

LEFT-SECTARIANISM IN THE POST- INDEPENDENCE PERIOD OF 1947-1952

NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE AND WORKING CLASS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR HEGEMONY IN THE COMPLETION OF THE NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

As in the case of the pre-independence period, so also in the post-independence period, the analysis of the policy shifts and deviations have to be made in the context of the *national* task that faced the Party after the transfer of power. In fact, from the so-called Mountbatten resolution of June 1947, right up to the present time, the differences and deviations that arose in our Party hinged on the key questions: What is the significance of the transfer of power to the bourgeois leadership? How does the proletariat carry forward the remaining part of the unfinished national-liberation revolution? Once again the question arose: What is the role of the national leadership and the class it represents—the bourgeoisie—now that it has secured state power, in the remaining part of the revolution? Where does the main line of class contradiction lie in the social upheaval that is taking place? How is the united front of national-liberation forces to be reconstructed for carrying the bourgeois-democratic revolution to completion and how is the struggle to achieve proletarian hegemony in the same to be carried forward? And how is the transition to socialism to be prepared for? Such were the questions which arose.

'THE MOUNTBATTEN' RESOLUTION

The author says our initial stand on the eve of transfer of power—on its very eve—was Right-opportunist and

non-class. But this was also the judgement pronounced on it in all the succeeding stages when our stand was basically Left-sectarian and dogmatic as accepted by us later. Hence a review or a re-appraisal of that judgement itself is necessary in the light of our corrected understanding and the developing national and international events and with regard to the political and ideological shortcomings which we inherited from the previous periods.

The 1947 Mountbatten resolution, for instance, was condemned as revisionist and Right-opportunist by the documents of the Second Congress and the succeeding documents of 1950. After 1951 Programme came also the same analysis continued. But subsequently, all these documents have proved to be Left-sectarian, though in differing forms. In subsequent years, we learned a lot despite committing other mistakes.

If the author, after this rich experience, is now in the unique position to shed the light of pure Marxism on both the revisionist and Left-sectarian mistakes of the past, on both the bourgeois nationalism of the majority and the Left-sectarianism of the minority, then is it not his duty to re-examine the 1947 Mountbatten resolution? Is it not necessary to examine anew its "Right-opportunism" not from the point of Left-sectarianism but from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism?

The so-called Mountbatten resolution was passed in June 1947, when the Mountbatten partition plan and the transfer of power to two independent governments was already decided upon and agreed between British imperialism and the national leadership. The Party leadership was called upon to make an assessment of the forthcoming transfer of power and of the new state that was to come into existence on August 15, 1947.

Was the resolution wrong when it emphasised both aspects of the transfer of power, that, on the one hand, it was a compromise arrived at by the national leadership with British

imperialism, while, on the other hand, it was a retreat forced on imperialism by the rising mass national revolt?

Was it not right when the resolution pointed out that, while there was a transfer of power and the creation of an *independent state*, imperialism was at the same time conspiring to use partition difficulties, princes and feudal forces and its economic grip to make that independence formal?

Was it not right when it implied that the new state formed was no longer an imperialist state but a national independent state in which the power was in the hands of the national leadership, which we recognised at the time represented the interests of the national bourgeoisie?

The author criticises the non-class and Right-opportunist approach of the resolution and seems to suggest that this approach runs like a red thread through the attitude of the majority through all the succeeding stages of the inner-Party struggle, which the author sets about to review. That is why we think it is necessary to state exactly where its mistakes lay.

It is a fact that the resolution did not specifically characterise the new government as one of the national bourgeoisie. It spoke of the Indian big business, as apart from the national government, while it supported the national government which was a part of the national bourgeoisie.

The resolution recognised that the new government was no longer an imperialist government or an imperialist satellite government: It was a national independent government, though that political independence had shortcomings and it was faced with an imperialist conspiracy to subvert or render formal even whatever was obtained.

Despite its shortcomings, was this not a more correct class approach to the new government than the approach through which it has sought to be corrected, viz., that it was a government of national betrayal and surrender, a government which had made a final compromise with imperialism and had exhausted its oppositional role against imperialism?

The resolution said—the new government and the constituent assembly were strategic weapons in the hands of the national leadership and the people to realise national aims, smash imperialist conspiracy, liquidate the rule of princes, give India a democratic republican constitution.

While the resolution demanded "*national unification behind the popular government,*" it also said that

people's vigilance has to be roused against compromises in the national leadership, people's indignation against the vested interests, national conscience against communal provocateurs.

In subsequent months following August 15, 1947, in the context of the communal holocaust that broke out, national unification behind the government's effort to restore communal harmony was stressed all the more and partly rightly too. But it is necessary to go deeper into its reappraisal and to see the positive aspects of the analysis given in that resolution, which were thrown overboard in the subsequent periods.

THE POST-WAR MASS UPSURGE

We have stated earlier that in 1946, when the post-war revolutionary upsurge was mounting up, we had to a large extent corrected our wrong attitude vis-a-vis Muslim League and its slogan of Pakistan, we were putting forward the slogan of 'final assault'—of launching national struggle for complete independence. Starting from the protest against the trial of the returned INA soldiers, the upsurge spread to the Navy and Air Force where it took the form of strike actions and rebellion; it led to a wave of mass political strikes in the industrial cities and began to spread as mass anti-feudal struggle in the princely states.

Isolated as we were from the main stream of the national movement because of the 1942 developments, our slogan of final assault could not rally together even the

militant anti-imperialist elements in the national movement, though the bulk of them were in some way or other drawn in that upsurge at its various points.

