CHAPTER II

ANTI-COLONIAL SOVIET STRATEGY AND THE
FORMATION OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL,
1919
As obvious from the historical background of this work, anti-colonialism was not only a basic component of Soviet foreign policy, but it also served as a strategy for the future victory of World revolution which seemed to be an immediate agenda before the Bolshevik Party following the victory of October Revolution. Historian Julius Braunthal points out that according to Lenin's conception the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was only one element of World Revolution. In his strategy it was meant to act as a spark which would ignite Europe's social tensions in one huge revolutionary explosion.¹ He further says that Lenin believed that conditions were already matured for World Revolution. At the historic conference of the Bolshevik Executive on October 10, 1917, which decided in favour of an armed rising, he justified the need for an immediate seizure of power by stressing, above all, the International basis of the Russian Revolution.²

The excitement of the victory of October Revolution vigorously provoked Bolshevik leaders to think in terms of a World Revolution. In this context, in a significant wireless message of greeting on behalf of the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) to the Government of the Hungarian Soviet Republic on March 22, 1919, Lenin said; "The Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party sends ardent to the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Our Congress is convinced that the


² Ibid.
time is not far distant when Communism will triumph all over the World. The Working class of Russia is making every effort to come to your aid. The Proletariat throughout the World is watching your struggle with intense interest and will not permit the imperialists to raise their hands against the new Soviet Republic. Long live the World Communist Republic! ³ It is interesting to note that at a time, when the Bolshevik were dreaming of a world revolution, the Soviet Russia was badly isolated by the colonialist West. Most of the Asian, African and Latin American countries had become the victim of the colonial rule. This typical phenomenon of colonial ascendancy further isolated the newly born Soviet state in Russia. Under these circumstances, the Bolshevik sought their friendship with the colonial people, particularly in the East. Through the call of national self-determination and freedom for the oppressed people of the world, the Bolshevik had a definite plan to kill two birds with one stone. Firstly they wanted to foment revolution in the colonies after ending the domination of the colonial powers and secondly, to weaken their economy as well as the military position throughout the world. This is how, the anti-colonial policy came into being which flourished through the formation of the communist international (Comintern) or Third International in March 1919. Thus, the anti-colonial policy of a single isolated state became the voice of millions of people throughout the world. In this regard Comintern was a miracle for Soviet Russia.

The formation of Comintern was not a sudden phenomenon.

It was the reincarnation of two other Internationals, perished in the history after playing their historic roles in promoting the idea world revolution. In this context it may be recalled that the First International originally known as 'International Working Men's association' was set up on September 28, 1864 in London. Karl Marx played the most crucial role in the foundation of the First International. Interestingly, the historic meeting held in St. Martin's hall of London in which the First International was founded, was chaired by Prof. Edward Spencer Beesley of London University. In his inaugural speech Prof. Beesley spoke of the need to fight against great powers' annexationist policy and exposed Great Britain's foreign policy. One of the first bodies to join the International was the 'London, German Workers' Educational association' and the other important organization which joined it in 1867, was the New York Communist Club (of German Workers).

The famous British intellectual R. Palme Dutt who was one of the most important leaders of the Communist International has given some interesting accounts regarding formation of the First International. According to him, the true title was not "the First International." This arithmetical terms, by which it is now a days known, was only attached to it after the foundation of the Second International. Its official title was the International Working Men's Association (at first, in the foundation documents, "


5 Ibid., p. 560.
Working Men's International Association" ). In general contemporary expression, equally of friend and of enemies, it was referred to as "the International".\(^6\) He has further pointed out:" The foundation at the St. Martin's Hall meeting in London on Sept. 28, 1864, was the outcome of series of preparatory steps during the preceding two years. At the International Exhibition in London in August, 1862, and elected delegation of French trade union representatives (the trade unions were permitted under Napoleon III, although political organisation was forbidden) had met English trade union representatives and discussed the project of forming an international workers' organisation. Contact was maintained. In the following year this was brought to a higher level when the American civil war and consequent cotton famine brought extreme hardship to the textile workers of Lancashire and also in France.... In July, 1863, a demonstration was held in London in support of the Polish Insurrection, with the joint participation of France and English workers' leaders, who carried forward the contacts of the preceding year. On the initiative of the London Trades Council (there was not yet a Trade Union Congress) a joint meeting was held with the French representatives, and also with Polish and German Workers' representatives' and a committee appointed to draw up an Address to the French workers proposing the holding of an international workers' congress. The reply of the French workers was brought and read out by their delegation to the St. Martin's Hall meeting on September 28, 1864. The French representatives presented a plan for the formation of an international workers' 

organisation by the establishment of a central commission in London, with representatives from the workers of all countries, and with sub-commissions in the capital cities of Europe, to draw up the constitution and rules and prepare an International Congress in the following year. This plan was accepted in a resolution unanimously adopted by the meeting."

