specially created land board was, in order of priority to be assigned to the tenants whose land had been resumed, experienced landlords with less than three acres of land, co-operative societies of agricultural laborers agricultural laborers and so on.<sup>134</sup>

While taking these steps the government did not give much emphasis on nationalizing the foreign owned plantation it deffered the decision on including the plantation in the ambit of land reform. They believed that the foremost task is to end the Janmi system. Likewise they were also aware about the legal complexities in these steps. Even some provisions of the education bill were later quashed by the supreme court of India by sitting the minority rights which were enshrined in the constitution.

The Ministry wanted to give much participation for the workers and their unions in the government enterprises. The government made a first beginning with the implementation of this principle. An elicited workers representative was added to the board of directors of some government enterprises. For example; Kerala state transport service and in the Sitharam spinning mill Thrissur. The most important aspect in the field of labor participation, the encouragement given to labor contact societies, in three

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

sectors, namely public sector, coir industry, and toddy tapping. The government set up plans aimed to protecting workers from exploitation by middleman and contractors.<sup>135</sup>

Besides this this government took number of other interventions. The important among them was the formation of popular food committees. This was aimed to provide food items with affordable prices. These committees consisted of the members of all members of the political parties.

While these policies were adopted their emerged some disputes within the communist party over the attitude towards other trade union strikes. The important event that created this dispute was the firing upon the RSP led trade union workers at Chanthanathoppu in Kollam. By recollecting this period K Damodharam stated; ‘the logic of the comrades who advocated changing the initial position on the firing went something like this; if we attack the police, there will be a serious decline in their morale, if there is a serious decline in their morale the anti-communist movement will be strengthened; if the anti-communist movement is strengthened our government be a tremendous blow against the communist movement’. The final resolution passed by the party defended the police action. It was then decided that somebody must go to the spot and to explain their point of view i.e. attack the RSP and defiant the police action. To K. Damodaran, he was supposed to be one the party’s effective Malayalam orators and he was asked to go to speak on behalf of the Kerala Communist party. His response was to refuse and maintained that he had been unable to digest the decision taken by the council and therefore he could not defend it. But then he was formally instructed by the party leadership to go and defend the party. He went there and he spoke for about an hour and a half. To him, it was pure ‘demagogy’. He blamed the deaths of

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

the three workers on the irresponsibility of the RSP and asked them to publicly explain why they had led these workers to be shot. He made vicious attacks on the strike leaders. That night when he returned home he really felt sick inside. He could not sleep. He kept thinking that he should have refused to defend the party and he felt that he was going mad. To him, he shouted at his wife, instead of having shouted and hurled abuse at the party leaders, who had put him in such situation, he took it out on his wife. The next day he was asked to speak at three different places and make the same speech. This time he refused point blank and his refusal was accepted. He added, it weakened the government and dented its mass support, but a significant section of our supporters remained solid despite in this incident.<sup>136</sup>

Many of the steps had invited much criticism. The steps like; education bill and Agrarian relation caused much opposition from different communities like Catholic Church and Nair service society on the one hand and from the Indian National Congress on the other. Likewise many opposition parties accused this government of cell rule. All of this ultimately led to a struggle which is generally referred as 'Vimojana Samaram' (Liberation struggle). This led to the dismissal of the Communist led government on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1959. This so called liberation struggle became a platform under which a broad anti-communist coalition was being constituted. They include the Roman Catholic Church, the Nair Service society, Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. Especially the leaders of Travancore and Cochin region had mobilized a broad anti-communist coalition. Each group had their own interest in participating in this struggle. The Roman Catholic Church was interested in preserving their interest in education institution which was threatened by the new educational reform. On the other hand the

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<sup>136</sup> K. Damodaran, *op. cit.*, *The Tragedy...*, pp. 361-362.

organizations like Nair service society had antagonized by the land reform measures of the government.

From March 1959 onwards, the communal organizations of the Nairs and Christians on the one hand and the major political parties, the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist party, and the Muslim league on the other, joined forces in an anti-communist, extra parliamentary struggle, which, on 31<sup>st</sup> July resulted in the imposition of presidential rule on Kerala. The NSS conference at Changanacherry on 9 March 1959 called on the members of the Nair community to raise their voice against the measures adopted by the communist government against Nair interests. The awakening of the Nairs was described one month later by their leader Mannath padmanabhan at the Chirayikeezh Nair conference was; “the Nair who is lazy, the Nair who does not mind whatever happens, is now organizing. We should congratulate the communists who helped this awakening. Oh dear communist regime, you please stay on for some more months. Let the Nair be roused even at this late hour ...let Nair arise to awake this namboothiri who ate fish and rice from the huts of pokkan. At the same time, he also warned that no one came to take away the excess land could not be sent back alive. And he continued; “Nairs is going to take over the administration from the communists. Nair is the simple reply to those who ask who will rule after the communists.<sup>137</sup> By the time Mannath pathmanaban and the NSS had already formed a close compination with the church. The Christian Community in Kerala consisted of two specific identities, but both of them have their own anti-communism in common. The first group belonged mainly to the Syrian Christians and the Jacobaites, the rising groups in all fields of economic and administrative activities. This leading community as well as leading farming community dominating the rubber,tea, and coffee plantations- was extremely

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<sup>137</sup> quoted in,Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-131.



alarmed by the actions and intentions of the communist government. The relatively high class position of these communities and the traditional link between international, uncompromising anti-communist churches united them “in a position with similar social and economic interests. This combination would constitute from the first beginning and through out the full period of the communist government the hard kernel of the anti-communist resistance”. The other group mainly consisted and culturally backward Latin Catholic religion, one feels was “nothing but the fanatic reflection in men’s mind of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces now was rising communism. Though in Catholic Church only the clergy and the small portion of educated and wealthy layman had similar class interests as the Syrian Christians, they could make their followers believe that evil communism was launching an attack on the good supernatural forces. In March 1959, a Kerala Catholic Bishop’s conference at Eranakulam had charted out a programme to launch a struggle against the government, the circumstances called upon their people to take all necessary action and to unite with other communities. According to this programme, soon afterwards a conversion was held of Christian and Nair leaders, who formed an action council with Mannath Pathmanabhan, Fr Mannanali, secretary of the private school managers association, and V.O Abraham. The convention decided to organize volunteer corps to defend the schools. On 8<sup>th</sup> April, the Christian education action committee took a decision not to reopen the schools after the summer recess if the education act was not amended. On April 26, Catholic Bishops in Kerala in a circular exhorted Catholics to continue the agitation against the Act by all constitutional means. On 29<sup>th</sup> April the editorial said that to run the schools under this circumstances “would be a deed against religion, society and the country. We need not to

have any respect for a law which is unjust”.<sup>138</sup> The Muslim leaders participated in this conference and agreed to the removal of the CPI from office, but later announced their decision not to take part in the school closer movement. Political leaders of the INC, PSP and Muslim League were also participated at the Changanachery meeting. A pamphlet published by the Vimojana samara on 17 June characterized the government as “the ten men rogue and one women rogue who have been come to rule with the authority given to them by the people and staff who prop them up turning this small Kerala into a blood soaked field. Violence did break out several times. In a number of cases the police had to resort to firing, result in the total of 15 deaths. A closer analysis of one of these firings, at Angamali, will illustrate the nature of the peaceful and uncompromising struggle, and of deliberate violence supposedly used by communist forces. Almost 95 percentage of the population belonged to the Syrian church. While 70 per centage of the households had no land or less than 50 cents of land, only 2 per centage of families owned more than five acres of land. Industrial activities were mainly limited to reed mat weaving on pre-capitalist lines, Characterized by the absence of co-operative and by exploitation of producers by the middle man. The firing take place in this locality on the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> July, when accordingly to a wireless message by the police the telephone had been cut- the police station was attacked by some thousands people. Opposition sounds however claimed that the killings of represented a pure form of massacre. The casualty list in the Angamali, Puthuvila and kochuveli firing shows that the Christian people under the church were put in to action. The Sunday preaching was that to kill a communist would take the killer to heaven and if he was minister canonization was certain. The violent incidents made it clear

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

that the Vimojana samaram samiti could count on some mass following.<sup>139</sup>

But some recent studies show that this so-called liberation struggle is a part of an international anti-communist struggle as a part of Cold War Strategy and had the backing of central intelligent agency. The assumption of the first communist ministry in Kerala in 1957 had attracted much global attraction in the view of existing cold war situation. This could be understood in the articles which were published in international journals like New York Times and observer between 1957 and 59.<sup>140</sup> It was the comments of Ellsworth Bunker the then ambassador of United States between 1957 and 60 to India which gave earlier indication regarding the role of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the so-called liberation struggle of Kerala in 1959. Another important revelation regarding their participation was in a work entitled '*A dangerous place*' written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. To him, CIA made two operations; one is in Kerala another one is in Bengal. To Bunker, CIA had organized a secret plan to oust the first communist government in Kerala. Their main strategy was to promote and organize a protest against the then state government. There by pursue the central government to dismiss the Kerala government. The book of Dennis Kuxen titled; *Estranged Democracies* shows that America was not comfortable with the communist victory in Kerala. It was in the Madras based South Indian book trust which acted as a main vehicle for spreading anti-communist printed materials in Kerala. This publication includes writers like C.J Tomas, KM George, and it had a huge financial backup from the United States. It was the moral rearmament movement which consisted as an important Proof of the

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-143.

<sup>140</sup> T.M., Thomas Isaac, *Vimochana Samarathinte Kanappurangal* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2009, p 229.

foreign intervention in the Anti-communist movement in Kerala.<sup>141</sup>

From this discussion it can find that the ministry under the leadership of EMS Namboothirippad did not implement and tried to implement any programme which can be characterize as Communists In nature. Instead they were tried to implement those programmes which were earlier promised by Indian National Congress way back in 1930s. As mentioned earlier the situation which existed in India during that period was not so helpful for the communist party to implement their programme. They had to make adjustment with the existing bourgeois constitution, the bourgeois judiciary, above all a central government; its machinery was not supportive for the Kerala government. The new government had to work within this limitation. As a result, they had to compromise many programs like the nationalization of foreign owned plantations. The programs of this government should be understood this context.

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p 252.

## **Chapter 6**

### **THE TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE CPSU AND THE SPLIT OF THE CPI**

After the death of Stalin in 1953 the debates in the Indian National Communist movement had undergone a drastic change. Many of the earlier understandings were rejected by various communist parties like CPSU. This was resulted by a sharp response from other communist parties like the CPSU. This was resulted in a sharp debate and dispute within the international communist movement. On the one hand this debate had taken place between different communist parties. Likewise the debates were also sharpened within the individual parties of the international communist movement. In countries like India the debate between CPSU and CPC had intensified the internal dispute within the CPI and ultimately led to in 1964 and subsequent split in 1967.

#### **The process of De-Stalinization**

The 20<sup>th</sup> party congress of the CPSU 1956 was an important land mark in the history of International communist movement. It initiated new debates and discussion within the international communist movement. The important factor which changed the cause of the international communist movement was the initiation of a process which is generally referred as 'De-Stalinization'. It was in report of Nikita. S. Khrushchov, the process of De-Stalinization was begun. In this report he was highly critical of Joseph Stalin. While accepting Stalin's role in the Socialist construction in the USSR and the defeat of Fascism. In this Khuschov asked the central committee of the CPSU to work for the rejection of 'The Cult of the individual'.

To Khroschov, after Stalin's death the central committee of the party began to implement a policy of explaining consciously and constantly that it is impressible and foreign to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism to elevate one person, to transform him in to superman possessing supernatural power characteristic akin to those of god. Such a man supposedly known everything, sees everything, thinks for everyone, can do anything, and is infallible in his behavior. To Kroschov, Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient co-operation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed these concepts or tried to prove his viewpoints and the correctness of his position, was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation. This was especially true during the period following the 17<sup>th</sup> party congress, when many prominent party leaders and rank and file of party workers honest and dedicated to the cause of communism, fell victim to Stalin's despotism. To Khroschov, worth nothing is fact that, even during the progress of the furious ideological fight against Trotskyites, the Zinoviviets, the Bhukharinates and others, extreme repressive measures were not used against them. The fight was on ideological grounds. But some years later, when Socialism in the USSR fundamentally constructed, when the ideological opponents of the party had violently contracted, when the ideological opponents of the party had long since been defeated politically then the repression directed against them began. To him, It was precisely during this period between (1935-1937-1938) that the practice of mass repression through governmental apparatus was born, first against the 'enemies of Leninism' - ie., Trotskyites, Zinovivietes, Bukharinites long since politically defeated by the party and subsequently also against many honest communists against those party cadres who had born on the heavy load of Civil war and the first and most difficult years of

industrialization and collectivization, who actively fought against the Trotskyites and the rightists for the Leninist party line.<sup>1</sup>

To Krushchov, Stalin originated the concept 'enemy of the people'. This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of man or men engaged in a controversy be proven; this term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary loyalty, against anyone who in the way disagreed with Stalin, against who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations. This concept 'enemy of the people' actually eliminated the possibility of any kind of ideological fight or the making of one's views known on this or that issue even those of a practical character. Arbitrary behavior by one person encouraged and permitted arbitrariness in others. Mass arrests and deportations of many thousands of people, executions without that and without normal investigation created conditions of insecurity, fear and even desire. To Khrushchov, mass oppressions against activists during that period as he thought at that time had elevated himself above the party and above nation that he ceased to consider either the central committee or the party. While he still reckoned the opinion of the collective before the 17<sup>th</sup> congress, after the complete liquidation of the Trotskyites, Zinoviets, and Bhukarinites, when as a result of that fight and socialist victories that party achieved unity, Stalin ceased to an ever greater degree to consider the members of the party's central committee and even the member of the political bureau. Stalin thought that now he could decide all things alone and all he need were statisticians; he treated all others in such a way that they could only listen to and praise him. After the murder of Sergei M. Kirov,

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<sup>1</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, 'On the Cult of The Individual and Its Consequences, Special Report to the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of The Communist Party of The Soviet Union', February 24-25, 1956, cited in *The Documents of the Great Debate*, Vol.I, 1956-1963, Delhi, Anthararashtriya Prakashan, 2005, pp. 210-217.

mass repressions and brutal acts of violations of the ‘Socialist legality’ had begun.<sup>2</sup>

To Krushchov, the CPSU should abolish the ‘cult of individual’ divisively, once and for all; To him, the CPSU must draw the proper conclusions concerning both ideological-theoretical and practical work. It is necessary for this purpose; in a Bolshevik manner to condemn and to eradicate the ‘cult of the individual’ as alien to Marxism-Leninism and not consonant with the principle of the party leadership and the norms of party life, and to fight inexorably all attempts at bringing back this practice in one form or another. To return to and actually practice in all our ideological work the most important theses of Marxist-Leninist science about people as the creator of history and as the creator of all material and spiritual good of humanity, about the decisive role of the Marxist party in the revolutionary fight for transformation of society, about the victory of communism. To him, in this connection CPSU will be forced to do much work in order to examine critically from the Marxist –Leninist view point and to correct the widely spread erroneous view connected with the cult of the individual in the sphere of history, philosophy, economy and of other sciences, as well as in literature and the fine arts. It is especially necessary that in the immediate future CPSU compile a serious of text book of history of their party which will be edited in accordance with scientific Marxist objectivism, a text book of the history of soviet society, a book pertaining to the events of the civil war and the patriotic war. To him, to continue systematically and constantly the work done by the CPSU central committee during the last years, a work characterized by minute observations, from the bottom to top, of the Leninist principle of the party leadership, characterized above all, by the main principle of collective leadership, characterized by the observance of the norms of party life

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 219-226.



described in the statute of the party, and finally characterized by the practice of criticism and self criticism. To him, in order to restore the Leninist principle of 'soviet socialist democracy' expressed in the constitution of the Soviet Union, to fight the will fullness of individual abusing their power. The evil caused by acts violating revolutionary socialist legality which have accumulated during a long time as a result of the negative influence of the 'cult of the individual' has to be completely corrected.<sup>3</sup>

Like rejecting the 'cult of Individual' USSR also made substantial changes in their foreign policy. It was based on certain principle namely peaceful co-existence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition to socialism. To 20<sup>th</sup> congress, the simultaneous co-existence of two opposite world economic systems, the capitalist and socialist, developing according to different laws and in opposite directions, has become an indisputable fact. To him, there were some fundamental questions they were the peaceful co-existence of the two systems, the possibility of preventing wars in the present era and the forms of transition to socialism in different countries. To Khrushchov, as a matter of principle the USSR renounces any policy that might lead to millions of people being plunged into war for the sake of selfish interests of a handful of multimillionaires. To him, building communism in our country, USSR are resolutely against war. USSR believes that countries with differing social systems can do more than exist side by side. As long as capitalism exists in that would the reactionary forces reprinting the interest of capitalist monopolies will continue their drive towards military gamble and aggression and may try to unleash war. But war is not fatalistically inevitable. Today there are mighty social and political forces possessing formidable means to prevent the imperialists from unleashing war and if they actually try to start it, to give a smashing rebuff to the aggressors and frustrate their

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

adventurist plans. To him, to be able to do this all anti-war forces must be vigilant and prepared; they must act as a united front and never relax their efforts in the battle for peace. The more actively the peoples defend peace, the greater the guarantees that there will be no new war. To him, the winning of a stable parliamentary majority backed by a mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat and of all working people could create for the working class of a number of capitalist and former colonial countries the condition need to secure for fundamental social change.<sup>4</sup>

Commenting on the contradictions in the capitalist system Krushchov stated, the capitalist world economy was developing extremely unevenly and has become still unstable. In the postwar decade, old capitalist countries such as Britain and France increased their industrial output but this growth is proceeding slowly and contradictorily. Of the defeated countries like western Germany and Italy regained their prewar level of production only in 1945-50, while Japan's industrial output is approximately on the 1944 level. To him, since the war, the united states the chief capitalist countries have experienced three substantial cutbacks in production; a serious economic crisis began in 1948 but was subsequently stopped by an intensified arms drive arising from the war in Korea. Instability in industrial production is supplemented by financial instability in most capitalist countries by the issuing of an immense amount of paper money and the depreciation of currency. The general crisis of the capitalism continued to deepens. Capitalism's insoluble contradiction- the contradiction between the modern productive forces and capitalist relations of production-has still become more acute. The rapid development of the present day technology does not remove this contradiction but only emphasis it. To

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<sup>4</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, 'Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, February 14-1956', cited in *ibid.*, pp. 2-37.