The national leadership, while not unwilling to cash upon the upsurge, discouraged it generally and opposed and sabotaged it where it rose to high pitch, prevented any section of the Congress from leading it.

British imperialists correctly sized up the upheaval which they saw as a part of the post-war national-revolutionary upsurge that had broken out in the countries of South-East Asia—Indo-China, Burma, Philippines, Malaya and Indonesia. There the people, inspired by the Chinese example, were fighting arms-in-hand to win national independence, to prevent the old colonial rulers staging a come-back after the Japanese imperialists were defeated.

The British imperialists foresaw that the upsurge in India was the beginning of the end. Their mouthpiece, Sir Stafford Cripps, said in the British Parliament (February 1947) that a settlement with India had to be reached or in the alternative they would have to launch on a reconquest of India which was no longer possible.

IMPERIALIST MANOEUVRE

Imperialists obviously could not rule in the old way. So the shrewd imperialists decided to make a strategic retreat by transferring power to the national leadership, while at the same time, conspiring to make that power unreal through partitioning the country and by propping up the princes. The groundwork for this conspiracy was already laid in the tactics of divide and rule, of fomenting and utilising communal division—and the Congress-League conflict—pursued over a long period. The Congress leadership, while not prepared to head the countrywide anti-imperialist mass upsurge, sabotaging and curbing it wherever it rose to a high pitch as in the RIN revolt,

still wanted to cash upon it as a pressure for getting a more favourable compromise.

The Congress leadership did not want the partition of the country, nor did it want to perpetuate the princely states—but it was not prepared to lead the mass upsurge to launch a new national struggle to oust the British and to end the princely rule. Nor had it the boldness of vision to tell the Muslim masses and the Muslim League—“Let us first get the British out and then we will solve our dispute, without the interference of the third party, on the basis of democratic principles, sovereignty of the people, unity and the interests of the nation as a whole and the wishes of the people of every national unit of the country—through a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.”

Imperialists utilised the compromising attitude of the Congress leadership to make them accept partition and for handing back the paramountcy to the princes, in return for full transfer of power by August 15, 1947 and the withdrawal of British military by the middle of 1948. The imperialists wanted to use the partition and the princes, as well as their economic grip over the country, to make the independence thus conceded, formal or unreal.

The bourgeois leadership had accepted the compromise because it hoped to use the state power to consolidate political independence won by eliminating the princes and to proceed towards independent economic development.

The analysis given in the June 1947 resolution was nearer this understanding which we can now have in terms of the subsequent developments. On the part of imperialism, it was both a retreat and a cunning counter-offensive to restore its rule in a new way. It was not just a cunning counter-offensive as the Second Congress Political Thesis afterwards said.

ROLE OF NATIONAL BOURGEOIS LEADERSHIP

As for the national bourgeoisie, it was also both a compromise and an advance. It was a national advance because instead of the imperialist state there was a state manned by a popular leadership. It was not a puppet state installed in power by the imperialists at their sweet will. They were compelled to concede that much because of these reasons—these factors of the post-war world situation:

1. The powerful post-war upsurge of national-liberation revolutions in the countries of South-East Asia;
2. The pressure of US, which wanted Britain to end its colonial rule over India and because it wanted to muscle in;
3. Post-war revolutionary mass upsurge in India itself, which made it impossible for Britain to rule India in the old way.

One may argue that in the light of the post-war revolutionary upsurge in India, what was achieved was a retreat not an advance. But we have seen how and why that upsurge could not be developed further. And when transfer of power came, the mass of people greeted the event with wild enthusiasm.

Was the resolution right when it stated that the national government was a weapon in the hands of the popular movement to defeat the imperialist conspiracy? It was right. Because the national bourgeoisie, which manned the government, was interested in consolidating political independence and advancing to economic independence. But the imperialist conspiracy could not be defeated only by rallying the masses behind the national government—as the resolution came to mean in later months, in period of riots. We had to use the tactics of unite and struggle; unite with and support it when it acts against the rule of princes or fights imperialist conspiracy; but fight against it when it hits the people and suppresses people's struggles.

The resolution was also wrong when it stated that the big bourgeoisie had compromised, while nothing was said about the national leadership. Actually, the national leadership as a whole representing the whole national bourgeoisie was responsible for the compromise. At the same time, the national bourgeoisie as a whole was also trying to use the state power for consolidating independence.

Thus the national bourgeoisie and the national leadership were playing a dual role in a new situation in a new way. It required of the proletariat and its Party that they too formulate a new policy of uniting with and struggling against the national bourgeoisie for consolidating national political independence and for achieving economic independence, i.e., for completing the anti-imperialist anti-feudal revolution.

THE RE-APPRAISAL

In a most difficult situation, when a basic turning point was reached in the situation of the national-liberation revolution, when it was difficult to foresee the future developments—at such a time the resolution made a careful analysis which correctly grasped the dual aspect of a situation, which was of a half-finished national revolution. It was a step in the right direction—to go forward to work out a new policy for the new period that was opening. Its main shortcoming—its main deviation, was in the reformist direction. It underplayed the compromise and ignored the need to struggle against the new government for defending democratic rights and people's living conditions.

The resolution was not Right-reformist but correct when it implied that the *main* direction of the struggles was still against imperialism and feudalism and not against the national bourgeoisie and the national leadership, was for the consolidation of political independence, for the accession of the princely states and their merger with independent India. In this struggle, the national leadership and the na-

tional bourgeois state, which had emerged, were not on the other side, with imperialism, but on this side, with the people—a weapon to be sharpened to smash the imperialist conspiracy. This was not Right-reformism of the resolution but a correct approach.