Khrushchov, a characteristic feature of the post war period is the increasingly resolute actions by the working class on fundamental political questions. Many large trade unions regardless of their political complexion are with increasing vigor calling for the lessening of international tensions and the end of the arms race. This was the result of the contradictory within the capitalist system during the postwar period. The situation in the capitalist world is marked by the intensification of the profound contradictions. The contradiction between the social character of production and private capitalist appropriation, between the expansion of production and diminishing effective demand, which lead to economic crisis, is becoming greater. To him, social contradictions are deepening and the struggle of the working class and the broad masses for their vital rights and interests is becoming more vigorous. Thus capitalism is steadily moving towards new economic and social upheavals.<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on the disintegration of the capitalist imperialist system Khrushchov stated that; people's china and independent Indian republic have joined their hands with great powers. They were witnessing of a political and economic upsurge of peoples of south-east Asia and the Arab east. The awakening of the peoples of Africa has begun. The national liberation movement has gained in strength in Brazil, Chile and other Latin-American countries. The outcome of the wars in Korea, Indo-China and Indonesia has demonstrated that the imperialists are unable, even with the help of armed intervention, to crush the people who were resolutely fighting for a life of freedom and independence. The complete abolition of the infamous system of colonialism has now been on the agenda as one of the most acute and pressing problem. The new period in the world history which Lenin predicted has

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<sup>5</sup> 'The Economic Situation in the Capitalist Countries and the Further Aggravation of the Contradictions of Capitalism', in *ibid.*, pp. 7-14.

arrived and the peoples of the East are playing an active part in deciding the destinies of the whole world, are becoming a new mighty factor in the international relations. In contrast to the prewar period most Asian countries now act in the world arena as sovereign state or states which are resolutely upholding the right to an independent foreign policy. International relations have spread chiefly by peoples of the white race and are beginning to acquire the character of genuinely worldwide relations.<sup>6</sup> During the 20<sup>th</sup> congress Soviet Union started a process which is generally referred as De-Stalinization. USSR stated it wanted to reduce the international tensions. So it wanted to initiate talks with western powers on the issues like the reduction of nuclear weapons. But the important factor which determined the future course of the international Communist movement was the rejection of 'Cult of the Individual' by the USSR.

One year after the 20<sup>th</sup> congress a meeting of world communist parties was held at Moscow in November 1957. It fully affirmed its support to the soviet programme which was adopted at the 20<sup>th</sup> congress. It stated, 'the main content of our epoch is the capitalism to socialism which was begun by the October socialist revolution in Russia'. To them, today more than a third of the population of the world-over 950 million people have taken the road of socialism and are building a new life. It declared that, the meeting considers that in the present situation in the strengthening of the unity and fraternal co-operation of the socialist countries, the 'communist and the workers' parties and the solidarities of the international working class, national liberation and national democratic movements acquire special significance. It stated the victory of socialism in the USSR and the progress in the socialist construction in the people democracies find deep sympathy among the working class and the working people of all countries. In these conditions the imperialist

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

bourgeoisie attaches increasing importance to the ideological moulding of masses; it misrepresents socialism and smears Marxism-Leninism, misleads and confuses the masses. It is a prime time task to intensify Marxist Leninist education of masses, combat bourgeoisie ideology, and expose the lies and slanderous fabrications of imperialist propaganda against socialism and the communist movement and widely propagated simple and convincing fashion the idea of socialism, peace and friendship among the nations. To them, the communist and workers' parties are face with great historic tasks. The carrying out of these tasks necessities closer unity not only of the communist and workers' parties, but the entire working class, necessitate cementing the alliance of the working class and peasantry, rallying the working people and progressive mankind, the freedom and peace-loving forces of the world.<sup>7</sup>

This new process was immediately followed by great wave of protest in countries like Hungary and Poland. This created a new discussion within the international communist movement. This new policy shift of the CPSU especially Khrushchov's criticism of Stalin had made a profound impact upon the future course of international communist movement. Many Communist parties especially of the Western Europe were shocked by these new revelations of Khrushchov. Many members of these parties had resigned from their respected Communist parties. Khrushchov's description of Stalin's terror persuaded many communists to take anti-Communist stand in their future political life.

Commenting on the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress Eric Hobsbawm stated, there 'two ten days that shook the world' in the history of the revolutionary movement of the last century; the days of October revolution, decribed in

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<sup>7</sup> 'The 1957 Moscow Declaration: Declaration of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries, Moscow, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1957, in *ibid*, pp. 308-315.

John reads book of that title, and the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress of the CPSU (14-25 February 1956). Both divided it suddenly and irrevocably in to a ‘before and after’. To him, the October revolution created the world communist movement, the 20<sup>th</sup> congress destroyed it. To Hobsbawm, the impassioned attack on his record and on the ‘cult of a personality’ by Khrushchov sent shock waves through the international communist movement. Within few months of the 20<sup>th</sup> congress the weakness were visible, in Poland and Hungary. And this aggravated the crisis within the nongovernmental communist parties. To him, ‘what described the mass of their members was that the brutally ruthless denunciation of Stalin’s misleads came, not from the bourgeois press, whose stories, it read at all, could be rejected a priori as slanders and lies, but also impossible to know what loyal believers should make of it. To him, after the Hungarian revolution and soviet armed intervention later that year, not even the most blindly loyal party members could reasonably deny it. When the leadership had re-established itself in after 1957 after finding of an outburst of open opposition without president, the British communist party costs a quarter its members, a third of the staff of its newspaper, the daily worker. More than the year of 1956 British communist party lived on the edge of the political equivalent of a collective breakdown. He stated, ‘the soviet intervention in the Hungarian revolution moved several of us to a second and even more flagrant breach of party discipline, technically punishable by expulsion, a collective letter of protest, signed usually silent loyalist Maurice Dobb, rejected by those daily workers and demonstratively published in the non-party press’.<sup>8</sup>As result of this many historians of the British Marxist circle like Christopher Hill and E.P Thomson had left the British communist party. Likewise different Communist led trade

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life*, Allen line, Penguin Press, 2002, pp. 201-207.

unions in Western Europe had also faced the repercussions of the 20<sup>th</sup> CPSU congress.

But in countries like India this did not create a great impact like that of the western European countries. This could be seen in the early response of the CPI regarding Khrushchov's attack of Stalin. While recognizing the negative features and grave defects that developed in Stalin's method of leadership, the central committee of the communist party of India considers that a one sided appraisal of his role during the last twenty years of his life, years of mighty development in the USSR and the world communist movement, cause bewilderment among the masses and can be utilized by enemies of communism to confuse them. It is evident that a system in which such violations and distortions were inherent could not have unleashed the creative energies of hundreds of millions on a scale never known before and brought about such unprecedented social transformation. In accordance with the soviet reversal of the De-Stalinization line, which became evident in late 1956, (New Age weekly) published a full page commemorative article on the occasion of Stalin's seventy seventh Birthdays. Written by Ajoy Gosh, the article acknowledged that "a number of serious mistakes were committed by Stalin" but conclude; nevertheless, notwithstanding these mistakes the name of Stalin will always be cherished by mankind as one of the greatest Marxist of all times, as a towering personality and a titan of thoughts and actions, as a man who dedicated his life to the service of the working people and to the cause of Socialism. His contribution to the cause of emancipation of mankind will continue to inspire millions of all over the world.<sup>9</sup>

In March 1956, a central committee criticized the 'Cult of individual' but qualified the criticism with a paragraph of praise for Stalin's contributions

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<sup>9</sup> Gane D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, Bombay, Perennial Press, 1960, p. 325.

to revolutionary progress. To central committee, it is known to all that after Lenin's death; Stalin led the party in the struggle for building for Socialism in the USSR against the left and right deviations. He developed and further enriched the theory of Marxism and Leninism. He played a leading role in the battle of Hitlerate aggressors. He rendered great service to the world communist movement and the development of communist parties. Stalin was a great friend of Colonial and Semi-Colonial people and his works immensely helped them in their struggle for national liberation. All these are the parts of heritage of the world communist movement all will always inspire the communists all over the world. In July 1956, the central committee published a second resolution on the 'Cult of Individual' which stated; it is evident that Stalin was mainly responsible for the distortion of soviet democracy and for the violation of inner party norms.

Responding to the twentieth party congress Jayaprakash Narayan asked certain question to the CPI, "could all the crimes of Stalin have been concealed from communists so long?, the revelations of Khrushchev indeed no revelation at all. It is impossible that the communists-at least their leadership-did not know the facts. Why then did they remain silent so long?, are the communists going to stop where the Khrushchov has led them?, are they not going further in search of the truth?, is the truth not of any service in communism?, can communism be build on a foundation of lie"?<sup>10</sup> Ajoy Gosh answered to these questions; As for Stalin's Crime he said; the truth is that we did not know them until they were brought to light by the CPSU leadership itself. Ajoy Gosh charged Narayan with a one side appraisal. "for you, the abolition of capitalism and landlordism and the ending of exploitation of man by man seem to mean nothing."<sup>11</sup> He said; no do you seem to attack any

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



importance to the fact that in the USSR and in other Socialist state, it is the mass of people, the workers, the peasants and the working intelligentsia that that exercise power at all levels, through their elected organs. He called upon Narayan to recognize without equivocation, that the establishment of the power of working masses in the one third of the world is the greatest event in recorded human history. He did make an attempt at self criticism, he said, CPI agrees that they were wrong in idealizing everything in the USSR. To Ajoy Gosh, CPI should paid more attention to the criticism of the USSR made by Socialists and the communists democrats. CPI agrees that among them and in other communist parties, the tendency developed of defending everything done by the USSR, of condemning everyone who criticized any aspects of the soviet policy. CPI deeply conscious the damage this has done to the cause of Communist-Socialist unity and even to the cause of Socialism. To him, they are determined to abandon this attitude.<sup>12</sup>

About this time CPI had accepted the formulations of the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress. Writing in 1956 EMS Namboothirippad stated; the last 12 years the world had witnessed the triumph of Communist parties in different parts of the world and the sharpening contradiction within the capitalist system on the other. The 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU was the manifestation of these developments. In 1956, he justified the soviet policy of rejecting the ‘cult of individual’; he stated it was the right move to resolve the organizational degeneration in the soviet Communist party. To him, this will allow the entire communist to avoided present and future mistakes.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 327-329.

<sup>13</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, ‘Soviet Uniyanum Communistukarum’ (Mal) in P. Govindapilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika*, Vol. XVII, 1956, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, P. 140.

Likewise this period also witnessed the intensification of a debate within the Kerala literary circle which was started in 1935. In India also twentieth congress and the Hungarian uprisings had made some impacts. Leaders like C. Achuthamenon were dissatisfied with the soviet conduct of the Hungarian uprisings. As a protest against this he offered his resignation from the CPI national council but had later withdrawn it. Similarly many intellectuals who were earlier sympathetic towards the communist party were turned in to Anti-Marxist after the twentieth congress. The important example is C.J Tomas. After 1956 he wrote plays like Vishavriksham (poisoned tree) which contain a strong anti-communist message. Another important example was M. Govindan. Like C.J Tomas Govindan became an anti-communist after 1956. His journal Sameeksha was gradually transformed into an instrument for anti-communist propaganda. Writer like M. Govindan wanted to give full power to the individual right and opposed any kind of planning in the literature. Communist leaders like Namboothirippad had used Khrushchov's rejection of the cult of individual to criticize M. Govindan. To EMS Namboothirippad, if a writer behaves as isolated being and continue to write according to his own wish there will not be any coordinated action or objective for the literature. On the other hand if the writer coordinate with others and fix an objective they can draft a programme for this. In this they can distribute certain duties to each and every member of this group; it can make a planning to literature. By criticizing M. Govindan Namboothirippad stated, like any other field the writer will subordinated his personal freedom to collective interest and consult others regarding the work he had written, this according to Namboothirippad the planning to literature. While accepting the role of individual he stated the individual was created out of a mutual interaction with material factors which has surrounded him. For example, Soviet Union, its economic system was the achievement of the entire soviet population but not any individual. The Soviet communist party was in front of

these achievements. The top of this Soviet party was central committee; Stalin was so powerful and influential in this committee. He had a lot of merits and demerits. Because of his adversarial activities he was demoted. It was not personally against him. Like him other members shall also be demoted if they do this kind of things. The struggle against the 'cult of individual' was there demotion with a statement that it was their social circumstances rather than their individual capacity that created them. He added, this is closely related with the debate in the literary circles regarding the individual freedom and Social obligation.<sup>14</sup>

But some leaders of the CPI were deeply impacted by the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPI. By recollecting these days in late 1974 K. Dhamadharan stated 'for two or three nights after the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress he could not sleep. A man they had been taught to worship, idol of our world movement had been attacked by his own former Comrades. Even after reading Khrushchov's secret report he remained a state of shell shock. He could not believe it for some time, but after re-reading and thinking he came to the conclusion that Khrushchov was correct and he began to defend Khrushchov against the supporters of Stalin.'<sup>15</sup>

Though it made a very little impact the 20<sup>th</sup> congress gave a new dimension to the inner party struggle which had existed in the Communist party of India. As stated by EMS Namboothirippad, the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress of the CPSU had strengthened the hands of those Indian communist leaders who advocated for making alliance with congress. This was reflected in the 4<sup>th</sup> party congress held in Palakkad. Till the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress nobody had

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<sup>14</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Vyakthi Prabhavavum Sahithyavum' (Mal), in *ibid.*, pp. 194-208.

<sup>15</sup> K. Damodaran, 'The Tragedy of Indian Communism', in Tariq Ali Ed., *The Stalinist Legacy*, England, Penguin Books, 1984.

thought there had existed difference of opinion within the Soviet Communist party. Likewise nobody believed that Soviet leaders will make mistakes. The Central committee meeting held just before the 4<sup>th</sup> congress had passed and send their resolution to Moscow by contradicting meetings from the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU.<sup>16</sup> Within a short period of time the policy shift of the USSR had initiated new debates within the international Communist movement. This impacted the CPI and led to its splits in 1964 and 1967 respectively.

### **The 20<sup>th</sup> Congress and the Sino Soviet Split**

The new line of the Soviet Union had initiated a new debate and the subsequent splitting of the international communist movement. As mentioned earlier, through Nikita Khrushchov USSR had initiated a policy of peaceful co-existence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition. Likewise USSR had made some initiatives to engage with countries like Yugoslavia from 1955 itself. This was opposed by communist parties like the Communist party of China. They termed this kind of steps as ‘Revisionistic’. China did not publicly oppose the Soviet programme in the initial days. Likewise, this period also witnessed the emergence of some difference of opinion within the Chinese communist party. The 8<sup>th</sup> congress of the Chinese communist party held in Beijing in October 1956. Many delegates viewed this congress as a venue for re-unification of the international communist movement as even the delegates from Yugoslavia headed by Cardly. Even though the difference of opinion in the CPC was growing, the delegates got an impression that the Chinese communist party was unitedly working under the collective leadership of Maozedong, Liu shai chi, Zhou Enlai and Den Xiaoping. The congress adopted the resolution mainly supported by Liu shai chi and Zhou

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<sup>16</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Communist Party Keralatthil* (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publications, 2009, pp. 479-482.

Enlai. It adopted the soviet programme for constructing socialism by adopting certain changes in accordance with Chinese condition.<sup>17</sup> About 1958, it adopted a new programme called 'the Great leap forward' they claimed this programme is a step to accelerate the industrial and agrarian growth which no country had adopted so far. This had intensified the dispute between CPSU, CPC. It also intensified within the CPC. It was Liu shai chi who opposed this policy.<sup>18</sup>

It was in this context Chinese communist party's mouthpiece Renmin Ribao published an editorial against Revisionism. It stated, since 1844, Marxism has been carrying on a persistent struggle against reactionary bourgeois and petite bourgeois ideas of every description and against opportunist ideas of every variety within the ranks of international workers movement. Marxism has scored one victory after another in the struggle, because revolutionary practice has testified to its correctness. It was in the cause of the struggle in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution that Lenin developed Marxism and carries it to a new stage, the stage of Leninism. Now the internationalism movement has placed before Marxism-Leninism a new scared task: to wage an irreconcilable struggle against modern revisionism or new Bernsteinism. This was a struggle between two fundamentally different lines; Marxism-Leninism versus anti-Marxism-Leninism, a great struggle involving the success of failure of the cause of the working class of the world and the cause of Socialism. The draft programme openly betrays the basic principle of Marxism-Leninism, sets itself against the declaration of the meeting of representatives of the communists and workers parties of socialist countries held in Moscow last November, and at the same time turns against the 'peace manifesto' adopted by the meetings of the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 496-499.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 608.

representatives of 64 communist and workers' parties, endorsed by the representatives of the league of communists of Yugoslavia. To Chinese Communist party, without proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship there can be no socialism. Speaking like the reactionaries of all countries and the Chinese bourgeois rightists, the leading group of the league of communists of Yugoslavia viciously slanders proletarian dictatorship, alleging that it 'leads to buracratism, the ideology of etatism, separation of the leading political forces from the working masses, stagnation, the deformation of socialist development, and the sharpening of internal differences and contradictions. They maliciously slander the socialist camp, alleging that it also has a policy of 'position of strength and struggle for hegemony'. They describe the two fundamentally different world politico-economic systems, the socialist camp and the imperialist camp, as 'division of the world into two antagonistic military-political blocs'. They represent themselves as standing outside the 'two blocs' of socialism and imperialism that is, standing in a so-called position beyond the blocs. To CPC, 'Revisionism', or 'rightist opportunism', is a bourgeois trend of thought which is even more dangerous than doctrinarism. The 'revisionists' or 'right opportunists' pay lip service to Marxism and also attack doctrinarism. But the real target of their attack was actually the most fundamental elements of Marxism. The Revisionists try to exorcise the revolutionary spirit of Marxism, to undermine the faith in socialism among the working class and the working people in general. They deny the historical necessity for a proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, deny the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist party, rejected the principles of proletarian internationalism, and call for the rejection of Leninist principals of party organization and above all, of

democratic centralism, and for transforming the Communist party from a militant revolutionary organization in to some kind of debating society.<sup>19</sup>

This was responded by Nikita Khrushchov, while addressing the 21<sup>st</sup> Congress of the CPSU in January 30, 1959. To him, what new things on the international arena will be introduced by the fulfillment of the economic plans of the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries of Europe and Asia? As a result of this real possibilities will be created for the doing away with war as a means of solving international issues. When the USSR became the world's foremost industrial power, while all the socialist countries taken together will produce more than half the worlds' industrial output, the international situation will change radically. The success of the countries of the socialist camp will undoubtedly exert a tremendous influence on the consolidation of the peace loving people throughout the world. The idea of the inadmissibility of war will take still deeper root in the consciousness of nations. The new correlation of power will be so obvious that even the most obdurate imperialists will clearly realize the helplessness of any attempt to launch a war against the socialist camp. Relying on the might of the camp of socialism, the peace loving people will be able to force the bellicose imperialist circles to renounce plans for another world war.<sup>20</sup>

By reiterating his stand in Peking Khrushchov stated in September 30 1959, Socialism brings to the people peace-that greatest blessing. The greater the strength of the camp of socialism grows, the greater will be its possibility for successfully defending the cause of the peace on this earth. The force of

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<sup>19</sup> 'Modern Revisionism must be Repudiated', *RenminRibao*, Editorial May 05, 1958, in cited in *The Documents of The Great Debate*, Vol.I, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-365.

<sup>20</sup> Khrushchev's Twenty First Congress Speech, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1959, in *The Documents of The Great Debate*, Vol.II, New Delhi, Ananthashriya Prakashan, 2005, pp. 24-25.

socialism are already so great that real possibilities are being created for excluding war as a means of solving international disputes. To him, about the time the leaders of some capitalist countries have begun to show a certain tendency towards a realist understanding the situation that has emerged in the world. To him, when he spoke with President Eisenhower and he just return from the United States of America he got the impression that the president of the USA and a not a few people support him, understands the need to relax international tensions. To him, perhaps not every bourgeois leader can pronounce the words 'peaceful co-existence' but they cannot deny that the two systems existed in the world the socialist and the communist.<sup>21</sup>

To him, there is only one way of preserving, that is the road of 'peaceful co-existence' of states with different social systems. The question stands thus; either peaceful co-existence or war with catastrophic consequences. To him, with the present relation of forces between socialism and capitalism being in favor of socialism, he who would continue the 'cold war' is moving towards his own destruction. The cold war warriors are pushing the world towards a new world war in the fires of which those who light it will be the first to get burned. To Khrushchov, socialist countries have achieved great success in developing their economies and as a consequence have created mighty political forces on the basis of which they can successfully continue their advance. They have the means to defend themselves from the attacks of imperialist aggressors if these should attempt by interference in socialist countries affairs to force them to leave the socialist path and return to capitalism; that old time has gone never return.<sup>22</sup>

Though this article was directly referring to Yugoslav communist party

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<sup>21</sup> 'Khrushchev's Speech in Peking', on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1959, in *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.



it was a beginning of a clear criticism of the new soviet strategy. It continued its attack on revisionism it stated; Lenin, following on Marx and Engels, was a ‘great revolutionary’ teacher of the proletariat, the working people and the oppressed nations of the whole world. Under the historical conditions of the epoch of imperialism and in the flames of proletarian socialist revolution, Lenin resolutely defended and developed the revolutionary teachings of Marx and Engels. To CPC, Leninism was the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. In the eyes of working people of the world, the name of Leninism was the symbol of the triumph of socialism and communism. To CPC, the communist movement has from the very outset been an international movement. The international solidarity of the proletariat was the fundamental guarantee for the victory of the people’s revolutionary causes in all countries of the world, of the cause of the national liberation of the oppressed nations, and of the people’s struggle for the world peace. In the interest of socialist countries, of the proletariat and working people of all countries, of the liberation of the oppressed nations, and of the defense of the world peace, we must all times strengthen the international solidarity of the proletariat. To CPC, Marxist –Leninist have always guarded as the apple of their eye the unity of the Socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union, the unity of the international communist ranks, the unity of the world proletariat, and the unity of the people of the whole world. The ‘imperialist’ and ‘modern revisionists’ regard this great international unity as the greatest obstacle to their attempt to disintegrate the revolutionary movement of various countries. Scheming day and night in the vain hope of undermining this unity, they are carrying on the most despicably dirty work of sowing discord and spreading lies and slanders. But these base intrigues are doomed to complete bankruptcy.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Unite Under Revolutionary Banner, Report Delivered at The Meeting Held by

In early 1960s some attempts were made to resolve the dispute within the international communist movement. The first one was a conference of few communist parties at Bukharest in early 1960 and the second one was a conference of 81 communist parties November 1960. Though this kind of attempts were happened the dispute was continue. This argument was expanded by CPC in another article entitled Long Live Leninism. The Chinese Communist party, integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, has led the people of the entire country in winning great victories in the people's revolution, marching along the broad common road of socialist revolution and socialist construction charted by Lenin, carrying the socialist revolution to full competition and it has already begun to win great victories on various fronts of socialist construction. The central committee of the Chinese communist party creatively set down for the Chinese people, in accordance with Lenin's principles and in the light of the condition of China, the correct principles of the general line for the building of socialism, the big leap forward and the people's communes, which have inspired the initiative the revolutionary spirit of the masses throughout the country and are thus day after day bringing about new changes in the face of the country. To CPC, under our common banner of Leninism, the socialist countries in the Eastern Europe and the other socialist countries in Asia have also attend progress by leap and bounds in socialist construction. To them, Leninism is an ever victorious banner for the working people throughout the world, holding firm this banner means taking hold of truth and opening up for themselves a road to continuous victory. CPC stated, 'Lenin will always lives in our hearts, and when modern revisionists endeavor to smear Leninism, the great banner of the international proletariat,

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The Central Committee of The Chinese Communist Party in Peking on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1960, To Commemorate The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Birth Day of Lenin', in *ibid.*, pp. 122-140.

our task was to defend Leninism. By quoting Lenin, CPC stated, at the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the working class movement concur in this ‘doctoring’ of Marxism. They omit, obliterate and distort the revolutionary side of this teaching, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. The modern revisionist do not stop destroying the teachings of Marx, they go further to distort the teaching of Lenin, by interpreting the Moscow declaration the CPC held that the main danger at the present is revisionism or on the words right wing opportunism. By continuing its criticism on Soviet communist party CPC maintained that under the present circumstances when imperialists are compelled to accept peaceful co-existence and when there is a kind of ‘internal peace’ in many capitalist countries revisionist find it easy to spread. To CPC, Leninism is the complete and integrated revolutionary teaching of the proletariat; it is a complete and integrated revolutionary outlook which, following Marx and Engels continues to express the thinking of proletariat. This complete and integrated teaching and revolutionary outlook must not be distorted or covered up. It added, we hold the view that attempts of the modern revisionists to distort and cover up Leninism are nothing but a manifestation of the last ditch struggle of the imperialists facing their doom.<sup>24</sup>

By reacting to CPC Otto Kuusinen stated, the great teaching of Lenin-Leninism is the Marxism of our epoch. As a loyal Marxist, Lenin further developed the teachings of Marx in conformity with changing historical conditions. Allegiance to the teaching of Lenin demands of CPSU that it too taking the present day conditions, should its fundamental provisions in a creative way. Such allegiance to Leninism is demand of the CPSU by its responsibility to the working class, to the entire soviet people, and also to the

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<sup>24</sup> Hogqi, ‘Long Live Leninism, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1960’, in *ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

international communist movement. To Kuusinen, the CPSU proves its all allegiance to Marxism-Leninism by its deeds and by its policy. Lenin wrote that politics is a science and art. Emphasizing the unbreakable theory and practice of Marxism, he pointed out; “Marxism lies in the ability to determine what policy should be persuaded in the given conditions”.<sup>25</sup> To him, CPSU had always backed the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples and their right of self-determination. When, after the Second World War Lenin’s forecasts consuming the liberation of the peoples of the east came true on a gigantic scale and when a dozens of new independent states founded on the wreckage of colonial empires, the soviet state was confronted with new and important task. As for the USSR’s relations with countries of socialist camp—the Chinese people republic, the Korean democratic people’s republic, and the democratic republic of Vietnam and the Mongolian People’s Republic, Those relations have been determined from very out set by the principles of socialist internationalism. Close alliance and fraternal friendship, mutual assistance and co-operation in building socialism and communism, that is the foundation of these relations.<sup>26</sup>

To him, to the road to consolidation of the independence of the countries is the road of developing their national economy, promoting the advance of their culture and improving the living standard of the people. Industrialization is of the tremendous importance for such countries. It is precisely here that the young states need support most of all. Understanding this Soviet Union is accordingly developing co-operation with them. The supplying of up to date industrial equipments assistance in building large enterprises, in protecting for and exploiting national resources, in training

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<sup>25</sup> Otto Kuusinen, ‘Speech at Lenin’s Anniversary Meeting, April-22-1960’, in *ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

national cadres of specialists, these are the principle aspects of the soviet assistance. To Kuusinen, Lenin's behest to CPSU and all communists was; fight tirelessly for the peace and work to end wars. He said the ending of wars, peace between the nations, the stopping of plunder and violence- it is precisely this that is CPSU's ideal.

While defending the policy of 'peaceful co-existence' Kuusinen stated; Lenin's entire policies during the first years of soviet power, his line towards establishing business like cooperation with capitalist states, the line which was clearly expressed in Lenin's directives to the Soviet delegates to the first international conference, for instance in Genoa in 1922. In that period Lenin developed his idea of the peaceful economic competitions of the two systems. To use Lenin's expression, this is the 'rivalry of two methods, two formations, two kinds of economy-communist and capitalists. To him, the task of USSR is to make full use of the new factors operating for peace in order to save humanity from the catastrophe of another war. A dogmatic position is a backward position. The correctness of our foreign policy of creative Leninism, making the use of all the factors for the peace, is proved best of all by the success of this policy.<sup>27</sup>

By responding to the Kuusinen defense of 'peaceful co-existence' Liu Niug pointed out, war can never be prevented and the world peace preserved only by uniting all peace loving forces of the world to wage resolute struggle against U.S imperialism and its lackeys. The entire history of the workers' movements and of the struggles' of the people's throughout the world in the post war period proves that to safeguard world peace the socialist countries mainly on the resolute struggles of the working class and the masses of the people of all countries. The force of the masses of the people is the decisive

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143-145.

factor in defending the peace. The victory of the struggle for peace can be assured only if the forces of the peoples in the socialist countries, the forces of the liberation movement of the people of the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the revolutionary force of the people in the capitalist countries are continuously augmented. It can be assured only by relying on the forces of this overwhelming majority of the humanity, and by mobilizing and encouraging them to carry out struggles against U.S imperialism and its lackeys. To him, the present situation is very favorable to the people of the world in their struggle against imperialism and its lackeys. U.S imperialism, the most ferocious enemy of the people and landed itself in an unprecedented isolation. To him, the great era is characterized by the fact that the east wind prevails over the west wind. Socialist countries have full confidence in the future of the cause of striving for the peace and human progress. The CPC firmly believes that so long as the forces of the socialist countries, the forces of the oppressed nations striving for the national liberation and democracy, the forces of the revolutionary proletariat in the capitalist countries and the peace loving forces of all over the world continue to grow, and so long as these forces are combined in sustained struggle against the imperialist forces of war headed by the united states, the working class and the people of the world will certainly be able to effectively prevent imperialist war and safeguarded world peace.<sup>28</sup>

About this time the dispute between CPSU and CPC was more and more clear. As said earlier there maid some attempts to resolve this dispute. The important one was the conference of the fraternal parties which held at Bukharest in 1960. But this meeting was converted in to a venue were the

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<sup>28</sup> Liu Ning, 'Working Class Must Wage Firm Struggle Against Revisionism, Workers' Movement Should Stand in The Anti-Imperialist Front, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1960', in *ibid.*, pp. 145-150.

differences between CPC and CPSU were articulated. By addressing the conference Krushchov stated, communists are aware that in the present conditions, when there are two world systems, it is imperative to build mutual relations between them in such a way as will preclude the possibility of war breaking between states. To him, only mad man and maniacs can now call for another World War. As for people of sound mind- and they are in the majority even among the most deadly enemies of communism-they cannot be aware of the fatal consequences of another war. By referring to the example of Suez crisis he stated, it was the soviet policy of 'peaceful coexistence' which prevented the escalation of Suez crisis.<sup>29</sup> But the Chinese communist party was critical of this line. The central committee of the communist party of China maintains that at this meeting Krushchov of the delegation of the central committee of the communist party of the Soviet Union has completely violated the long standing principle in the international communist movement that the question of common concern should be settled by consultation among fraternal parties, and has completely broken the agreement made prior to the meeting to confine it to an exchange of view and not to make decision; this he has done by his surprise attack of putting forward a draft communiqué of the meeting without having consulted the fraternal parties on its contents beforehand and without permitting full and normal discussion in the meeting. To the CPC, this is an abuse of the prestige enjoyed by the CPSU in the international communist movement. The prestige which has been built up over the long years since Lenin's time, and it is, moreover, an extremely crude act of imposing one's own will on other people. This attitude has nothing is common with Lenin's style of work and this way of doing things creates an extremely bad precedent in the international communist movement.

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<sup>29</sup> 'Krushchev's Bucharest Speech in Rumanian Communist Party Congress at Bucharest', 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1960, in *ibid.*, pp. 172-181.

The central committee of the CPC considers that this attitude and this way of doing things on the part of Krushchev will have extra ordinarily grave consequences for the international communist movement. To them, the communist party of China has always been faithful to Marxism-Leninism and always steadfastly adhered to the theoretical position of Marxism-Leninism. In the past two years and more, CPC has been completely faithful to the Moscow declaration of 1957, and has firmly upheld all the Marxist-Leninist principles. To the CPC, there are differences between them and Khrushchov on a series of fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism. These differences have a vital bearing on the interest of the socialist camp, on the interest of the proletariat and the working people of the whole world, on the question of whether socialism will continue to score victories in the capitalist World, which comprises two third of the World's population and three fourth of its land space. To them, all the Marxists-Leninists should adopt a serious attitude towards these differences, so as to achieve unanimous conclusions. However, the attitude Krushchov has adopted is patriarchal, arbitrary and tyrannical. He has in fact treated the relationship between the communist party of the Soviet Union and the CPC not as one between brothers, but as one between patriarchal father and son. At this meeting he has exerted pressure in an attempt to make CPC submit to his non Marxist-Leninist views. To them, CPC hereby solemnly declare that they believe in and obey the truth of Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Leninism alone, and will never submit to erroneous and in the contravention of the Moscow declaration. To them, His speech will be welcomed by the imperialist and the Tito clique and has indeed already been welcome by them. To them, we the communist party of China has always striven to safeguard the unity of all communist parties of all socialist countries. For the sake of genuine unity of the international communist ranks and for the sake of common struggle against imperialism and reaction, CPC hold that it is necessary to unfold normal discussions on



the differences and the serious questions of principle should not be settled in a hurry by abnormal methods or simply by vote. To CPC, they glad to see the draft communiqué of the meeting put forward here affirms the correctness of the Moscow declaration. But the presentation of Marxist-Leninist thesis of the Moscow declaration in this draft is inaccurate and one sided. And it is wrong that this draft avoids taking a clear stand on the major problems in the correct international situation and makes no mention at all of modern revisionism, the main danger in the international working class movement.<sup>30</sup>

At the end of this discussion this conference adopted a declaration which reaffirmed its commitments to the 1957 Moscow declaration. The representatives of the communist and workers parties of the socialist countries attending the third congress of the Romanian workers party held a meeting in Bucharest and issued a communiqué on the meeting. The communiqué says, “the participants in the conference unanimously noted that all international events and the development of the countries of the world socialist system fully reaffirmed the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist theses of the declaration of the manifesto of peace which are a charter of the present day communists and workers’ movement, a programme of its struggle, for peace democracy and socialism. To them, they maintained that the current situation, reaffirmation by the communist workers’ parties of socialist countries of the correctness of the Moscow declaration of 1957 is necessary and of major significance. The Moscow declarations of 1957 were drawn up in accordance with the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and the new characteristics of our epoch. In the declarations, the analysis of the two world systems of socialism and capitalism, of the conditions of modern imperialism,

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Statement of The Delegation of The Communist Party of China at The Bucharest Meeting of Fraternal Parties, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1960, in *Great Debate: The Polemic on The General Line of The International Communist Movement*, Kollam, Mass Line Publications, 1994, pp. 83-86.

of the question of war and peace, of the question of how to win world peace, of the question of the basis of foreign policy of the socialist countries being peaceful co-existence between countries of two different social system, of the common laws of socialist revolution and socialist construction, of the question of different forms through which the various capitalist countries are to accomplish socialist revolution, whether by peaceful transition or by non peaceful transition, of the question of national liberation movement in colonies and semi-colonies, of the question of the mutual relationship and unity and cooperation among the socialist countries and among the communists and workers parties of all countries in the world- all these analysis not only fully confirm to the current situation but are also a guide for future struggle of the people of all countries in the world.<sup>31</sup> Likewise another conference was also held in Moscow in 1960. But this conference was also failed to resolve the dispute between CPC and CPSU over certain question in the international communist movement.