But it was also true that the national leadership and the national government were unleashing repression against working-class and peasant struggles for democratic rights and for improving living standards. It was also discouraging struggles of the states' people wherever they were rising in revolutionary tempo. It was necessary to fight this tendency and develop these struggles within the framework of the united front in which the national bourgeoisie had yet a place. The resolution was defective here. It missed this task.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MASS UPSURGE AFTER AUGUST 15

A cursory look at the struggles which were proceeding in 1947-48 is necessary to make this point clearer. Soon after the transfer of power, communal holocaust started in the north and east, leading to huge exodus of population from both Pakistan and India. This was the conspiracy of British imperialists. The situation was particularly critical in the north. Imperialism wanted to divert and disrupt the anti-imperialist mass upsurge and weaken the new government. Allay the communal tension, protect the minority; maintain national unity and rehabilitate the refugees—such were the tasks. And they had to be discharged in cooperation with the government—lending support to government measures. Our Party, especially in the north, played a creditable role in this and wrote a glorious page of heroic self-sacrifice.

In 1947, the unprecedented strike-wave which began in 1946 continued; as reflected in the following eloquent statistics:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Disputes</i>	<i>Workers involved</i>	<i>Work-days lost</i>
1945	820	747,530	4,054,499
1946	1629	1,961,948	12,717,762
1947	1811	1,840,784	16,562,666
1948	1639	1,332,956	7,214,456

In 1946, the bulk of the strikes were political protest strikes, part of the INA and RIN revolt protest movement. They were directed against British imperialism. Others were strikes for better living conditions breaking out under the stress of post-war burden of exploitation. Even economic general strike attained a powerful sweep and strength because of the general political ferment. The same can be said of strikes in 1947, though this year the number of political strikes was less. But the strike wave of 1947-48 had not the significance of political struggle against the national bourgeoisie, against its compromise with imperialism. When in 1948 we artificially tried to give it that impress, the attempt failed miserably.

Then there were the anti-landlord peasant struggles—the Tebhaga in-Bengal, the Bakasht struggle in Bihar, the Warli adivasi peasant struggle in Maharashtra. They were struggles demanding land reform to be implemented by the national government.

The innumerable struggles of states' people in the various princely states were revolutionary in content, though of differing intensity and form, as they demanded accession and merger of states into India, and the end of princely rule. They were a direct continuation of the independence struggle. They were not given the full throated support from the national leadership and the national government, who were relying more on top-negotiations with princes rather than on the people's struggles from below.

So, therefore, the great upsurge of mass struggles of 1947-48, in the given correlation of forces in the national move-

ment after the transfer of power, had not and could not have the significance of the mass rise of the people against the betrayal of national-independence revolution by the national-bourgeois leadership and to overthrow it. It had the significance of an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal mass upsurge demanding the consolidation of the political independence already won. It had the significance of struggles to force the national government to move forward to implement that demand.

If the Mountbatten resolution is to be dubbed as nothing but Right-reformist and its approach non-class, then we would have learned nothing from our past mistakes. In fact its main analysis of the transfer of power and its characterisation of the national government in general was correct. It had reformist shortcomings and they had to be corrected in the manner indicated above. What was needed was a correct understanding of the role of the Indian national bourgeoisie and its leadership in the new stage of national-democratic revolution, correct formulation of the tactic of unity and struggle vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie in that stage and correct direction in which the mass struggles were to be developed.

Given such a correction of the line of the resolution, we would have been able to develop the mass struggles in such a manner that would have enabled us to change the relation of forces more and more in favour of the proletariat—of worker-peasant unity and against the compromising trend of the bourgeois leadership.

This was all the more necessary at the time when the national leadership, apprehensive of the growing upsurge, was taking more and more anti-communist, anti-working-class and anti-people positions, was seeking to slander and isolate the Communist Party from the national forces by using our 1942 stand against us. It was throwing out the communists and other Lefts out of the Congress, converting the Congress itself into an ordinary political party. It

had proceeded to split the working class by forming the INTUC.

At this crucial turning point in the national-liberation struggle, when a new stage had opened, instead of going forward from the Mountbatten resolution, correcting its reformist shortcomings in the manner indicated above and developing a correct policy and programme for the new stage by correctly applying the Leninist theory of national-colonial revolutions to the concrete conditions and revolutionary experience of our national-liberation struggle, we made a false turn in our policy shift in our December 1947 resolution and in the Second Congress of our Party in February 1948, which cost us heavily.

THE SECOND PARTY CONGRESS—A FALSE TURN

Everybody now agrees that the positions we took in the December 1947 resolution and in the Political Thesis of the 2nd Congress were proved to be thoroughly wrong—both from the point of view of Marxist-Leninist theory and our practical and concrete experience. Things were much worse in the subsequent PB documents, the “Tactical Line,” “On People’s Democracy” and “On the Agrarian Question”. But it is also true that the Political Thesis of the 2nd Congress, which contained the detailed exposition of the programme and policy of the new stage of the revolution, was unanimously agreed to by the highest body of our Party—the Party Congress.

That is why, in trying to review our policy shifts from the Second Congress up to the 1951 Programme, we should examine the matter more carefully and should endeavour to see how we came to make and accept certain formulations and take positions which were ultimately proved to be utterly wrong.

At the Second Congress of our Party in February-March 1948, we produced, at one stroke as it were, a complete political tactical line of the new stage of the national-libera-

tion revolution that had opened after the transfer of power. At that time we thought it was an impressive theoretical achievement and an inspiring practical lead. Within two years, however, practical experience proved it to be a monstrous distortion of Leninist principles and subjective blindness to the concrete realities of the revolutionary process in the country.