The continuance of this dispute between CPC and CPSU was evident in an editorial published by the people's daily of CPC in November 21, 1960. The development of the situation in the past three years demonstrates that the forces of socialism have further surpassed the forces of imperialism. The forces of national liberation have further surpassed the forces of colonialism, the forces of people have further surpassed the forces of reaction and the forces of peace have surpassed the forces of War. To them, this shows that the famous dictum made by Mao Zedong three years ago, that 'the east wind has prevailed over the West wind', is perfectly correct. In a word, the entire situation is highly favorable to the peoples of the world and unfavorable to

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<sup>31</sup> 'Holding High the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Banner of The Moscow Declarations', *Renmim Ribao*, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1960, in *Great Debate*, Vol.II, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-200.

imperialism and all reactionaries. Any view that over-estimates the strength of imperialism and underestimates the strength of people is contrary to the Moscow declaration and is completely incorrect. To the peace can be effectively safeguarded only by incessantly strengthening socialist camp, the national liberation movement, the people's struggles in the capitalist countries, the forces of all peace loving people and the unity of all these forces and by a joint struggle. The broader and stronger this united front of the peace forces against imperialism unleashing wars and more extensive and intensive its struggles the firmer will be guarantee for world peace. To the people's daily, the Moscow declaration points to the necessity of resolutely overcoming revision and dogmatism in the ranks of the communist and workers parties. It also clearly points out "the main danger at present is revisionism." The characteristic of revisionism is to emasculate the revolutionary spirit of the theory of Marxism-Leninism. Imperialism and the reactionaries of the various countries, in order to save themselves from their fate of decline, are always exerting ceaselessly an influence of the working class. The revisionists of different hues always make use of a certain new situation to distort and adulterate the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory so as to lure the working class away from the correct path of revolutionary class struggle, to meet the needs of imperialism and the reactionaries of various countries.<sup>32</sup>

In the next two years the relationship between the two parties became more and more deteriorated. About 1963 this led to the public condemnation of each party against another. In the mid of 1963 the two communist parties published two open letters against each other. In this Soviet Union defended the policy of Peaceful co-existence, peaceful competition and the peaceful

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<sup>32</sup> 'Give Full Pay to The Revolutionary Spirit of The 1957 Moscow Declarations', *People's Daily*, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1960, *ibid.*, pp. 363-365.

transition. It accused China of trying to break the unity of international communist movement. This was firmly refuted by Chinese Communist party. In this letter CPC stated that, the general line of the international communist movement must take as its guiding principle the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory concerning the historical mission of the proletariat and must not depart from it. The Moscow meeting of the 1957 and 1960 adopted the declaration and the statement respectively after a full exchange of views and in accordance with the principle of reaching unanimity through consultation. The important issue here is whether or not accepting the revolutionary principles of the declaration and the statement. In the last analysis, it is the question of whether or not accept the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, whether not to recognize the universal significant of the road of October revolution, whether or not accept the fact that the people still living under the imperialist capitalist system, who comprise two third of the world's population, need to make revolution, and whether or not accept the fact that the people already on the socialist road, who comprise one third of world population, need to carry their revolution to the end. To the CPC the basic aspect of their plan include; workers of all countries, unite, workers of the world, unite with oppressed people and oppressed nations; oppose imperialism and reaction in all countries; strive for world peace, national liberation, people's democracy and socialism; consolidate and expand the socialist camp; bring the proletariat world revolution step by step to the complete victory; and without exploitation of man by man. This in CPC's view is the general line of the international communist movement at the present stage. It added, the general line of the international communist movement should reflect the general law of development of world history.

The revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and the people in various countries go through different stages and they all have their own characteristics, but they will not transcend the general law of development of

world history. The general line should point out the basic direction for the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and people of all countries. While working out its specific line and policies, it is most important for each Communist or Workers' party to adhere to the principle of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of revolution and construction in its own country. If the general line of the international communist movement is one-sidedly reduces to 'peaceful co-existence', 'peaceful competition', and 'peaceful transition', this is to violate the revolutionary principles of the 1957 declaration and the 1960 statement, to discard the historical mission of proletarian world revolution, and to depart from the revolutionary teaching of Marxism-Leninism. To CPC, the fundamental contradiction in the world includes the contradiction between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp; the contradiction between the oppressed nation and imperialism; and the contradiction among imperialist countries and among monopoly capitalist groups. The contradiction between socialist camp and the imperialist camp is a contradiction between two fundamentally different social systems, Socialism and Capitalism. It is inevitable that these contradictions will give rise to popular revolutions, which alone can resolve them.

CPC criticized the view point of CPSU regarding their attitude towards the capitalist world; it stated; the view which maintain with regard to the capitalist world that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be resolved without a proletarian revolution in each country and that the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism can be resolved without revolution by the oppressed nations; they continued their criticism on CPSU CPC stated; the view which denies that the development of the inherent contradictions in the contemporary capitalist world inevitably heads to a new situation in which the imperialist countries are locked in an intense struggle and asserts that the contradictions among the imperialist

countries can be reconciled, or even eliminated by international agreements among the big monopolies and, the view which maintains that the contradiction between the two world systems of socialism and capitalism will automatically disappear in the cause of economic of 'economic competition', that the other fundamental world contradictions will automatically do so with the disappearance of the contradiction between the two systems, and that a world without wars, a new world of 'all round co-operation' will appear. It is obvious that these erroneous view inevitably lead to erroneous harmful policies and hence to setbacks and losses of one kind or another to the cause of the people and of socialism. The balance of forces between imperialism and socialism has undergone a fundamental change since World War Two. The main indication of this change is that the world has not just one socialist country but a number of socialist countries forming the mighty socialist road now number not two hundred million but a thousand million, or a third of the world's population.

The socialist camp is the outcome of the struggle of the international proletariat and working people. It belongs to the international proletariat and working people as well as to the people of the socialist countries. The main common demand of the people of the countries in the socialist camp and the international proletariat and working people are that the communist and workers parties in the socialist camp should; adhere to the Marxist Leninist line and pursue correct Marxist-Leninist domestic and foreign policies; consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers peasant alliance led by the proletariat and carry the socialist revolution forward to the end on the economic political and ideological fronts; promote the initiative and creativeness of the broad masses, carryout socialist construction in a planned way, develop production, improve the people's livelihood and strengthen national defense; strengthen the unity of socialist camps on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and support other socialist countries on the basis of

proletarian internationalism; oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war, and defend world peace; oppose the anti communist, anti-popular and counter revolutionary policies of the reactionaries of all countries; and help the reactionary struggles of the oppressed classes and nations of the world. It is the duty of Marxist-Leninist to distinguish between truth and falsehood with respect to the differences that have arisen in the international communist movement. In the common interest of the unity for struggle against the enemy, we have always advocated solving problems through inner party consultations and opposed bringing differences into the open before the enemy.<sup>33</sup>

By continuing its criticism on CPSU the CPC stated; on the contrary to their expectation, the CPSU perpetrated increasingly serious violations of the revolutionary principles of the declaration and the principle guiding relations among fraternal parties and colonies, and departed further and further from the path of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. The revisionism of the leadership of the CPSU grew. This development aggravated the differences in the international communist movement and carried them to a new stage. In complete disregard of the common conclusion of the 1957 declaration that U.S. imperialism is the enemy of all the people of the world, the leadership of the CPSU passionately sought collaboration with U.S. imperialism and the settlement of the world problems by the head of the Soviet Union and the United States. Particularly around the time of the Camp David talks in September 1959, Khrushchov lauded Eisenhower to the skies, hailing him as a man who “enjoys the absolute confidence of his people” and “who also worries about ensuing peace as just we do.” Moreover, comrades of

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<sup>33</sup> The Letter of The Central Committee of The Communist Party of China in Reply to The Letter of The Central Committee of The Communist Party of The Soviet Union of 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1963, cited in *The Great Debate, op. cit.*, pp. 1-39.

the CPSU energetically advertised the so-called “spirit of Camp David”, whose existence Eisenhower himself denied, alleging that it marked “a new era in international relations” and “a turning point in history”. Completely disregarding the revolutionary line of the 1957 declaration, in statements by Krushchov and in the soviet press leaders of CPSU vigorously advocated their ‘revisionist line’ of “peaceful coexistence”, “peaceful competition” and “peaceful transition”, praised the “wisdom and good will” of the imperialists, preached that “a world without weapons, without armed forces and without wars” could be brought into being while the greater part of the globe was still ruled and controlled by imperialism, that universal and complete disarmament could “open up literally a new epoch in the economic development of Asia, Africa and Latin America”.<sup>34</sup>

The 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU marked an important shift in the history of international communist movement. It had initiated new disputes and debates within in the international communist movement. In this congress CPSU through Nikita S Khrushchov initiated certain decisive changes in the policies of CPSU. The first one was the policy of De-Stalinization by rejecting the “cult of the individual”. Another one was the policy shift in the foreign policy in the form of “peaceful co-existence”, Peaceful competition”, and “peaceful transition” to socialism. But this policy shifts was subjected to severe criticism by different communist parties especially from the communist party of China. They alleged that Soviet Communist party is deviating from the basic principle of Marxism-Leninism and is going towards revisionism. To them, the policy of ‘peaceful coexistence’ and ‘peaceful transition’ violates the fundamental principle of the unity of communist

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<sup>34</sup> ‘The Origin and Development of The Differences Between The Leadership of The CPSU and Ourselves’, Comment on The Open Letter of The Central Committee of The CPSU, *Renmin Ribao*, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1963, cited in *ibid*, p. 57.



movements. The CPC was broadly in agreement with the 1957 Moscow declarations. But their problem was mainly on the strategy of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism. The differences became open after the 1960 conference where China, Albania and some other communist parties openly protested against the position of the USSR. This led to a serious split in the international communist movement in the late 50s and early 60s. These developments had significant bearing upon the disputes within the CPI and ultimately led to its splits in 1964 and later in 1967.

### **The Indo-China Border Dispute and the Split of the Communist Party of India**

The inner party disputes which were started in the Communist Party of India from the early 1950s had intensified and which eventually led to the split of the CPI in 1964 and later in 1967. This was mainly due to the interplay between national and international developments. In April 1958 the 5<sup>th</sup> congress of the Communist Party of India was held at Amritsar. About this period the inner party dispute within the CPI had substantially intensified. This congress has officially supported the new strategy of the Soviet Communist Party which was started in the 20<sup>th</sup> congress. It declared, the growth of the world peace movement is evident in the increased strength of the existing movements and the fact that new organizations and movements have arisen challenging the policies of war and colonial enslavement. Several governments, particularly in Asia, Africa, have thrown themselves more and more resolutely on the side of peace and independence. The forces of peace, the people's movement and the peace-loving states, particularly in the Soviet Union, combined to support the Egyptian people in repulsing the imperialist aggression against Egypt. Within one year, the same forces of peace had grown still more powerful and were able to prevent a similar conspiracy to commit aggression against Syria even before the aggression was started. The emergence of the Arab Republic stands as a

milestone in the advance of Arab-Nationalism. The Eisenhower doctrine has met with fiasco. Asian African solidarity has become a factor of vital significance in the world affairs. The Cairo conference was a land mark in the struggle for peace and national independence. People's movement for Asia-African solidarity has developed embracing millions in both the continents and enjoying the support of governments. The liberation struggles of the enslaved peoples have grown rapidly in intensity and volume.<sup>35</sup>

The important feature of the Amritsar conference was the amendment which made the constitution of the communist party of India. The preamble of the constitution which adopted in the Amritsar conference stated, it is their objective to establish a ruling system led by the working class which protects the interest of all working sections through step by step. The important amendment was that the cell was replaced by branch as the lower unit, in the cell there were very little members, but in the branch the members were larger. In the centre; there created 3 sector; the National council, secretariat, the central executive instead of politbureau and central committee.<sup>36</sup>

To the congress; it is with the combat of individualism and strengthening of discipline that the main work of remolding of the party has to be stated and discipline is to be strengthening. The congress self critically stated; that taking the party as a whole leadership has not grown in maturity and ability as fast as growth of the movement. This creates big difficulties for party; proper methods of functioning of committees can be to overcome these difficulties to a limited extent. The leaders of the party at all levels, especially in central and state leadership have to increase their individual efficiency through self study, specialization and party organization of their own work.

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<sup>35</sup> *Resolution of The Communist Party of India at The Amritsar Party Congress, April 1958, New Delhi, New age press, pp.1-2.*

<sup>36</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit., Communist party Kerala...*, pp. 587-588.

To the Amritsar congress, it is necessary to stress that the weakness and shortcomings from which the party suffer cannot be procedural steps alone. These shortcomings and weakness are the product of continuous neglect of the fundamental principle of party organization, with a view to removing that this congress of the party calls upon all units of the party, especially the national council, the central executive committee and the central secretariat. To conduct a campaign of improvement of party work through a process of study, criticism and self-criticism, this campaign should be directed primarily towards the overcoming of individualism, restoration of discipline, bridging the gulf between words and deeds and strengthening the comradely relations, to setup appropriate machinery for preparation of party programme, to conduct education throughout the party on the basis of principles of Marxism-Leninism. The Amritsar congress stated; it hails and endorses the peace manifesto of sixty four communist and worker's parties as well as the declaration of the communist and worker's parties of the socialist countries. The manifesto and declaration permeated with the independence in the victories the international working class and the progressive mankind has won in the struggle for peace and socialism mark the historic advance in unity of the forces of people and socialism throughout the world. The peace manifesto is a clear call for further develop the struggle for world peace on the basis of broadest unity all right thinking men and women of all people who want kind to be freed from war and threats of war. The congress declared that; the congress of the CPI pledges that it's strive its utmost in mobilizing their people for the cause world peace and in thus translating the noble objectives of manifesto into a living reality. The declaration of the twelve parties is a document profound significant and embodies the experience of the entire international working class movement. Correctly analyzing peasant's day world situation and representing the universal unity of Marxism and Leninism, the declaration further carries for the unity of the socialist countries

as well as of their communist and workers parties. It makes a historic contribution further strengthened of communist and workers party and of their fraternal solidarity. To the congress, but rightly characterizing present epoch as one of transition from capitalism to socialism the twelve parties declaration bare the decline of imperialism and points to the goal of socialism and communism.<sup>37</sup>

Commenting on the first communist ministry in Kerala, the Amritsar congress stated; Kerala evokes hatred and fear among forces of reaction, but it has come to sympathize the hopes and aspirations of millions of our people. To the congress; the Kerala experience has shown that the verdict of the ballot box in favor of people forces in not necessarily respected by the vested interests. It has to be defeated by mass actions. This imposes heavy responsibilities on our party in Kerala-responsibly that have to be carried out in a very difficult situation and within the frame work of present constitution. By seeking to implement the plan in a popular way, by unleashing the creative labor of the people to increase the production of food and industrial goods, by giving relief to the people to maximum possible extent, by bringing the administration close to the people, by combating corruption, nepotism and bureaucrats high handedness it has to demonstrate over again by the correctness of our policies and prove that a government to carry on the task of national reconstruction.<sup>38</sup>

About 1959 the border dispute between India and china had worsened and it made a very deeper impact in the inner party struggle of the CPI. The dispute between the two countries had began in October 1954 when Nehru told Chou En-Lai that the Chinese map were not correct in showing the

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<sup>37</sup> 'Resolution of The Communist Party of India, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

border line between India and China. The then Chinese prime minister had replied that those maps were old, having been made by the government of Chiang Kai shek. He also said that the McMahon line needs to be recognised as the correct boundary between the two countries. During 1958 and early 1959, the Chinese started constructing western Tibet with Sikiang. India protested against these activities, but the Chinese leadership did not respond positively. In April 1959, there occurred a revolt in Tibet against the authority of China but it was crushed. Dalau Lama fled to India and, along with thousands of his followers, was accorded asylum in India.<sup>39</sup> The border conflict from the end of August onwards brought into the open the split in the international communist movement and the place of the CPI in it. On 9 September, while Ajoy Ghosh was in Moscow, the Chinese government was notified by the Soviet embassy that TASS would issue a statement the next day on the border question. According to Chinese sources, USSR was asked to refrain from it and was given a letter from Chou En Lai (the then Chinese prime minister) to Nehru for consideration. The same evening the statement was issued expressing regret over the clashes, taking a neutral stand between China and India and thus indirectly supporting India. Several statements were made by Khrushchev to the impression that China was mainly responsible for the clashes and was required to withdraw from the territory. Ajoy Gosh stated in 1960 November, imperialists are trying to disrupt the peace zone. The socialist states must do everything in their power to prevent this. To him, in their opinion the CCP has very recently underestimated the importance of this task and, in relation to India, has not acted in a way so as to strengthen the

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<sup>39</sup> K.S., Pavithran, “Ideological Evolution of Communist Movement in India Till 1964”, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Submitted in Political Science, University of Kerala, 2003, p. 167

peace zone.<sup>40</sup> The reason why the CPI adopted such an attitude in the early days of the dispute were both internal as well as external. The internal reason was that on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1959, the central government of India dismissed the Communist ministry in Kerala and imposed central rule. The left wing of the CPI considered this as a Coup. They attacked at the right-wing who had been talking of bringing socialism through parliamentary means. The external reason on the other hand was Nehru's pro-soviet foreign policy. Because of these reasons the CPI secretariat called upon both India and China to resolve their differences amicably and to avoid rigid positions.<sup>41</sup> Up to 1959 the CCP had an understanding of the class nature of Jawaharlal Nehru's government, which was close to that of the CPSU and it was not until after the incidents in Tibet that they started having rethinking on it. In the Central Committee's political report to the first session of the eighth national congress in 1956, Liu Shao-chi declared that "there are a number of countries in Asia and Africa which have shaken off the colonial bondage and achieved international independence. These nationally independent countries, our great neighbor India included...are all pursuing a peaceful, neutral foreign policy. To the 1958 session of the People's Congress, Chou-En-lai in his report on the international situation spoke about "our great neighbor which is always concerned for world peace and international security", and about "Jawaharlal Nehru with his basic idea of expanding the area of peace", which was the same as "what the Chinese people have always proposed".

After the incidents in Tibet on 10 March 1959 Jawaharlal Nehru initially took a cautious position, considering Tibet as an internal affair of China. The Chinese press reciprocated by proclaiming its hope on Nehru's

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<sup>40</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, 'China and The Undivided Communist Party of India', in *Social scientist*, Vol,III, No.12, July, 1975, pp. 3-28.

<sup>41</sup> KS Pavithran, *op. cit.*, Ideological Evolution..., p. 168

loyalty to the Panch Sheela, while at the same time accusing subversive elements in the Indian government for having masterminded the revolt. Nehru, however, slowly moved over to the position of his right-wing opposition, particularly in his address to parliament on 27 April 1959. This speech was reprinted in the Chinese newspapers with the editorial comment: "This is a vital matter for the Chinese people. We are bound to pay great attention to this matter." This call was accompanied by a theoretical article entitled; "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy", in which the global role of Nehru was still assessed positively: "There are sections of the bourgeoisie in some capitalist countries, whose political attitude in general is different from that of the above-mentioned people (Rhee, Diem, etc.), but who line up with imperialism on this question. Certain bourgeois elements in India are such an example".<sup>42</sup> The article continued that in class terms the Indian government represented two aspects of the picture: The Indian bourgeoisie maintains innumerable links with imperialism and is to a certain extent dependent on foreign capital. Moreover, by its class nature the big bourgeoisie has a certain urge for outward expansion. In international affairs, the Indian government headed by Prime Minister Nehru has been reflecting generally the will of the Indian people and playing an important and praiseworthy role in opposing war and colonialism and safeguarding peace.<sup>43</sup>

In India on the boarder issue their emerged two different viewpoints within the communist party. It was at the CPI national council at Meerut in November 1959 this differences were reflected. One section of the CPI wanted to declare china as an aggressor and support the Indian government but other sector opposed this. The left-wing in the CPI led by P. Sundarayya thought that the border crisis had been built up by the Indian Government to

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<sup>42</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *op. cit.*, 'China and the Undivided...

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

cover up its retreat from progressive policies. The centrists led by Ajoy Gosh how ever occupied the middle ground that while China had not committed aggression its attitude towards the respective countries border had created tensions and had strengthened the hands of reactionaries in India. On the other extreme, the rightist within the CPI, following the lead of Sardasai, felt that the Chinese wrongly considered Nehru as the spokesman of Indian reaction and had intruded into Indian territory to make hi see reason.<sup>44</sup> In this meeting a resolution was moved which criticizes the Chinese aggression. At the same time various amendments were moved calling for the peaceful resolution of this issue. Even though the leadership tried to adopt unanimous resolution by adopting some of the amendments it did not held to reduce the gap between these two sections. Within the minority view point there existed some difference of opinion. In this a section argued as China a socialist country it cannot be called as an aggressor. To them, China is aggressor. But a large section within the minority was opposed to this opinion. To them, the problem is not whether to characterize India or china as aggressor, instead to resolve the issues between the two anti-imperialist countries. To them, the political leadership of the two countries should try to resolve this dispute.<sup>45</sup>

This difference within the CPI was manifested in an article which was written by EMS Namboothirippad in 1959. Commenting on congress, PSP, Janasankam stand on Indo-china boarder dispute EMS Namboothirippad Stated; these parties were silent on the stand on the Pakistan position on Ledak and they were not ready to criticize Eisenhower. He asked PSP and Janasank that, whether their aim was the territorial integrity of India or to take India into a military alliance sponsored by the United States. To EMS Namboothirippad, the India china boarder dispute should be resolved

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<sup>44</sup> K.S Pavithran, *op. cit.*, Ideological Evolution..., p. 169.

<sup>45</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralthil*, pp. 592-593.



amicably. Both countries should try to resolve their issues by allowing them to follow their own system of government. Therefore on the relationship with China, India government should adopt the same principle in which it had adopted towards Pakistan. In order to determine the boundary EMS Namboothirippad advocated for an unconditional dialogue between Indian and Chinese government.<sup>46</sup> This Sino-soviet border dispute was largely used by the Anti-communist coalition of Kerala in 1960.

As said earlier in 1960 the CCP published an article "Long Live Leninism", which according to them was aiming to fight against the revisionism was reprinted by B T Ranadive (a left wing communist) in the June issue of New Age monthly. The split in the international communist movement was dated by the Chinese as 9 September 1959 when the Soviet government issued the statement on Tibet which the CCP considered as a stab in the back, as "the first instance in history in which a socialist country, instead of condemning the armed provocations of the reactionaries of a capitalist country, condemned another fraternal socialist society. This date has become important because the incident established a landmark in the fight for the ideological hegemony between the respective parties."<sup>47</sup>

In 1960, some attempts were made to resolve the dispute within the international communist movement. The first one was a conference of few communist parties at Bucharest in early 1960 and the second one was a conference of 81 communist parties in November 1960. In this a 5 member's Indian delegation was attended. However, there was not unanimous opinion regarding the stand which the Indian communist party should take in this

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<sup>46</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *Indo-China Border Dispute* (Mal), Communist Party Publication, Archives of Contemporary History (ACH), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, 1959.

<sup>47</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *op. cit.*, China and the Undivided...

conference so it was put to vote in the national council and adopted based on one vote majority. This reflected in the structure of delegation. In this, EMS Namboothirippad, Ramamoorthy, Bupesh Gupta was considered as left. Ajoy Gosh and SA Dange were considered as right-wings. In this conference the dispute was intensified, one section stood with Krushchov's ideal of peaceful co-existence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition to socialism. But the section argued the competition between socialist and capitalist block will lead to a third world war. They also adopted a resolution dealing with the attitude towards newly liberated African, Asian countries. With the conference of 81 communist parties, there emerged an international base for the dispute which had emerged within the CPI. As a result of this the difference between USSR and China had reflected in the two resolutions which have presented in the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of CPI at Vijayavada, one resolution had the influence of Soviet view point other had the influence of China.<sup>48</sup>

Both the left and right wing of the Indian communist party had publicly supported the Moscow conference. For instance, commenting on the 1960 Moscow conference AK Gopalan stated; unlike other conferences this was not a formal one, each delegates played their own part in formulating the documents and resolutions of the conference. To him, each session had freely participated and openly expressed their opinion. To A.K. Gopalan, this conference was conducted for two different reasons. Initially the events after the Moscow declaration and the declaration of peace justified the contents of these documents; the communist party should learn lessons from these incidents and take it in their March ahead. Secondly, this conference also aimed to resolve the difference of opinion in the international communist movement over a certain issues. To A.K. Gopalan, it is the duty of all socialist countries to unite and isolate those governments who were interested in War

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<sup>48</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralatthil*, pp. 618-622.

and military expansion. For this there should be a unity between socialist and independent countries. To him, it is only through expansion of the consequences of the war, an anti-war united front can be created. To him, in countries where the different social system were existed had two options; one was the option of peaceful co-existence or war and brutal destruction. To him, the peace can be created only through a peaceful and relentless struggle. To Gopalan, the success of liberation movement had helped to strengthen the hold of socialism across the world. The importance of the alliance between the working class of the advanced industrial countries and the people of the colonial and Semi-Colonial countries had substantially increased during this period. Even though, this kind of statement were come from leaders like A.K. Gopalan the Moscow conference had added another factor for the dispute within the communist party of India.<sup>49</sup>Till then the two factors which determined the CPI was the issue of the attitude towards the national bourgeoisie and the Sino-Indian Boarder dispute. But after the Moscow conference of the 1960 the developments in the international communist movement was also a factor which contributed to the debate within the CPI. It should be noted that there existed a qualitative difference between the first Moscow conference (1957) and the conference of 81 communist parties (1960). The first conference allowed for the existence of different paths to revolution and the second conference concentrated almost fully on peaceful transition to socialism and national democracy in the case of colonised nations. The second position, which was not agreed on by China and Albanian parties resulted in the Sino-Soviet debate. The old debate on Russian path and Chinese path was being reformulated in the context of the new circumstances. There were serious dissensions in the CPI over the ideological issues before

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<sup>49</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *Moscow Sammelanathinte Rekhakaleppatti Chila Vishadeekaranakkurippukal* (Mal), Jenayukam Publications 23<sup>rd</sup>, Jnuary, 1961, ACH, JNU, New Delhi, pp.1-14.

the Moscow conference of world Communist and workers parties was held in November 1960. In fact it is claimed that the conference was the result of the CPI's initiatives. In the international commission to prepare documents for the Moscow conference of the 81 communist parties, the CPI was represented by Ajoy Gosh. The dominant leadership which had already supported the party to CPSU's positions in the international dispute made no serious attempt to resolve the differences but appointed two commissions to prepare documents for the sixth congress.<sup>50</sup> After the Moscow conference the national council met early in 1961 to decide on the documents but found there were two draft programmes and two political resolutions before it because the commissions were divided. The main issue in debate at this juncture was the 1960 Moscow statements formulations of a national democratic state, described as a form of transition to socialism in under developed countries, especially in the nonaligned countries of the peace zones where the national bourgeoisie played an objectively progressive role and deserved political and economic aid. To Mohan Ram, this was distinctively a soviet innovation and the Chinese without explicitly rejecting it, did not consider the national bourgeoisie in countries like India progressive and wanted political support to the communist parties rather than to the pro-imperialist national bourgeoisie.<sup>51</sup> The alternative draft by Ranadive while endorsing the concept of national democratic front was for an altogether different front than the one Ajoy Gosh had envisaged but its goal was to be people's democracy not national democracy. Ranadive's political report (which was part of the political resolution) as well as the joint report on the revision of party programme by Bupesh Gupta and Ramamurti constituted the leftist documents. Both of them held that the countries independence was not complete get because after

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<sup>50</sup> Mohan Ram, *Indian Communism Split within a Split*, Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1969, pp. 105-106.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

the transfer of power by the British the bourgeoisie has compromised with domestic reaction and imperialism and instead of liberating the the country from from foreign capital was giving more and more concession to the foreign monopolies leading to a linkup between domestic and foreign capital. To them, though the soviet aid had helped India's economic development, the ruling class was using it as a bargaining counter for more. The Western aid retarded the growth and simultaneously created a new vested interest in the class of Compradore bourgeoisie. The task was to fight American pressure, the right reaction and the leftist shift in congress policies and the object was to be people's democracy. The national democratic front was to achieve the task was to build in the cause of struggle. The proletariat was to be its main base, but it was also to cover the rural poor, the agricultural labour who were the allies of the working class employees and the intelligentsia who were the vacillating allies and the petite bourgeoisie (hit by the growth of monopolies) as also section of national bourgeoisie (managed by foreign capital).<sup>52</sup> The 'rightist' viewpoint was presented by Ajoy Gosh, Adhikari and Joshi who said the test of a country's independence was its foreign policy and India was not only basically anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist but one of the continues collaborations with soviet union and the newly liberated countries despite occasional vacillation.<sup>53</sup>

Commenting on the debates in the sixth congress of the CPI EMS Namboothirippad stated, this congress had faced three important questions. The first one was the two different interpretations of the Moscow declaration. Another one was the two different interpretations of the post independent developments. The third one was the differences of strategy and tactics which the working class should adopt in India. In this those people who adopted one

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

approach began to consider the advocates of other approach are anti-Marxist and began to view the others as against the principle of Marxism and Leninism. In this each section accused other section as either Revisionist or Dogmatist. The important dispute was over the question of adopting the correct tactics in achieving national democratic resolution. In this one line argued the main Right-wing forces are working outside the congress so there is a necessity of making alliance with congress to counter these forces. But other section argued that the major reactionary forces which make the life of the people harsh were still work within the congress therefore it is necessary to make a democratic front against congress without making any compromise with any reactionary forces outside the congress. The party congress did not accept the two proposals.<sup>54</sup>

It was in this context the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPI was held at Vijayawada in April 1961. In this congress, friendship soviet delegates were attended under the leadership of Michael Suslov, the head of international department. To Namboothirippad, this congress did not resolve the issues within the CPI instead it had intensified it. Addressing the sixth congress Ajoy Gosh the then general secretary of the CPI stated the communist strategy towards congress will be based on two components that is unity and struggle. He added the communist party cannot go forward by ignoring the fact that the influence of congress had largely expanded in India. He stated, congress was still the instrument of national bourgeoisie. Many element who did not have any kind of relation with national movement had joined with the congress after independent. At same time congress cannot be compared with other right reactionary parties. Likewise the congress government had taken certain

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<sup>54</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, 'Revisionism and Dogmatism' (Translated into Mal), in P. Goninda Pilla, Ed., *EMS Sanchika 1961-1963*, Vol.XXXIII, Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2004, p. 272.

measures can be considered as progressive. The two sections accepted this argument with their own interpretations the one sections interpret this as an endorsement for an alliance with congress, but other section while accepting the front with congress believed that this policy as against the congress government. These different interpretations aroused because of the unsettling dispute over the class character of congress which had existed in the CPI for a long period of time. While the class character of congress was analysed there did not have effort to analyse the character of the parties like Jan Sangh and swatantra, instead this given to the opinion of given communist members. Therefore many believed these parties represent the interest of the right wing and reactionary elements of the national bourgeoisie. Naturally some believed that Indian National Congress was far better than these parties. But other section believed all of the party including congress representing the interest of the reactionary elements of the Indian Bourgeoisie. To Namboothirippad, the struggle against the right reactionary cannot be interpreted as an alliance with the congress. While accepting the progressive actions of the congress there should not be a hesitation to oppose the reactionary policy of the congress. While defending the public sector CPI should not defend the efforts for corruption and and misuse of power in this institutions. While exposing the monopolistic policy of the Swatantra Party there should not support the efforts of the government to support the monopolist.<sup>55</sup> Even though a unanimous resolution passed within the intervention of Ajoy Gosh it did not resolve the dispute instead temporarily delayed the split.<sup>56</sup>

Before the war broke out it had become obvious which side the majority of the CPI would be on. On 20 November 1961 Jawaharlal Nehru made a statement in the Lok Sabha accusing China of border incursions. The

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*,p. 273-280.

<sup>56</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*,*Communist Party Keralathil...*, pp.623-625.

next day Ajoy Ghosh issued a statement as general secretary of the CPI. Basing himself on Nehru's account of the happenings he condemned the Chinese actions as embittering the relations between the two countries. The CCP reacted sharply and attacked Ghosh for having "trailed behind Nehru . . . without bothering to find out the truth or to look into the rights and wrongs of the case. While the central organ of the CPI, New Age which was controlled by the rightists, openly attacked the CCP, the West Bengal party organ Swadinatha criticized the statements of Ghosh and supported the Chinese line on Nehru.<sup>57</sup>

In May 1962 the central secretariat of the CPI was reorganized by Making EMS Namboothirippad as General Secretary and Dange as chairman. The main dispute was over the question of Indo-China dispute and the worsen relationship between two governments. On 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1962 the China Army began to march towards Indian boundary. It was generally pursued chairman SA Dange was anti-Chinese; on the other hand the general secretary was the supporter of China. In order to discuss the Chinese aggression the emergency meeting of the national council of the CPI was held in the beginning of November 1962. Majority of the party members were against China. At the same time a minority view point against this. Many supporters of the minority view pint branded were as Chinese agents. Many of the national council members had the opinion that it is not fair to blame China alone for this issue; India government had major role in Chinese aggression. To them, instead of resolving the border dispute India government tried to protect their borders with the support of USA and USSR. Based on this they

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<sup>57</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *op. cit.*, China and The Undivided...



presented some amendments in the national council, but this was rejected. The majority felt it was many chances for isolation of CP like that of 1942.<sup>58</sup>

The meeting of the central secretariat of the CPI on 18 October decided that the McMahon line should be defended against any attack, but did not state that China had violated that line, although S A Dange said so to newsmen afterwards. It transpired that S A Dange, Z A Ahmed, M N Govindan Nair and Yogindra Sharma wanted China to be named aggressor, but it was opposed by other leaders including Bhupesh Gupta, Jyoti Bosu, Harkishen Singh Surjeet, P Sundarayya and E M S Namboodiripad, who wanted to put more emphasis on negotiations than on military measures. Unlike Dange, the latter group stuck carefully to the resolution of the central secretariat. Jyoti Basu for example, in a statement in the West Bengal assembly, declared that the West Bengal CPI would do its duty for the defense and integrity of India: "There is no question of surrender for superior military might and all measures must be taken to remove all weaknesses consistent with India's honor."<sup>59</sup> In Maharashtra where the predominantly right-wing State Council in its meeting of 23 October proposed to the National Council to take strong measures, if necessary expulsion, against B T Ranadive for not acting according to the party line. He was accused of having said that socialist China could not have been the aggressor, which as a matter of fact was not contrary to the central secretariat resolution of 18 October. The dividing line was drawn when the National Council, with a right-wing majority, in its meeting of 1 November pressed for a resolution which was so radically anti-Chinese and pro-Nehru that the new general secretary Namboodiripad refused to sign, and Jyoti Bosu, P Sundarayya and Harkishen Singh Surjeet resigned from the central secretariat. The resolution started with

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<sup>58</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralathil*, pp. 632-640.