Three factors dominated our understanding towards the end of 1947:

1. Subjective understanding of the post-war mass struggles:
We tended to look upon them as a mass upsurge against the compromise which the national leadership had made and not as what they really were—struggle for the consolidation of national-independence war.
2. We were justifiably angered at the brutal repression launched by the national government against working-class struggles and against our Party.
3. In the complex situation that was developing after partition-riots, we were deadlocked—the June 1947 resolution did not show us the way forward.

Unable to integrate Leninist principles with a concrete study of the actual experience of the revolutionary process taking place, we came to a shortcut: the national leadership had betrayed—the masses have begun to see it; expose the betrayal mercilessly, lead the mass struggles with the slogan of overthrow of the government of national betrayal and surrender to imperialism; bourgeoisie has joined the camp of counter-revolution; so reorganise the anti-imperialist democratic front anew under the leadership of the working class; for a people’s democratic government to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution and to march forward to socialism.

In the period between December 1947 and February-March 1948, a number of contemporary international writ-

ings became available to us and they were also published in our press as material for discussion before the Congress. Some old basic documents were also published in those months:

Contemporary Documents:

1. *On the International Situation*: Report of Com. A. Zhdanov to the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in September 1947, published in *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!*, November 10, 1947.
2. *The Present Situation and our Tasks*: Com. Mao Tse-tung's report to CC CPC, December 1947, published in *Communist*, Vol. I, No. 8, February 1948.
3. *The Indian Situation*: E. M. Zhukov. Russian original in July 1947, published in "*On the Colonial Question*" PPH, January 1948.

Basic Documents:

1. Lenin's *Thesis on National and Colonial Question*, June 1920, in *On the Colonial Question*, PPH Pamphlet.
2. Stalin's *Address to the University of the Toilers of the East* (1925) same PPH Pamphlet.
3. *Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies*—Thesis of the 6th World Congress of the CI (1928). PPH, January 1948.

THE SOURCE OF OUR MISTAKES

In those days we were not influenced so much by the contemporary international documents though some of them may have confirmed us in the analysis we were making. The main source of our Left-sectarian derailment of that period were threefold:

1. Distorted understanding of the 6th World Congress Thesis—which itself had a sectarian slant as stated earlier;
2. Wrong approach to the *national* (democratic) task that faced the nation and proletariat in that period;

3. Our failure in 1937-38 to 1940-41, to create the political and ideological groundwork for charting the path of our revolution—by integrating Marxism-Leninism with the concrete reality of our national life and peculiarities of the revolutionary process in our country—and the consequent mistakes of 1942-45.

POST-WAR WORLD SITUATION

Here it is necessary to make a brief comment on the contemporary policy developments in the international communist movement. It was clear by 1946-47 that an entirely new world situation was taking shape. The utter rout and destruction of the military might of the fascist powers, the historic victory of the Soviet Union in the war, the emergence of people's democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, the beginning of the final stage of the victory of the Chinese People's Liberation Army—all these were changing the relation of forces decisively in favour of socialism and democracy and against imperialism and colonialism. The upsurge of national-liberation forces in Asia—particularly in South-East Asia, the developments in India—the weakening of capitalism in many countries, etc., showed that there was a new intensification of the general crisis of capitalism.

In this situation, US imperialism—which had emerged unharmed and immensely stronger economically and militarily, having the monopoly of atomic bomb in its hand, had begun a worldwide drive to "contain" the forces of socialism and crush the forces of national liberation.

Side by side with this economic and military drive against the forces of socialism and democracy in the world, the US imperialists launched an ideological and political cold-war drive of anti-communism directed against Communist Parties, who because of the creditable role they had played in the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist fight in their respective countries had become a strong force in their nations.

In September 1947, representatives of Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, the victorious people's democracies and of France and Italy met to review the new world situation—to chalk out a common line of action against the worldwide drive of US imperialism.

The report of Comrade Zhdanov and the resolution of the conference became available to us in December 1947. These documents gave the first size-up of the new world situation that was shaping up. It characterised the two opposing lines of world policies.

The imperialist and anti-democratic policy of US imperialism—a policy of preparing war and intervention against the socialist countries, of launching aggression against newly-liberated peoples of Asia and Africa, of crushing forces of democracy and isolating communists in capitalist countries. It was a policy aimed at knocking together an imperialist anti-democratic camp, attacking the independence and sovereignty of many countries.

As against this, Soviet Union and the socialist countries and the working class in advanced capitalist countries pursued the anti-imperialist and democratic policy of preserving peace, standing forth for firm implementation of the anti-fascist and democratic commitments of post-war settlements, supporting the national-liberation struggles of the peoples fighting for their independence from colonial rule, for unifying all patriotic forces in capitalist countries standing for defence of their sovereignty, democracy and peace.

The meeting called for closing up the ranks of the Communist Parties for firmly carrying out this line and resisting the drive of US imperialism. It set up the "Information Bureau" and its world organ, *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!*

The meeting noted the powerful upsurge of national-liberation movements and said this was "an aggravation of

the crisis of the colonial system" which placed the rear of the capitalist system in jeopardy. It made the important formulation: "The peoples of the colonies no longer wish to live in the old way. The ruling classes of metropolitan countries can no longer govern the colonies on the old lines." It foresaw a period of "protracted colonial wars."

The Cominform meeting was the first collective effort to study the character of the new era in world socialist revolution, and new stage of the general crisis of capitalism that was taking shape. The main aim of the meeting was to consolidate the unity of the new born people's democracies and the Soviet Union against the US offensive. It was also sought to coordinate the actions of the Communist Parties and of the democratic forces in capitalist countries in struggle for peace and against the US drive to revive forces against independence of nations and democracy, and those of fascism.