<sup>59</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *op. cit.*, *China and The Undivided...*

an appeal to the population to unite in the defense of the motherland against the Chinese aggression, gave unqualified support to the position taken by Nehru, praised the Indian parliamentary democracy and Nehru's policy of non-alignment and declared no objection to arms deals with any country on a commercial basis. It charged that by its wrong and mistaken attitude the Chinese government had facilitated the strengthening of the right-wing reactionary opponents in the country. The resolution finally called for all possible efforts to create a national defense fund and to increase production.<sup>60</sup>

After the national council there had nationwide arrests of leaders. This was started in Maharashtra; leaders like BT Ranadive were arrested. This was also taken place in Kerala; even leaders like Achuthamenon and C. Unniraja who later joined in CPI were also arrested. Ems Namboothirippad was arrested from Delhi. The party leadership was silent on the arrests of the left wing leaders; they did not even allow the party mouth piece to publish the editorial which opposed the arrests. In the national council meeting of CPI (1963) both EMS Namboothirippad and Bupesh Gupatha presented a document entitled (revisionism and dogmatism). In the Indian communist party, due to their request this document was circulated among the members and published later. By quoting Lenin they stated; only by opposing the revisionism and dogmatism the Communist Party can mobilize the working class. The Document added; Left wing communism was the punishment for revisionism. In the mid of 1963 both Soviet and Chinese communist parties had published two open letters. The basic content of this letters was the condemnation of one by another. This letter intensified the factionalism within the Indian communist party. After these letters their emerged two divergent opinions regarding the relationship between the international communist movement and the world peace. During this period Palmira

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

Togliatti developed a concept of 'multi centre system'. According to this, communist party have multiple centers other than that of Moscow and Peking, therefore the movement should be grown on the basis of joint fronts.<sup>61</sup>

About the end of 1963 the inner party dispute within the CPI reached its zenith. The Indo-China dispute had intensified the debate over the attitude towards the congress government and Indian Bourgeoisie. The immediate incident which exploded the Indian party dispute was news related to the then chairman S.A. Dange. A left Communist journalist working for Swathinatha Dwijen Nandi, while doing research in the National Archives came upon a letter written S.A Dange in 1964 to the colonial governor general offering co-operation in return for his release from Jail in the Kanpur conspiracy case. Dange came to the leadership of the CPI only with the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress of the CPI in 1948. About 1964, an English daily journal named 'the current' published this letter. In 1920s, in this letter he offered his apology to the British government and agreed to maintain loyalty to the government. After leaking the letter many argued that if this letter was right Dange should be expelled not only from the chairmanship of the party but from the party membership. But Dange defended himself by stating that he did not write this letter and it was forged by the British government. After getting this letter many left leaders of the CPI visited the National Archives of India and confirmed its authenticity. The left-wing leaders demanded the setting up of a party commission which consist of members of the left and right wing of the party to enquire into the the authenticity of the letter, it should be visited the national archives and collect the letter from there. Dange can say his stand in front of the commission. The findings of the commission should be placed before the consideration of secretariat. The Right wing leadership was not ready to accept this demand. To EMS Namboothirippad, the Right wing was

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.644-657.

determined to fight the so-called Chinese supporters rather than enquiring about this letter. In April 1964, 32 members of the national council made a walkout against the stand of the Chairman. These members were suspended by the official right wing leadership citing disciplinary violation. It was after this session there convened two separate conferences by the left and right wing. The majority section was branded as traitors and China supporters. In the National council April 1964 the minority fraction had raised two demands; the first was; they asked to discuss this letter. Likewise they stated; Dange should not hold the Chairmanship when the letter regarding him was discussing in the council. But Dange rejected this demand and stated no discussion will taken place without his chairmanship. The majority members were supported the Chairman. After this walkout the two sections had made statements and counter statements to justify their stand. This was not restricted to the central leadership. This was spread to the different state local district and branch committees. The two sections also organized public meetings to propagate their stand. This was regarded as a perfect sign of a split. There were some efforts on the both sides to preserve their unity was failed. The minority section demanded the formation of a collective leadership which consisting of two sections. They also wanted to get opportunity to express their opinion freely in the party congress and its preceding conferences. But this was rejected. After the walkout the 32 members along with their supporters in the executive and secretariat had opened a temporary office in Delhi. Even though they have a unanimous opinion regarding their causes for their walkout the differences of opinion was existed regarding the organization of new party, there also proceeded an alternative congress. For example, Bupesh Guptha who participated in the walkout was later return to the CPI. Likewise, EMS Namboothirippadhad certain differences with the majority of Left-wing leaders over some issues, and Jyothi Basu also had some reservations with the majority of the left

leaders. The left-wing leaders organized a convention at Thenali in Andhrapredhesh to sort out their future strategy, the formation of an alternative 7<sup>th</sup> congress, to organize their conferences of state and district level and draft a programme for the 7<sup>th</sup> congress. They decided to organize the 7<sup>th</sup> congress at Kalkatha in October and the beginning of 1964. Majority of the left wing leaders had the opinion that China is emerging an alternative leader in the international communist movement against the 'revisionist USSR' but the other section did not agree with this. The two sections had similar opinion on two issues. Initially both of them agreed that with the twentieth congress Soviet Union becoming more and more revisionist. Secondly, based on this revisionist attitude the right-wing leadership of the communist party was implementing the same revisionist attitude in the internal politics and trying to make Indian communist party under the fact of Indian bourgeoisie. There are certain factors which united the delegates in the Tenali conference; they were; to oppose the congress leadership by exposing the right wing leadership, the liberation of Maximum units from the leadership of Right wing, to get Maximum support for the leftwing communist leadership in the all India level. After the walk out the rightwing tried to prove that they were in the majority, on the other hand left wing tried to prove that this majority was artificial and the real majority was with them.<sup>62</sup>

### **Kerala and the split in the CPI**

When we discuss the impact of the split in Kerala, it should be noted that only the seven members from Kerala were walked out of the national council meeting which was held in April 1964. This shows that the majority of the Kerala leaders stood with the official CPI leadership. However within a year the newly emerged CPI'M had proved its support in Kerala after the

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 668-678.

general election of 1965. This should be understood in the context of the rising agrarian agitation which was started in 1960. It was through these struggle leaders like A.K. Gopalan had become popular. The peasants of Kerala were lived in frustration following the dismissal of the communist party led government. They had no idea as to what would happen to the land reform they had worked and struggle for. They were concerned that even after the lapse of a year the president has not given his assent to the bill. A general discontent was prevailed. A rumor spread that some modifications to the bill were imminent. It was against this background that the Kerala *Karshaka Sangham* decided at a meeting at Thrissur on June 1, 1960 that a Jatha should be sent from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram under the leadership of A.K. Gopalan. The decision to organize a Jatha was taken as a protest against the moves to amend the Kerala Agrarian relation bill in accordance with the demands of the landowners association and the Nair service society. This procession started from Kasaragod on June 18 with A.K. Gopalan, C.H. Kanaran, and P.R. Panthalam as leaders. One week after, the Jatha had completed its March, the Agricultural reforms bill was returned by the president. But even by November, 1961 the government had not taken any steps to implement the reform. The government did not carry out all the important tasks of preparing a register of possessions in respect of peasants who had no documents. As the peasants moved the tribunals for cuts in their rent, the Janmies started to evict the peasants without documents for their land. They started claiming that the land belonged to the Janmies. At Nadvarampu near Kodungallur a Janmy thus seized the property of a farmer. The peasants did not remain quite. They re-occupied the land. Arrests and police oppression and law suits began. A small struggle in Nadavarampu thus came to being a national issue many were arrested. The Kerala *Karshaka Sangham* held meetings. It decided to start a movement for 16 demands. These include preparation of a register of ownership in respect of title less peasants, establishment of land tribunal at the rate of one tribunal for every

2000 petitions, consideration of the claims of peasants for government forest lands and dry land and cancellation of the lease of Kottiyur temple land.<sup>63</sup> The important struggle which the communist party led after 1960 was the struggle of the migrant cultivators at Amaravathi in central Kerala. It was in 1948 after the congress came in to power that peasants started migrating to the high ranges in eastern Travancore. Not long after the congress came into power, it allotted five acres of arable land to each family in order to increase food production. Peasants settled down on these allotted lands and started growing crops. With the allotment of forest lands in this manner for cultivation, rich people and others from village stated unauthorised encroachment. In a short time, cultivators had virtually reached the high ranges. None of the governments that came in power in Travancore-Cochin were able to prevent this exodus. When the communist ministry came into power in 1957, a large portion of the forest lands of the high ranges was already under occupation either through allotment or through unauthorised instruction. The communist government announced that those who had occupied the lands prior to April 27, 1957 would not be evicted but would be given some land in perpetuity if they did not already own land at home and that no fresh encroachment would be allowed. But things did not work out in accordance with this declaration. As part of their efforts to foil the communist government, the opposition provided leadership for organized encroachment of forest lands wealthy families in Meenachil, Thodupuzha, Kanjirappalli, Changanasherry and other places in Kottayam district took part directly in this forest encroachment and even set up big syndicates for the purpose. They had many agents who toured the interior and enthused poor peasants by telling them that very fertile land was available at a low price in the forest area. The poor peasant with his thirst for land trustingly

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<sup>63</sup> A.K., Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People*, New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1973, pp. 243-253

sold all his belongings and went to the forest and brought land from those who were very rich and prominent, with no idea that they were the helpless victims of fraud. A large number of the peasants of Udumbanchola taluk including the refugees of Amaravathi acquired land in this manner. This rich landlords and estate owners of kottayam district have sent lower castes in this manner to forests. They had for long been tenants of their land. In addition to all this, many peasants had occupied forest land during the liberation struggle at the behest of leaders. Some of them had purchased the land as mentioned above. With the success of the liberation struggle and the coming into power of the united front government the general impression was that none of them would be evicted. The flow of people to these places intensified because of this and the price of land boomed. Believing the leaders who assured them those leaders who assured them that there would be no eviction of any kind, the peasants invested their all growing crops there. Their attention and energies were concentrated on their plantations. It was against this background that eviction started at Ayyappankoil on May 1961. Just for this eviction, a police station and a magistrate's court had been opened. A special KDO was deputed to supervise these evictions.<sup>64</sup> Many huts were set to fire, crops were destroyed. About 10000 families consisting of 10000 people 8000 acres of land were thus evicted in Ayyappankoil. The government did not construct even a shed for rehabilitation of these evicted (nearly 10000) people. On June 1<sup>st</sup> KT Jacob and A.K. Gopalan left to Amaravathi and visited the sheds of the people. After meeting at Amaravathi they reached Udumbanchola. A meeting was organized at Udumbanchola. They declared "we will not rest until this is answered". Most of the protesters were the participators of the liberation struggle. A.K decided to resort to some agitational method in order to bring the Amaravathi problem in to the attention of the central and state governments on an immediate basis; he declared at the

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 236-237.



public meeting that he would go on a fast on June 6 at Amaravathi. On June 6, E.M.S. Namboothirippad and A.K. Gopalan reached Kumali where a meeting was organized under the presidency of Joseph, president of Karshaka Samithi. In this meeting both E.M.S. Namboothirippad and A.K. Gopalan spoke.

Commenting on this struggle A.K. Gopalan stated, the important features of this struggle was that this struggle had broken all barriers like Religion, Caste, Colour and so on. There were Congress, Muslim League and PSP supporters and one or two Communists. There were also people belonging to different political parties. There were anti-communists, Nair service society men and members of the catholic congress. But they were all united today. To A.K. Gopalan, there were among them anti-communists who believed that communists should be stoned, as well as those who felt that they should not co-operate with communists under any circumstance. There were also individuals who acted in belief that the Nair should make capital out of misfortunes of the Christian and vice versa. All such caste, religious, and political difference vanished in the face of a common cause and threat. After eight days, the Amaravathi Satyagraha became a national issue. Leading newspapers started writing editorials. The issue was discussed in the Kerala Assembly where the opposition staged a walkout in protest against the government's high handedness attitude. There was a steady flow of telegrams to the Prime minister and the Kerala Chief Minister asking for an immediate solution for the Amaravathi problem. The anti-communists were doing all this for political propaganda. But even they criticized the ministers for not having visited Amaravathi and strongly pleaded for an early solution to the problem. At this critical juncture, the only public figure who was a non-communist, who helped the Amaravathi peasants, was father vadakkan of Vimochana samaram fame. These leading anti-communists who mobilized the Christians for a holy war against the E.M.S Namboothirippad led communist ministry,

now found the church dignitaries and big Christian land lords and congressman totally unsympathetic to the sufferings of the poor Christian peasantry and he was on the spot with blankets and other such items, to help them. After the 8<sup>th</sup> day of fast K. Kelappan through a telegram requested to terminate the fast for the time being. In a replay to this A.K. G sent a telegram to Kelappan, he requested to proceeds to Amaravathi. In replying to this Kelappan stated; if necessary they will undertake a joint fast at Amasravathi and sacrifice themselves. In that letter also Kelappan asked A.K. Gopalan to suspend his fast. Even congress MLA's and some ministers felt that some compromise should be arrived at and the fast ended. Home minister P.T. Chakko took ther greatest initiative in this. On June 15, he came to Kottayam from Trivandrum. He set out on receipt of reports that A. K. Gopalan was in a critical state. To A.K. Gopalan, their talk was long and very cordial. A.K. Gopalan felt that P.T Chakko was helpless in regard to Amaravathi. Along with congress leader P.C. Cheriyan, Chack, who was the then opposition leader, had played a leading role in inciting the people to encroach on lands in Udumpanchola. The encroachments were carried out with full support of the opposition parties of that time. They had then been evicted by the very people who promoted them to enter the lands. The eviction orders were signed the very people who had led the encroachments in the past. After the serious talk between Home Minister P.T. Chakko and the leaders of Communist Party and *Karshaka Sangham* a compromise was reached. The government agreed to do a few things for Amaravathi peasants. The Minister conceded most of the demands of the demands of the Amaravathi peasants including the grant of three acres of land for each family. On the basis this, the Kerala *Karshaka Sangham*, the Udumpanchola *Karshaka Sangham* society and the Amaravathi refugees committee and friends requested him to break the fast. After that the collecterate picketing and other district actions started by the kerala *Karshaka*

*Sangham* were also with down. The government assured that it would do all that they had promised under this compromise agreement.

Another important struggle which was led by the Kerala *Karshaka Sangham* was at Keeritthodu in the central high range region in 1963. More than 4000 families were evicted from Churuli and Keerithodu in November and December 1963. This occurrence came in the wake of of Amaravathi eviction. Although the peasants were unable to stop eviction in an organized manner, the malanadu Karshaka union took strong steps against eviction at Churali and Keeritthodu. While the eviction at Amaravathi was for the purpose of providing land for the project, that at Keeritthodu was in the name of forest conservation. The government decided to evict peasants in the interests of forest conservation. The peasants came to know that eviction in Keerithodu was imminent. MSP men started arriving in large numbers and senior police officials also stayed there. Karshaka union leaders also camped there. Preparations for a resolute struggle were in evidence.<sup>65</sup>The police promised began a man-hunt for the ring leaders, and launched a lathi charge. Everyone was chased way. There was firing. Some of them were killed. Houses were ransacked and shopes were set on fire. All the stores in the shops were destroyed. People were beaten at random. No one was allowed to enter Kerrithodu; those who tried to enter there were beaten up severely. An atmosphere of terror was thus created as eviction began. More MSP men arrived. Leaders like A.K. Gopalan, K.T. Jacob, P.R. Panthalam, and Gopala Krishnan Menon decided to go on to Keerithode from there.<sup>66</sup>These kinds of struggles made A.K. Goplan a mass leader of the peasants. Besides this agrarian agitation which the communist party was taken up in Kerala was the issue of alleged miss treatment of the centre upon Kerala. By raising this issue

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 256.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*. p. 257.

they organized a jeep rally from North Kerala to the south Kerala. This kind of agitations gradually made the majority of the cadres of the communist party into Anti-Congress position. In this situation the cadres were not ready to accept the position of the centre leadership regarding the attitude towards congress and the Indo-China boarder dispute. It was in this period a difference between left and right wing of the communist party was intensified in Kerala also. Certain questions were arised, whether the artificial unity which was formed in Vijayawada will be continued or it will led to an open split. If it happens, in which way it will affect communist and other left parties on the one hand. And the relation with other opposition parties on the other. It affected Kerala than any other parts of the country.<sup>67</sup> By recollecting these days A.K. Gopalan stated, he set out for Kerala on the day E.M.S. namboothirippad was arrested. He spoke at a huge public meeting at Kannur. It was then that he heard P.T. Ponnos's Jaihind Speech. The speech was full of blind hatred for China such as even congressman had not exhibiting before. He toured some states in the meantime. He asked the people to wage a struggle against some of the things going on in the name of national defense,for the release of the leaders and against the heavy taxation. The Dange group did not like any of these struggles. The central leadership made the charge that he was trying to break up the party and that he was organizing a parallel party. They asked the control commission to probe in to this. He was debarred from inter state travel. The state committee of Tamilnadu ordered him to keep out of that state till the municipal election were over. The Delhi state committee banned his participation in a Deepavali celebration there. Sardesai wrote that he was not to enter Bombay without being invited by the local committee.<sup>68</sup> A major charge was that the leftist were settling up

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<sup>67</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralathil.....*, p. 632.