The formation of the Cominform was not the revival of the Communist International. The statements made by Comrades Dimitrov and Stalin on the dissolution of the International remained valid. The international communist movement in the present phase could not be guided from one centre. Cominform was for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the Parties of socialist and capitalist countries of Europe in common tasks and that too by mutual consultations and agreement. At least that was the idea as proclaimed in the beginning. If later that body was used as an international authority as in the case of the expulsion of CP of Yugoslavia or for approving and disapproving this or that trend in other Communist Parties as was done later, that was an impermissible use of the body and therefore after 1956 it was dissolved.

But in 1947, it had not assumed such a role. The Warsaw Conference documents could not be interpreted as laying down even a general line for the other Parties. It was not as if the line of the anti-fascist united front and

the anti-imperialist national front laid down in the 7th Congress of the CI was being replaced by a new general line of "class against class." The general line of action put forward there, in the context of countering the US anti-democratic world drive, could be construed at best as the application of the line of the anti-fascist united front in a new way and in the new situation. As for the countries fighting for national liberation from colonial rule, no new line of action was formulated.

NEW FEATURES OF POST-WAR SITUATION

The governments which had emerged in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe after the defeat of the fascist governments there by the Red Army were called people's democracies. They began as anti-fascist people's front governments, in which the Communist Parties played a prominent role. They developed as people's democracies under working-class leadership and were recognised later as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This development was accompanied by the completion of the anti-fascist democratic revolution, by the abolition of landlordism and by distribution of land to the peasants, by the nationalisation of banks, factories and mines, so as to prepare the ground for the building of socialism. This development was not marked by the formation of Soviets but the transformation took place on the basis of the parliamentary form. In the special conditions obtaining in these countries, with the Communist and Workers' Parties playing a decisive role in the anti-fascist liberation struggle and under the influence of the liberating forces of the Red Army, the possibility of effecting a transformation from capitalism to socialism in a new way had arisen. The governments of people's democracy and their consolidation later as working-class governments had made that possibility a reality. It was a new phenomenon. The process was yet taking place. It had yet to be studied. The

question of generalising from it had not yet arisen. People's democracy was not considered as a new slogan of power for all capitalist countries though nailing it to the mast-head of the organ of the Cominform, as *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!* could give that impression. Two leaders of the world communist movement (Thorez and Gottwald) had stated in those days that the transition from capitalism to socialism may take new and varied forms in the new situation but the question was not yet concretely worked out.

All this is explained at some length only to show that the Cominform documents could not or did not offer us any direct help to evolve our analysis given in the Political Thesis of the 2nd Party Congress.

OUR 2ND PARTY CONGRESS THESIS

In the Political Thesis, we dared to make a sweeping formulation about "a new constellation of class forces" on a world plane, and stated:

The old combination in which certain sections of the bourgeoisie and their reformist hangers-on were found in the people's camp in the common battle against fascism, is replaced by one in which the entire bourgeoisie, ranged together with its reformist hangers-on and reactionary supporters, is attempting to blend itself together to stem the tide of revolution and oppose the working class, the people, the socialist Soviet Union, the eastern democracies and the colonial peoples.

This was our own original contribution to the understanding of the new world situation. We were projecting our distorted and wrong understanding of the "new class constellation" which we imagined to have emerged in India after the transfer of power, on to the world plane.

This 'new class alignment' in India after the transfer of power on August 15, 1947 is described in the Political Thesis thus:

1. Imperialism has made big concessions to the bourgeoisie and handed over governmental power to rule the Indian people in its own narrow selfish interests.

2. The state it has won is a satellite state dependent upon imperialism—which is dominant indirectly.

3. The bourgeoisie and the national leadership which represents it, are no longer in opposition to imperialism as in the past. Whenever differences and conflicts would arise between it and imperialism it would solve them at governmental level by offering new concessions to imperialism.

4. Hence the march of the democratic revolution will have now to proceed directly in opposition to the bourgeois government, its policies and the bourgeois leadership of the Congress. What is the new class alliance of the people against this? The Political Thesis says:

To defeat the combine of imperialism-feudalism and the bourgeoisie a new class alliance is forged—alliance between working class, peasantry and the revolutionary intelligentsia (or oppressed middleclass) under working-class leadership. (*Political Thesis of the CPI, PPH, July 1948, p. 75-76*)

What is the character of the new phase of the revolution that is opened out and what is our slogan of power? The Political Thesis says:

Today the entire trend of events demands a democratic state of workers, toiling peasants and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie as the only rallying slogan... It means the people's democratic revolution has to be achieved for the completion of the tasks of democratic revolution and the simultaneous building up of socialism. (*ibid.*, p. 74)

SOURCE OF THE SECTARIAN ERRORS

How and why did we arrive at these formulations which were grossly in contradiction with the Leninist theory of

revolution in colonies and also with the concrete reality of the complex situation that was developing after the transfer of power? Their source is not the Cominform documents of 1947, but our own deeply sectarian and distorted understanding of the Sixth World Congress theses. The theses themselves had a sectarian slant as stated earlier. While they correctly emphasised the oppositional role of the national bourgeoisie in India and the anti-imperialist significance of their national-reformist movement, while they correctly warned that their capitulation to imperialism is never final until 'class revolution' becomes imminent, the perspective stressed was that the bourgeoisie is on the way out and that as struggle sharpens and gains in sweep, they go over to imperialism even before independence is achieved. We did not use the comprehensive analysis of the thesis as a guide to study the Indian national bourgeoisie in motion in the context of the economic and political developments in India. We ignored the fact that with these developments the contradiction between imperialism and the Indian people including the national bourgeoisie were sharpening far faster than the contradiction between national bourgeoisie and its leadership on the one hand and the growing national-revolutionary movement.