<sup>68</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People, op. cit.*, pp. 271-272

parallel committees. But it was understood from national council members of the central secretariat belonging to the rightist group had started as a parallel group. The rightist had functioning as leadership gave the green signal for rightist of Palakkad and Calicut district councils to function as a parallel group. It was to be expected that this policy would be pursued in other districts as well as in lower units. More over, the state council leadership had still not agreed to hold a special congress as laid down in the party constitution. This was clearly a move to hide that fact the leadership was back by a majority of the party membership. The real parallel organization was thus the leadership which did not represent a majority of the members of the party.<sup>69</sup>

The important event which determined the course of Kerala was the disciplinary action against A.K. Gopalan. He was subjected to public censure for his alleged defense of china in a speech in West Bengal. But when he returns to Kerala he got a massive reception. As stated earlier about this time he became a mass leader in Kerala because his involvement in various agrarian struggles and his involvement in the struggle against the dilution of Kerala agrarian relation bill. These struggles created a condition that a discussion of an alliance with congress was not accepted by the majority of the CPI cadres as this struggles were carried against a government which was led by Indian National Congress.

In the suspended leaders of the left-wing after April 1964 National council meeting half a dozen were from Kerala, they include; EMS Namboothirippad, AK Gopalan, and Kanaran CH. As a protest of this some cadres tried to organize a reception to the suspended leaders. The right wing members tried to prevent this programme. For example, EMS

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p 274.

Namboothirippad was approached by S Kumaran the right-wing member. He told that, if they proceed with the reception it will increase the gap between left and right, it will more irreconcilable. In this meeting the left-wing leaders explained the circumstances which led their walkout from the national council meeting. It was explained that; it was neither the Sino-Soviet dispute nor the India-China boarder dispute which caused the split. Instead it was the attitude towards the Indian ruling class which caused this split. The Right-wing also organized their own meeting to explain their stand. After this the walkout was converted in to a public controversy between the left-wing and right-wing. This was not restrained to the public meeting; this also spread to the organization units of the CPI like state and district committees. In these committees this dispute was highly reflected in the committee meeting and decisions were more on the basis of voting. In many Committee meetings there had a practice of dual reporting. Through this the party cadres got opportunity to choose between the left and right wing. This shows that there existed a democratic process in the split. Both the left and right were claimed that they were the real Communist party. In reality; there existed two parallel state committees. Both committees tried to mobilize Marxism members in to their folds. The other important issue was regarding the ownership of the property and buildings of the party, they include; the newly build state committee office of Trivandrum, other buildings and assets, both party papers Desabhimani, Janayugam, party publications like Prabath publications, because of their majority in the state committee the right wing could control and occupy the majority of properties. Because of some technical reasons Desabhimani press was in the hands of left-wing, however its management and editorial board members were right-wing so that the management of Desabhimani was very big obstacle for the left-wingers. The right-wing also tried to get majority share in the limited company of Desabhimani. It also made some problems. But later the control was lifted within the hands of the

left-wing leaders.<sup>70</sup> It was at Alappuzha conference (preceeded the 7<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPI'M) they here the news of the removal of the removal of Nikitha S Krushchev. To E.M.S Namboothirippad the delegates in the conference received this news with clapping hands as they believed Krushchev was responsible for the growth of revisionism in the international communist movement. These delegates believed this will give a severe blow to the efforts for revisionism and right deviations in the international communist movement. The Indian government took this opportunity to arrest the left leaders (accusing them of Chinese agents) like A.K. Gopalan. When A.K. Gopalan reached Thrissur on December 9, 1964 after attending the 7<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPI(M) at Calcutta, he was arrested. Commenting on this arrest K. Damodaran stated, these arrests are on all India Level. It has nothing to do with the Kerala election as the detunes are also entitled to contest. It will lead to a better contest. At the same time there were several other statement issued by leaders like Achuthamenon, Dange. It was shown statements like this shown that these arrests had a clear bearing on the forth coming elections in Kelara. 600 had been arrested in all. The largest numbers were from Kerala. Responding to these arrests E.M.S Namboothirippad stated; “the food problem, the economic problem are going out of government’s control. It is necessary capable of mobilizing the people against the wrong policies of the congress. Achuthamenon pointed out that, while these arrests on the eve of election were a main attempt to pave the ruling party, they were not going to save the congress from the tragedy are waiting it. The leader of Samyuktha Socialist Party Chandrasekaran stated, these arrests on the eve of Kerala election will be interpreted as the first attempt of the congress to sabotage a free and fair election. The detunes this time were not lodged together. They were kept at Kannur, Viyyur, and Thiruvanathapuram. Members of the

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<sup>70</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Communist Party Keralatthil*, pp. 678-683.

politbureau like Sundarayya, Surjith, Ramamoorthy, and A.K Gopalan were all at Viyyur. After a few months, all except A.K. Gopalan were taken to their respective states. The mid-term elections in Kerala were held when they were in Jail. The congress thought that they could sweep the polls by holding the election while the Kept them in Jail. The right communists also thought it a good chance to win a large number of seats. The CPI'M demanded that a non congress united front including the Muslim league and PSP should be formed for this election. But CPI did not agree with this. They maintained that the Muslim league was a communal party with which they would never make an alliance. But the CPI(M) had made some kind of understanding even though they did not make a formal alliance. The election witnessed a three cornered contest. The principal contest was a united front of the Marxist party with Muslim league and SSP., another of the CPI, RSP and congress. The main propaganda of the CPI and congress were that CPI(M) was the Chinese spies. The main activists of the CPI'M were in jail. The elected MLA's of the CPI(M) were not released from jail and given a chance to attempt tp form a government. E.M.S Namboothirippad was outside and also elected. He was asked to form a government as CPI(M) was the largest party. He replied it that if the MLA's belonged to his party was released; his party would try to form the government. But this was rejected. As a result, no ministry could be formed, and Kerala continued to be under president rule.<sup>71</sup>

The split was also affected in the legislative party of the CPI. EMS Namboothirippad was replaced by Achuthamenon as opposition leader. Achuthamenon had a slight majority among the members so the left wing was recognized as separate party. Unlike the other parts of India even the right-wing communist leaders were forced to take an anti-congress stand because of the peculiar circumstances. Because of this the right wing also voted with

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 282-283.



others for the over throws of Sankar government. The Kerala state committee believed that the coming congress committee was the 7<sup>th</sup> congress. Like the other congress all procedures were followed from the branch. In the state conference the newly raised party plan was presented. Likewise, a separate letter of Namboothirippad and its response were also distributed among the delegates of the conference. In Kolkata congress the central leadership presented a document which call for the struggle against revisionism and extremism. But many delegates got this letter when they reach Calcutta. The document further stated; it is impossible to fight revisionism without fighting the extremism. The congress government advocated for a dual approach, on the one hand opposing the bourgeois, petite bourgeois leadership, on the other to mobilize the large section of the people including congress.<sup>72</sup>

The split of the CPI 1964 had some repercussions on the CPI led cultural movement in Kerala the ideological split in the communist party had also affected the KPAC. They were forced to take a stand on this difference. Men like: Thoppil Krishnappillai, Toppil Kumarappillai, Khan, Asees stood with the right wing, others like Janardhanakkurupp and sulojana sided with other side. During the split of the communist party artists in the KPAC behaves like enemies. In 1965 members like Sulochana, KP. Ummer and CG Gopinad were left the KPAC.<sup>73</sup>

Recollecting these days G. Janardhanakkurupp stated that for about one year after the split, he was not able to take a stand on split. In order to reunite the party Jnadhanakkurupp and his associates started a paper called *Kerala Sabdam* under the ownership of VP Nair. Ramachandran Nair was the manager, chief editor was KS Chandran. The advisory committee include; VR Krishnayyar, Subramnyan potti and Eswarayyar. The main task of the *Kerala*

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<sup>72</sup> E.M.S., Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, *Comuunist Party Keralathil*, pp. 683-687.

<sup>73</sup> K.P.A.C., Sulochana, *Arangile Anubhavangal*, Thrissur, Current Books, 2007, p 81.

*Sabdam* was to explore the venues of compromise between the two communist parties. They conducted interviews of communist leaders like EMS Namboothirippad, AK Gopalam, MN Govidan Nair, TV Thomas and published it.<sup>74</sup>

From 1951, there emerged a debate within the Indian communist party regarding the correct way Indian revolution, the idea of an Indian way of revolution initiated in the programme adopted by the communist party in 1951. There after the discussions were taken place regarding certain issues like the nature of Indian bourgeoisie, the attitude towards the congress government etc. the developments of the international movement had largely contributed to this discussion. For example, the Indo-China border dispute and the Sino-Soviet dispute intensified the debate regarding the attitude towards the Nehru government. The split of the communist party in 1964 was a sum total of these developments. The important factor which determined the split of the CPI was the difference of opinion regarding the attitude towards the Indian bourgeoisie and the congress government rather than the international developments. At the same time the international developments stimulated the debate regarding the correct revolutionary strategy which the communist party should adopt in India. In Kerala the major factor which determined the inner party struggle in the CPI was the question of attitude towards congress. The majority of the CPI cadres of Kerala were not in agreement with the right wing leadership of the CPI on the attitude towards congress government. In Kerala this situation was created by various struggle which were carried out by the communist party and the Karshaka Sangham against the attempts of the new government to dilute the Kerala agrarian relations bill. They organized various struggles in places like Amaravathi and

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<sup>74</sup> G. Janadhanakurupp, *Ente Jeevitham* (Mal), Thrissur, Current Books, 2003, pp. 257-261.

keerithodu in central kerala. The important feature these struggles was that the strong anti-communists like father vadakkan had joint with the communist party in this struggles. Likewise they organized struggles against central governments neglect on Kerala. Naturally this created a strong anti-congress feeling among the cadres of the communist party. When he returned from Bengal after the public censure by the CPI leadership he received a mass reception in his returning to Kerala. Similarly through this struggles leaders like AK Gopalan became a mass peasant leader across Kerala. The Chinese aggression created an opportunity for a massive anti-communist propaganda. Kerala witnessed a mass scale arrest of communist leader's aftermath of the 1962 Indo-China war. Even the right wing communist leaders like C. Achuthamenon were arrested during this period. At the same time the right-wing leadership of the CPI was supporting this kind of efforts by the government. When the leaders of the newly formed CPIM reached Kerala after their 7<sup>th</sup> congress at Calcutta most of them were arrested. This was a major factor which led to the rise of the new communist party in Kerala after the split. This can be evident when even the right-wing leaders of Kerala were forced to vote against the congress government in the assembly immediately after the split. Most of the CPI'M leaders fought the 1965 general assembly election from prison. The ensuing general elections proved that the majority of the cadres were sided with the new party that of the CPI. This shows it was the attitude towards congress rather than the Indo-China boarder dispute which determined the cause of the inner party dispute within the CPI.

## CONCLUSION

The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 a result of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry was an inspiration to many working class movements across the world, who stood for an 'alternative socio-political system' against the prevailing exploitative capitalism. Within three decades of the October revolution about one third of the world population came under the influence of socialism. The strategies of the international Communist movement was determined by certain debates which emerged in the the Russian Social Democratic Party by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. They include the questions like workers-peasant alliance, national and colonial question, debates on correct revolutionary strategy and the debates on the relationship between culture and revolution.

The major challenges to the new socialist government after Bolshevik revolution 1917 like the new civil war led by the ex-military generals with the support foreign powers and the huge economic difficulty caused by the First World War were dealt with the adoption of a programme called war communism and the foundation of communist international in 1919. The communist international was established to spread the messages of Russian revolution. The major aspect of the communist international was its emphasis on the colonial question especially from its second congress (1919). The major difficulty which the International had faced was the existence of national bourgeoisie, who led the anti-colonial struggles. The attitude to be adopted towards the national bourgeoisie in the colonies became a major problem of the International.

It was along with the second congress of the communist international efforts were made to form the Indian Communist Party. The immediate

challenge which the Indian communist party faced in the initial year was the lack of a proper organizational framework for Indian Communist Party. British government had taken conspiracy cases against the Indian Muhajirs like that of the Peshawar Conspiracy Case. They took severe restrictions on the circulation of communist literature in India. The formation of workers and peasant parties should be understood in this situation. About this period Comintern and MN Roy had established contact with several Indian leaders like SA. Dange in Bombay, Muzaffar Ahemd in Calcutta and Singaravelu Chettiyar in Madras. It was through these leaders a legal mass party like workers and peasants party was formed in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. In Punjab an organization called Kirti Kisan party was formed in the place of workers and peasants party. Likewise, there took some efforts to form movements based on Socialism. Certain Indian revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev and Chandra Shekhar Azad became communists by about late 1920s. They wanted to make India in to a socialist and secular country.

After 1925, there emerged serious debates within the CPSU regarding the correct revolutionary strategy viz; permanent revolution or socialism in one country. This made deep impact upon the sixth congress of the Communist International. Likewise there developed an alternative strategy in China based on the peasant uprisal. It was in this context the Sixth Congress of the Communist international was taken place in 1928. The major aspect of the sixth congress was the debate on the Colonial question. Many of the world communist parties criticized the communist parties of the metropolitan countries for not giving much importance to the struggle of the colonies like India. When we analyse the debate within the Comintern it is clear that by contrary to the general perception, there took place a fare democratic debate within the international regarding the issues like colonial question. The Sixth congress had ended the strategy of United Front at least for six years. It asked

the Communist parties of the colonies to be free from all form of reformist influence. This led to the denunciation of the Indian National Congress and the organizations like League Against Imperialism.

This congress made a decisive impact upon the functioning of the communist movement in India. This congress led to the breaking the link of the Indian Communist Party with the Workers and peasants parties. Likewise, Indian Communist Party did not take serious attention to the question of agrarian revolution which was argued by CPGB in the sixth congress. Likewise the Indian communist party was completely isolated from the Indian national movement from 1928 to 1935. During this period most of the Indian communist leaders were arrested in the Meerut conspiracy case. This situation was begun to be altered only with the adoption of the united front strategy, after the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1935.

The major change in the international situation which had taken place between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> congress was the rise of Fascist powers in different European countries. This was resulted in the adoption of the United Front strategy in the 7<sup>th</sup> congress of the communist international. It advocated for an anti-Fascist united front. In India this was articulated in the form of Dutt-Bradley thesis. It allowed Indian Communist party to work within the Indian National Congress and non-communist trade unions, thereby attain its leadership. Leaders like Wang Ming had advocated for the united front in the colonial countries.

It was in this period the ideas of socialism and communism were spreading in Kerala. The First Malayalam biography of Karl Marx was written by K. Ramakrishna Pillai in 1912. The 1917 Bolshevik revolution had impacted many Malayali intellectuals like K. Ayyappan. The great depression of the 1930, Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the indifference followed by the Congress leadership towards the hanging of revolutionaries including Bhagat Singh,

etc. accelerated the development of Socialist Consciousness in Kerala. Likewise many of them believed it was only through socialist system the present day problem of the Indian society can be resolved.

The communist league, formed in 1931 in Thiruvananthapuram seems to be the first communist organization in Kerala. Likewise, communist leagues were established in different parts of Kerala. Many of the younger generation became communists through the influence of prisoners whom they met during the period of imprisonment for their participation in the civil disobedience movement. Similarly, many of them became communists through their participation in various social reform organizations. About 1934 congress socialist party was emerged within the Indian National Congress. Unlike other parts of India most of the congress socialist party leaders were later transformed into communists.

Even before the adoption of Dutt-Bradley thesis was implemented the Kerala CSP leaders had organized the trade unions and the *Karshaka Sangahms* (agricultural organization) from 1932 itself. Many of the Kerala CSP leaders had established contact with Communist leaders of other parts of the country. They established contact with leaders like P. Sundarayya, SV. Ghate, Ameer Haider Khan *et al.*, This enabled the Kerala leaders to get many materials related to the international communist movement. Besides this the Kerala unit of the CSP could organise various sections of the working class including toddy tappers, teachers, weavers, coir and beedi workers and so on. Those leaders who organized various trade unions were coming from the grass root workers. Likewise they tried to organize the poor cultivators and agricultural labourers and tried to make them as the allies of the working class. While doing this they could effectively challenge the Gandhian leadership of the Indian National Congress.

It was the strategy of the united front which helped the formation of the Kerala unit of the CPI in 1937. Another important field, where the congress socialists of Kerala had worked was in the field of culture. From early 1930s Kerala witnessed the rise of literature which can be considered as progressive. Writers like P. Kesadev, Cherukad Govindappisharadi, Vaikom Muhammed Basheer, Takazhi shivashankarapilla *et al.*, They believed that the writing should reflect the day to day suffering of the common people, not the life of Kings and princes. Writers like Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky and Victor Hugo had influenced these writers. This period witnessed the emergence of a progressive cultural movement across the country which was manifested in the foundation of Progressive Writers Association in 1936. They include writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Sajjad Zaheer, Monoranjan Bhattacharya and others. They were also influenced by the debates in the international communist movement on the role of culture in the revolution. This new literary trends in Kerala finally led to the formation of Living Literary Movement (Jeeval Sahitya Prasthanam) in 1937. The congress socialist party during the course of their struggle ended the distinction between political and cultural activities. The plays like *Pattabakki* depicted the exploitation of tenants by the Janmies.

Beginning of the Second World War and the signing of Russo-German non-aggression pact allowed the Indian Communist Party to continue its strategy of united front. It was in this situation communist international adopted the strategy of imperialist war. They argued that this war was the result of the imperialist contradictions and asked the all anti-imperialist fighters to intensify their struggle. This was reflected in India too. Similarly the war had intensified the day to day suffering of the masses. It was a contributing factor for their intensification of struggle. India witnessed the mass upsurge in the agitation of the working class and peasants in places like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras there witnessed mass upsurge in the labour



agitation. In Kerala this period witnessed the final break of the Congress Socialist Party from the Indian National Congress and the open functioning of Communist party. About September 1940 this break was complete. This period witnessed the mass upsurge of the workers and peasant agitation across Kerala. After the Parappuram conference, the activities of the Kerala unit of communist party became open. In Travancore Cochin region this period witnessed the intensification of the trade union movement and the struggle for responsible government.

The Nazi invasion of the USSR did not result in an immediate change in the strategy of communist party of India towards the war. Earlier they believed the best way to defend the USSR was the simultaneous strengthening of the struggle for national independence. The earlier resolution of the CPI's polit bureau affirmed this position. But in late 1941 some Comintern documents were reached in India had signalled the change of Comintern strategy towards the war. The important among them was a document written by Harry Polit (a member of CPGB) regarding the new strategic shift. It also created heated discussion within the rank and file of the CPI. It was a document which was written from the Dayoli prison had clearly shifted the CPI's Strategy towards the war. The imperialist war was transformed into people's war.

But this strategic shift created much debate within the CPI especially in its Kerala unit. Many of the CPI leaders were not convinced by this new position. Many felt this new line will weaken their struggle against British imperialism. About this period the activities of Subhas Chandra Bose had influenced the younger generation. So the CPI's rejection of Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army disassociated many younger generation from CPI. Likewise, the communist party's link with the socialist group had strained due to their new strategy.

As far as Kerala was concerned this strategic change created some organizational problems. P. Krishna Pillai, the then state secretary of the CPI was influenced by the squabbles within the CPI leadership which was aggravated by the confusion on the people's war position. In mid 1943 he unilaterally dissolved the state committee. During the period of people's war the CPI policy was based on the principle of national unity i.e., the united struggle against Fascism. While stating this, they did not compromise their demand of national independence and the release of political prisoners. Besides this they began to take up the day to day issues of the people and took initiatives like grow more food campaign, the struggle against hoarding, black marketing and the support for Pakistan demand and their intervention in the field of culture.

CPI encouraged its members of each community to work in their respective community organization to change its character. The activities of Communist Party in Kerala between 1942-45 had helped CPI to overcome its initial difficulties due to adoption of people's war. It should be stated that the quit India movement did not have much impact in Kerala comparing to other parts of the country. This was mainly due to the impact of the communist party's activities during the period of people's war. Because of its activities they could overcome much of their ideological and organizational difficulties. On the one hand this strategy was a challenge to the communist party but on the other they could use it as an opportunity.

The period after 1945 allowed the communist party to re-intensify their struggles. This period witnessed the intensification of the workers and peasants struggle in different parts the country like that of Telangana peasant uprising, the Tibhaga uprising, the struggle for the release of INA prisoners, the Royal Indian Navy struggle, the Punnappra-Vayalar agitation and so on. It was the day to day suffering caused by the war which gave a fillip to these

struggles. The new constitutional proposals created an impression that these proposals were aiming to preserve the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie and aristocratic classes. This was reflected in the struggles like Punnapra-Vayalar. The Punnapra-Vayalar agitation was the clear example where, the struggle of the working class and cultivators were merged with the struggle against princely India.

The transfer of power which had taken place in August 1947 had initiated new debates within the communist party. Many believed that the compromise on Indian independence was made by Indian National Congress was mainly due to the fear of mass upsurge. Similarly the independence and partition had created certain conditions which were favorable for the mass upsurge. There was a discontentment against the government policy towards the princely states. Many Landlords who were earlier loyal to the British government had begun a mass enrollment in to Indian National Congress immediately after independence. Likewise the war time problems like price rise and famine had not been resolved by the newly independent state. All of these factors had contributed to the adoption of the new strategy by the communist party in February and March 1948.

It was in this context, the communist party adopted a new line in its second congress in Calcutta in February 1948. To CPI, they were not satisfied with the way in which the transfer of power was taken place. To them, Indian independence was not complete as India was still dominated by the economic and military power of British imperialism. To them, India's independence won't be real if this domination could not be overthrown. In this congress the earlier leadership of the CPI was replaced by a new leadership and was led by B.T Ranadive. The imperialist and the bourgeoisie collaborators are overthrown and power passes in to the hands of toiling people, which assure

not only complete national independence but also the liquidation of capitalist social order and building of socialism.

The activities of the CPI were severely restricted through various government measures like the public safety ordinance of the Madras government. They had to adopt certain organizational methods which were suited for this situation. Kerala witness a mass violent agitation in the period March 1948 and early 1950. In Kerala the Travancore leadership was by and large supportive of the Calcutta thesis and the Malabar leadership was inclined towards the earlier line. The agrarian agitations were taken place in places like Onchiyam, Thillankeri, Koram etc. In Cochin the important events were the attack on Edappalli police station and in Travancore the Shooranad incident. It was in this period the playing of drama became an integral part of the Communist party propagation. The CPI's calculation about this period was completely failed. For example the All India Railway struggle did not create much response and most of the strikes were suppressed by the police. The Indian Army which entered in to the state of Hyderabad in October 1948 was immediately deputed to suppress the Telangana uprising. Kerala witnessed the severe anti-communist measures in this period. Those who were suspected as Communists were subjected to severe physical torture by the police.

In March 1950 the Cominform through its mouthpiece expressed its reservation of the situation in India. It suggested for a new strategy for uniting all democratic forces instead of Telengana model. Following the editorial and the subsequent inner party discussions and struggle, there took place a drastic reshuffle of the central committee and the politbureau. A new polit bureau, with C. Rajeswar Rao as general secretary was elected by the reconstituted Central Committee. This accelerated the debate within the CPI regarding the two years their activities between 1948 and 50. This intensified the debate

regarding the correct revolutionary path which could be applicable to India. It was in this situation a four member CPI delegation had visited Russia in late 1950 and had discussion with the soviet leadership on the correct revolutionary path. This delegation consisted of four leaders. They were; Ajoy Ghosh, SA Dange, Rajeswar Rao and M. Basavapunnaiah. In their discussion with Stalin, he asked the Indian Communists to adopt an Indian way of revolution. That will be separated from both Russian and Chinese path.

The programme of 1951 was a result of this discussion regarding the correct revolutionary path in India. This document declared that India was a dependent and semi-colonial setup. They also talked of 'the colonial nature of India's economy' and of the backward and the basically colonial economy. In his pamphlet, 'on our programme' Ajoy Gosh wrote that; British capital control the Indian economy' and that a country with a backward Semi-colonial economy can never be really free, moreover, according to the programme, because of British control of Indian armed forces, 'the key part of our independence is still left in the hands of British imperialism. To CPI the fundamental of Indian revolution is bourgeois democratic, if India remains an economic colony of Britain its most internal enemy is feudalism, and this feudalism exploits all sections of Indian society. To this programme, the immediate task of the Indian revolution is to destroy the imperialist and feudal elements that prevent the bourgeoisie and their production relations. Under People's democratic revolution both rent to the Janmies and interest to the money lender will be abolished and the condition for an independent capitalist development will be emerged. It was after the adoption of this new programme CPI contested the first general election of 1951-52 and it became the largest opposition party.

After 1953, differences within the CPI had widen once again regarding the attitude to be adopted towards government policies, the nature and role of

Indian bourgeoisie and the leadership of India and its government with British imperialism. The question of Indian independence, the nature of Indian bourgeoisie, the CPI's attitude towards Indian government had been thoroughly discussed. This discussion was continued till the fourth congress of CPI at Palakkad in early 1956. It was in this congress which accepted India's independence. It also appreciated some progressive steps which the national government adopted in the field of economic and foreign policies. Even though this was accepted the debate on the nature of Indian bourgeoisie and the attitude towards the government had not been completed. It was in this period some Soviet scholars like Modest Rubinstein formulated the concept of Non-capitalist path of development for the under developed countries. This argument was challenged by Indian communists like Ajoy Gosh. But some leaders like EMS Namboothirippad had accepted these arguments in their own ways and made their own interpretation.

These debates had a decisive impact upon the activities of the first communist ministry in Kerala which ascended its power in April 1957. This government had to work within the constitutional frame work of India. Immediately after their victory there emerged a debated within the CPI leadership regarding the correct policy which they had to implement in Kerala. Their policies like inviting private investments in Kerala had resulted much criticism from CPI itself. Their policies like Land reform and education bill had invited opposition from the different community organizations and which led to a struggle which is generally referred as the 'liberation struggle' which led to the dismissal of the ministry in July 1959. This struggle was acted as a platform where, the all anti-communist groups could be mobilized with the support of community organization. The recent studies show that this struggle had the backing of international organizations like Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). This struggle united all caste and community organizations for the common objective of overthrowing the first communist

party led government and it could create a long time impact upon the socio-political life of Kerala.

The 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU (1956) was an important milestone in the international communist movement. It initiated a significant policy change from the part of CPSU. They started a process which is generally referred as de-Stalinization. In his speech Nikita S Khrushchev initiated a series of criticism against Joseph Stalin on the questions like the 'cult of the individual'. To Khrushchev, Stalin did certain things which were against the principles of Marxism Leninism like the mass assassination of his opponents and the building of his cult. To him, it was through the eradication of these trends the world proletarian interest can be advanced. Like this he initiated certain principles in the international communist movement. They include the peaceful co-existence of different social systems, Peaceful competition and peaceful transition to socialism.

After this, Soviet Union took certain initiatives like the beginning of nuclear disarmament with United States and certain steps which were aiming to normalize the relation with western capitalist countries. Some communist parties like Communist party of China wanted to continue the struggle against revisionism in the international communist movement. It was in this situation the first Moscow conference of the communist parties was held in 1957. While it endorsed the programme of the twentieth CPSU congress it accommodated the view points of the parties like the Chinese Communist party. But the next two years witnessed the widening gap between the CPC and CPSU. The major argument of the CPC was that CPSU was not aggressively fighting the menace of the Revisionism. Between 1958 and 1960 both CPSU and CPC had engaged in a serious debate over this issue. But they did not directly attack each other till 1960. But about 1960 especially with the conference of 81 communist parties this dispute was worsened and there took

place a mutual condemnation among them. It was the Moscow conference which made a significant part in the splitting of international communist movement.

Unlike other western capitalist countries the twentieth congress of the CPSU and the Hungarian uprisings did not create much impact upon the communist party of India. But the Moscow conference (1960) and subsequent split of the International communist movement had intensified the debates within the Indian communist movement which had started from the programme of 1951. This debate had divided the rank and file of the Indian Communist party into the advocates of national democracy and people's democracy. It was the Vijayawada conference of 1961, which became the venue for this debate. There existed a qualitative difference between the first Moscow conference (1957) and the conference of 81 communist parties (1960). The first conference allowed for the existence of different paths to revolution and the second conference concentrated almost fully on peaceful transition to socialism and national democracy in the case of colonized nations. The second position, which was not accepted by Chinese and Albanian parties, resulted in the Sino-Soviet debate. The old debate on Russian path and Chinese path was being reformulated in the context of the new circumstances.

There were serious dissensions in the CPI over the ideological issues before the Moscow conference of world Communists and workers parties, held in November 1960. It is claimed that the conference was the result of the CPI's initiatives. In the international commission to prepare documents for the Moscow conference of the 81 communist parties, the CPI was represented by Ajoy Gosh. The dominant leadership which supported the position of CPSU in the international dispute made no serious attempt to resolve the differences but appointed two commissions to prepare documents for the sixth



congress. After the Moscow conference the national council met early in 1961 to decide on the documents but found there were two draft programmes and two political resolutions before it because the commissions were divided. The main issue in debate at this Juncture was the 1960 Moscow statements formulations of a national democratic state, described as a form of transition to socialism in under developed countries, especially in the nonaligned countries of the peace zones where the national bourgeoisie played a progressive role and deserved political and economic aid. The alternative draft by Ranadive, while endorsing the concept of national democratic front was for an altogether different front than the one Ajoy Gosh had envisaged. But its goal was to be people's democracy not national democracy. Ranadive's political report (which was part of the political resolution) as well as the joint report on the revision of party programme by Bupesh Gupta and Ramamurti constituted the leftist documents. Both of them held that the country's independence was not completed yet because after the transfer of power the bourgeoisie has compromised with domestic reaction and imperialism and instead of liberating the country from foreign capital was giving more and more concession to the foreign monopolies leading to linkup between domestic and foreign capital. To them, though the soviet aid had helped India's economic development, the ruling class was using it as a bargaining counter for more. Western aid had retarded the growth and had simultaneously created a new vested interest in the class of big bourgeoisie. The task was to fight American pressure, the right reaction and the leftist shift in congress policies and the object was to be people's democracy.

Another factor which intensified the inner party struggle of the CPI was the Sino-Indian border dispute. When the border dispute between china and India had intensified in the late 1950s it initiated a debate within the CPI. The leadership of the CPI was tried to blame China for the escalating this border dispute. But significant section blamed the Indian government. A

major section wanted to resolve the Sino-Indian border dispute through mutual negotiations. This debate reached a new point when the Sino-Indian war broke-out in 1962. When the war broke-out most of the leaders who were alleged to be the supporters of China were arrested. They include EMS Namboothirippad, the then general secretary of CPI. But the central leadership did not condemn their arrest; instead the right wing leaders of the CPI parliamentary party had openly supported the Nehru government's war efforts. By protesting against this move EMS Namboothirippad has resigned from the post of the General Secretary of CPI. Succeeding two years witnessed a series of disputes within the party, leading to the split.

In early 1964, the publication of a letter regarding CPI chairman SA Dange had intensified the inner party dispute. The content of this letter was that, during the period of Kanpur conspiracy case in 1920's, Dange had promised the British government that he would adhere his loyalty towards the British government. This letter was published in an anticommunist journal, *Current*. The left wing of the CPI demanded the setting up of a party commission to enquire in to this letter and its content. They raised this demand during the National Council meeting of the CPI in April 1964. This was rejected by the right wing leadership. By protesting against this, 32 members of the National Council had walked out of the meeting. This opened a process, which ultimately led to the split of the CPI by about December 1964.

Along with the left wing leaders including EMS Namboothirippad, some right wing leaders in the Communist Party like C. Achuthamenon were also arrested. The impact of split in Kerala cannot be separated from the situation that was created out of various communist party led agrarian uprisings as 1960. In Kerala the agrarian struggles which were led by communist party and Karshaka Sangham created a strong anti congress

feeling among the majority cadres of the CPI. The struggles like Amaravathi were against the attempts of the new congress Government to dilute the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill. In this, even the strong anti communists like father Vadakkan had joined hand with the communist party. Through this struggle A.K Gopalan became a mass leader. Despite of his being publicly censured by the CPI for his statements regarding China, he got a massive reception at his arrival to Kerala. Similarly all the politbureau members of the newly constituted CPI(M), except EMS Namboothirippad were arrested when they returned to Kerala after the 7<sup>th</sup> congress in December 1964. The majority of the Right-wing leaders kept silent on this arrest. Most of the CPI(M) candidates fought the 1965 Assembly election from prison. Support or opposition to China was transmitted to the supporting or opposing of congress. This created an atmosphere for the imminent split in the communist party.

It should be stated that the communist movement in Kerala was not a mechanical reproduction of either Soviet or Chinese way of development. If it had ignored the specific socio-historical situation in Kerala, it would not have been a successful movement. This movement accepted the aspects of international communist movement by adopting the specific conditions of Kerala. This movement was emerged out of a desire for an alternative socio-political system against then existing oppressive socio-political system. By about 1930's various social reform movements had created an atmosphere, which was conducive for ideologies like communism. Many earlier leaders of Kerala communist movement started their public life by fighting against various social evils including caste system and other social inequalities. They did not distinguish between the struggle against social evils and struggle against economic oppression. When we assess the relationship between the international communist movement and the communist movement in Kerala we can see that the international factors had its own role to play. But it was

the day to day life of the people which intensified this movement here. The desire for an alternative socio-political system was the major factor which determined the growth of communist movement in Kerala. Many debates which started in this period have not been settled so far.

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