SUBJECTIVE APPRAISAL

Looking back now, we can definitely state that in the two and a half decades that preceded the transfer of power, the national leadership steadily stepped up its political pressure through its struggle against imperialism. Industrial bourgeoisie, including big business, as it grew increasingly accepted the national leadership and supported it fully. We tended to assess the developments in the opposite direction: the growing compromising and anti-struggle role of the national-bourgeois leadership. In fact, Gandhiji carried out what he told the Meerut prisoners in 1930. 1920-22, 1930-33 and 1942-44 were ascending peaks

of the rising tide of the national movement. As Comrade Ajoy Ghosh pointed out

The bourgeoisie as a whole remained remarkably under the leadership of Gandhiji. In 1942, the same Tatas and Birlas who minted crores from the war contracts, tried to engineer strikes from top during the August movement. (*Some Questions of Party Policy*, November 1956, p. 22)

The national-bourgeois leadership not only formulated its demand of complete independence and stepped up its type of struggle for it, it also formulated in the Lahore resolution (1930) that political independence cannot be consolidated unless it gets the basis of economic independence: removal of the imperialist stranglehold on our economy and the elimination of landlordism. These ideas were further concretised in the Karachi Resolution (1931).

In 1938, the national leadership produced a blueprint for achieving economic independence after political independence was won; that was the report of the National Planning Commission (NPC) headed by Jawaharlal Nehru and the Economist K. T. Shah. The report proposed the building up of heavy industry in public sector under independent India's government and also radical agrarian reforms. The work was inspired by Soviet Union's First Five-Year Plan and this can be seen from an article by Jawaharlal Nehru in the early thirties or earlier, entitled *Pyatletka* (contemporary Russian name for five-year plan). The blueprint of the NPC was not a socialist plan but a plan for independent economic development on capitalist lines though inspired by the ideas of Soviet Union's first five-year plan.

A sober appraisal of the fact that the national leadership and the bourgeoisie were stepping up their own type of struggle for political and economic independence does not mean we underplay its compromising role, tone down

struggle against it, or neglect the task of building independent proletarian movement and developing the anti-feudal peasants' struggle. On the other hand, this correct appraisal would have helped us to work out the tactics of "unity and struggle" more effectively. Failure to do this concrete study of the role of the national bourgeoisie in the pre-independence period, hardened amongst us the trend to consider the bourgeoisie as rapidly and inevitably sliding into final compromise. Thus when the final stage of independence struggle came with all its complications, we failed to stand by the more or less correct appraisal of our June 1947 resolution on the transfer of power. Instead we went in for the subjective appraisal that the national bourgeoisie has finally gone over to imperialism and the betrayed masses are ready to rise in revolt against it and to carry forward the unfinished revolution.

DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES

On this reading of the situation was raised the theoretical formulation of India's path to revolution, which was a crude violation of Leninist principles and led to disastrous practice. The proletariat and its party can never register an advance in achieving proletarian hegemony, even shifting the balance of forces more in its favour and against the bourgeoisie unless it correctly grasps the national task of the period and formulates the correct class alliance for the same. The national task of the time then was the consolidation of national independence, against imperialist conspiracy, against the feudal princes, and against landlordism. We put forward a high sounding programme of people's democratic revolution but on concrete issues of the national struggle we took a sectarian approach which harmed, not helped, the cause of the Party.

For instance, on the question of the struggle for the abolition of princedom and feudal rule we almost opposed accession to and merger of the states in the Indian Union

saying the states' people must first overthrow the princely rule, set up a people's democratic rule and then they will decide how to accede and merge. What was the result of this ultra-revolutionary unrealistic stand?

In Hyderabad, where our Party was in the forefront of the anti-Nizam struggle and had built up the glorious Telengana struggle for land, under the influence of this wrong approach we continued the struggle against the national government as well, even after the police action, which led to a great setback later.

In Kashmir, the position led us to the amazing stand that both India and Pakistan governments are reactionary. Therefore, we said that the Indian army which had been sent to fight back British-backed Pakistan aggression had gone there only to protect the feudal prince!

Thus on the two occasions, soon after the transfer of power, the national government used the army to smash and counter imperialist-feudal conspiracy against our national independence, instead of supporting it and joining our forces with it, we took a position of critical opposition to it. This was the logical corollary of characterising the national-bourgeois government as a government of imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine! How this utter Left-sectarianism in formulating the programme and policy, led to blind adventurism in the field of mass struggles and high-handed bureaucratism in Party organisation, and with what disastrous consequences is well known.

It is significant that our comrades in Andhra who were the builders of the anti-feudal struggle against the Nizam and who gave it revolutionary sweep by organising the glorious anti-landlord Telengana peasant struggle, were the first to raise their voice against this Left-sectarian deviation. Their experience of the anti-landlord struggles made them turn to Mao Tse-tung's *New Democracy*, which was published by us in 1944. They correctly saw that the main content of our revolution in this stage is anti-

imperialist, anti-feudal and in that struggle we have to cooperate with all sections of the bourgeoisie except the compradore sections which collaborate with imperialism. They sought to turn the face of the Party towards the anti-feudal struggle of the peasants for land and towards building worker-peasant alliance.

JUNE 1950 CC CORRECTION

Though the Andhra comrades made important corrections and they were accepted later unanimously by June 1950 meeting of our Central Committee, the total political line that emerged thus was not a correct one but a new variant of Left-sectarianism. The disastrous results of a mistaken policy did not lead us to a revived effort to correctly understand the Leninist principles of national-colonial revolution and to a renewed effort to correctly apply them to the concrete study of the role the national bourgeoisie was playing in the period after transfer of power, and to the sober appraisal of the national and mass struggles that were developing. It led us again to a shortcut of taking the model of the Chinese path of revolution and mechanically superimposing it on Indian conditions.

It was quite correct to turn to the rich experience of the Chinese revolution, first and foremost, because it was one belonging to the same category of revolutions as ours. Earlier we tended to uncritically use the analogy of the Russian revolution, forgetting Lenin's warning that national-liberation revolution in colonial countries is fundamentally different and the national factor there is of the greatest significance. Distorted understanding of the Sixth World Congress thesis and a subjective understanding of national reality led us in 1930 to such wrong slogans as—"the national bourgeoisie was counter-revolutionary" and that "real national independence was destruction of capitalism together with imperialism."

In 1947-48 again, despite over 20 years' experience,

dogmatism and subjectivism again led us to the wrong conclusion that the bourgeoisie had gone over lock-stock-and-barrel to imperialism and that the proletariat had now to complete both bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions in one giant sweep. Some of us toyed with the idea that the national government of 1947-48 was like the Kerensky government, emphasising the nearness of the socialist revolution! But what we lacked was a Bolshevik Party, it was said. (Main Report to our Second Party Congress.) This was carried to absurd lengths in the PB Tactical Line mechanically applying the "October path" to India and rejecting valid features of the "Chinese path" to the extent of launching an unfounded attack on the Chinese Party and its leader Com. Mao Tse-tung.

TURNING TO CHINESE EXPERIENCE

It was quite correct to turn to Chinese experience, but not once again to commit the mistake of blindly copying the Chinese path irrespective of the concrete conditions in our country, but in order to learn from their method of applying Leninist theory of national and colonial revolution to the concrete revolutionary experience of China. The Chinese proletariat and its party were faced with the same task of achieving proletarian hegemony vis-a-vis the national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal national revolution. The experience and the problems of the Chinese revolution were discussed in great detail in the Sixth World Congress (1928) of the CI and the colonial thesis of the same had outlined in general the line of its future development.

The Chinese revolution had reached a very high stage of development; despite the betrayal of the revolution by important sections of the national bourgeoisie, and despite Left- and Right-opportunist mistakes of the late 'twenties, the Chinese Communist Party was going to setting up Soviets and liberated bases by carrying through anti-feudal

land revolution in the early thirties. But as soon as the Japanese imperialists attacked China and the Kuomintang government took up the fight against this aggression, the Chinese Communist Party took "the initiative for the creation of a most extensive anti-imperialist front against Japanese imperialists and its Chinese agents, jointly with all the forces which were ready to wage a real struggle for the salvation of their country and their people." (Dimitrov's report to the 7th Congress of the CI.)

Out of the bitter and long experience of building the broad national united front in the war of resistance against Japanese aggression, and in continuous struggle against the Kuomintang diehards who went on attacking the communists despite the united front, the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Comrade Mao Tse-tung created the Leninist theory of programme of the Chinese national-democratic revolution. This theoretical and programmatic groundwork was first put forward in Mao Tse-tung's *New Democracy* (1939) and proved a true and reliable guide and weapon in the hands of the Chinese communists and people in the nine years of twists and turns enabling them to achieve their historic victory.

TEACHINGS OF "NEW DEMOCRACY"

New Democracy of Comrade Mao Tse-tung is a brilliant application of Lenin's theory of national-colonial revolution and his *Two Tactics of the Proletariat in the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution* to the concrete experience and peculiar conditions of the Chinese revolution. These very same principles were sought to be applied to the problems of the Chinese revolution at the Sixth World Congress of the CI (Colonial Thesis) and at the 7th Congress of the CI (Wang Ming's report on China at this Congress). But significantly enough, these 'precursors' of the *New Democracy* are seldom mentioned by Chinese Communist Party leaders in their reviews of the history of

the Party (cf. Chen Po-ta's *Mao Tse-tung on Chinese Revolution*, 1954; Liu Shao-chi *The Victory of Marxism-Leninism in China*, 1959). The reason for this is perhaps that neither of these documents gave a correct lead on the three key problems of the Chinese revolution.

For instance, the Sixth World Congress thesis had not foreseen that despite betrayal by important sections of the national bourgeoisie, the question of uniting with the national bourgeoisie, while fighting against its compromising tendency, would still arise—and had not worked out tactics of unity and struggle vis-a-vis national bourgeoisie. We have referred to this shortcoming of the thesis in relation to India earlier.

Wang Ming's report which was made in 1935 by which time the specific path of establishing proletarian hegemony vis-a-vis the national bourgeoisie by developing the anti-feudal peasant revolution in the countryside and establishing democratic liberated bases was clear enough. But Wang Ming's report does not reflect this characteristic feature at all.

Both in the 6th World Congress thesis and in Wang Ming's report to the 7th Congress the slogan of power put forward for the Chinese national revolution was that of Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic. But Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party, correctly appraising the experience of the course of the Chinese revolution both before and after Japanese aggression, and fighting both the deviations had come to the conclusion that the correct slogan of power for the democratic stage of the revolution in which national bourgeoisie can participate in the democratic republic of a new type, i.e., New Democracy—not the Soviet Republic. This was put forward in *New Democracy*.

There are three major teachings which are emphasised in *New Democracy* of Mao Tse-tung, which can be said to be creative application of the Marxist-Leninist theory of

colonial and national revolutions to the concrete realities of China.

1. The Chinese revolution consists of two stages—democratic and socialist: "We can give correct leadership to the Chinese revolution only on the basis of a clear understanding of both the difference between the two and their inter-connection." (Mao Tse-tung)

2. For achieving proletarian hegemony and victory in democratic revolution—developing revolutionary anti-landlord peasant struggle for land—setting up liberated bases.

3. On the basis of building closest alliance between proletariat and peasant masses solve the question of forging united revolutionary front with the national bourgeoisie—tactic of unity and struggle—isolating the diehard, uniting with the middle-of-the-road forces.

MECHANICAL APPLICATION

In 1950 these teachings of the Chinese Communist Party leaders did help us to correct some of the most crude Left-sectarian mistakes of the political thesis of the Second Congress and of the later PB documents. But we took to the shortcut of mechanically applying the Chinese model to India instead of imbibing the spirit of these contributions and attempting to chart our own path in the light of a concrete study of our national bourgeoisie, and in the light of the reality of our national mass struggles. The result was that we now characterised the government as that of the big bourgeoisie and landlords which had betrayed the national revolution.

We conceded that in the fight for the completion of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, we had to unite with the national bourgeoisie, which was oppressed by imperialism and that the main form of the struggle was to be armed struggle of the peasantry for land. Telengana was to be continued and similar movements to be started in other suitable places.

While some corrections were made, the line on the whole consisted of transferring Left-sectarianism and adventurism to the peasant front.

In fact, without going into details of the June 1950 CC decisions, it can be said that the lead that they gave was crassly at variance with the actual situation in the country and the mood of the people including the toiling masses. The dual role and aspect of the new class that now held the state power began to unfold itself. The police action in Hyderabad and the armed defence of Kashmir against imperialist-sponsored Pakistani raiders showed that the national leadership was using state power to counter imperialist-princely conspiracy and consolidate independence. The country was faced with economic and other after-effects of partition, rehabilitation of refugees, shortage of cotton and jute. The national leadership took up the question of abolition of statutory landlordism in its own way; the Congress agrarian reforms committee report with its progressive recommendations was out and zamindari abolition laws began to be framed. A constitution based on a parliamentary form of democracy and adult suffrage came into existence; political personal power of princes was put to an end. The armed forces were brought under Indian command. The British civil service was pensioned off. As a result of the new Constitution coming in, communist detenus were released. This was one aspect of the situation. The other aspect was that the class in power was using the state machine against the movements of workers and peasants. The Constitution had built-in provision for preventive detention acts. The Constitution could be used by landlords to stall the zamindari abolition bills. Large-scale eviction of tenants had been started by landlords to frustrate agrarian laws. Princely states were merged but privy purses were paid and the reorganisation of states on linguistic basis denied because it involved break up of big states. Protection was given to private foreign capital in

order to invite more penetration of the same. Big business was multiplying its collaboration deals. The Army was under national control but defence needs and industry were dependent on the British.

While armed defence of Kashmir had given a rebuff to Anglo-American conspiracy against our independence, the reference to the UNO under British pressure meant a new lease of life to that conspiracy in a new way. The calling of an Asian Relations Conference by the national leadership in 1947, inviting 30 Asian states, including the Soviet Asiatic Republics to discuss problems of national independence of the states was a significant indication of a desire to work out an independent foreign policy consistent with the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist stand of the National Congress of the pre-independence days. But subsequent events showed that foreign policy moves of the government were yet being influenced by the 'commonwealth link'.

SECTARIANISM IN NEW FORM

A new political situation was shaping up in the country 3-4 years after the transfer of power. The National Congress, which was the forum and front of all the anti-imperialist forces fighting for independence, had now become the ruling party. It changed its character. It converted itself into a political party representing the interests of the national bourgeoisie. Not only the CPI but all other Leftist groups and parties which participated inside the Congress were eliminated by making a rule that no group having a separate programme, etc., will be allowed. The Congress split central working-class organisations by forming the INTUC. It took the initiative to form other rival mass organisations as well. The object of these organisational steps was two-fold:

- (1) To create the apparatus for winning parliamentary

elections which were to be held on the basis of adult suffrage; and

(2) To split and sabotage the growing mass movement.

As for the mass movement, the national struggle upsurge of 1946-47 had subsided and a new rise based on the discontent of the masses was taking shape. It was no doubt directed against the government, representing the urge of the masses wishing to see national independence and democracy implemented in terms of national resurgence and rising living standards. It was neither united nor had yet reached the consciousness of the demand of replacing the government.

The slogan and the analysis of our 2nd Congress thesis and the tactics worked out on its basis had proved to be at crass variance with the situation as it developed in the next two years. The Party ranks and workers who tried to work it out unitedly and at the cost of great sacrifice began to see the contradiction and demanded change. The change which June 1950 line offered soon proved to be equally in sharp conflict with reality.

UNITY ON THE BASIS OF 1951 PROGRAMME

There was heated discussion and searching of hearts throughout the Party. There was widespread restudy of Lenin and Stalin on colonial revolution, of the works of the Chinese Communist Party, of Comrade Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi; of the reports of the two Soviet oriental academicians' meetings in 1949 and 1950. Besides, there was also the confusion and revolt in the ranks caused by the leadership trying to push through wrong political line through organisational methods. Finally, the leadership after a sustained effort of collective discussion, in which international communist circles were also drawn, produced in May 1951 a Programme and a policy document which unified the Party for the time being.