According to Soviet scholars: "The founding International Working Men's Association was a clear expression of shifts in the frames of mind of the masses of the workers and of their craving of unity. It was necessary to convert this feeling into practical actions and to give it organisational form. The structure of the Association, which had been laid down in its very first documents drawn up by Marx, was highly flexible. On the one hand it was conceived of as a network of branches (sections) operating as bases for propaganda and organisational work in the different localities and linked with the General Council either directly or through regional or national federations. In addition to that system, which was built on individual membership of each worker, Marx had also introduced another principle into the Provisional Rules, viz, the joining as affiliated members of already existing organisations of the proletariat.

"The International did not close its doors to representative of any ideological trend, provided they recognised that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself, and adopted the slogan "Proletarians of all countries, Unite!" Marx considered it a paramount task to draw the masses of the workers into the movement, seeing in that the

7 Ibid., pp. 46-47.
road to uniting scientific theory with the working-class movement." In this regard, it is interesting to note that in March 1870, a Russian Section of the First International was founded in Geneva. The members of the Russian section of the First International nominated Karl Marx as their representative on the General Council and at the same time sent Marx their programme and rule for approval. Marx wrote with amusement to Engels in 1870 that he had become "the representative of the Young Russia." 9

The most important landmark during the existence of First International, was the rise and fall of Paris commune in 1871. It was for the first time in the history of the international communist movement that the proletariat class had made an attempt to capture power in France. However, it is a remarkable point to note that Karl Marx was not in favour of capturing power immediately as the proletariat class was not so strong to sustain its rule on a permanent basis in France. According to minutes of the General Council of First International, 1870-71, in his second address on the Franco-Prussian war, Marx urged the French section of the International to use republican freedom for strengthening proletarian organisation and warned them against premature action. 10 Marx's prediction proved to be quite true as Paris Commune was crushed just after two months of its

8 V. N. Bonomarev, et al, eds. n. 4, pp. 559-60.

9 R. Palme Dutt, n. 6, p. 83.

existence. Later on it was stated that the main reason for the defeat of the Paris Commune was ultimately the fact that by the 1870s Capitalist development had not reached a sufficiently high level not only in France but in the world as a whole.\footnote{Ibid., p. 152; For further details see, F. Angels' Introduction in \textit{The Civil War in France} by Karl Marx in Marx and Engels, \textit{Selected Works} (Moscow, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 178-189.}

Ironically, the existence of the First International was badly influenced by the fall of the Paris Commune. During the post Paris Commune period repression of workers increased many folds due to which its head quarters was shifted to the United states of America in 1872, where it was finally dissolved in 1876. Afterwards for about thirteen years the International working class movement seemed to be left without any guiding centre. However, by the efforts of Engels and his associates the International Socialist Congress of working mean was held in Paris on July 14, 1889 in which the formation of the Second International was announced. This Congress was attended by about 390 delegates from 20 countries including three delegates from Russia. The Russian delegates were Georgi Plekhanov, V.I. Zasulich and P.V. Axelrod who were the founders of the famous organisation 'the Emancipation of Labour Group' in Russia.\footnote{V. V. Zagladin, et al, eds., n. 10, pp. 266-7; For further details see, Ivor Krivoguz, \textit{The Second International, 1889-1914 : The History and Heritage} (Moscow, 1989), pp. 16-60 and J. Lenz, \textit{The Rise and Fall of the Second International} (New York, 1932), pp. 11-17.}

Initially, the role of Second International did not seem to be stimulating as karl Marx was already dead. However, towards the
end of nineteenth century it began to play a crucial role in the international working class movement. It was the same period when dramatic changes were taking place in Russia with the foundation of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in March 1898. At this crucial juncture Lenin was emerging as a leader of future Russian Revolution. In the mean time, the Russian Revolution of 1905 shook the roots of Tsarist empire in Russia. At this moment of revolutionary upsurge seventh Congress of the Second International was held at Stuttgart in August 1907. For the first time Lenin attended any congress of the Second International. It was also for the first time that the Stuttgart Congress debated colonial question comprehensively and included it in its agenda.\textsuperscript{13}

In a resolution on colonial policy the Stuttgart Congress stated: "The Congress is of opinion that, by virtue of its inner nature, capitalist colonial policy must lead to enslavement, compulsory labour or extermination of the native population of colonial territories. The civilising mission referred to by capitalist society serves only to camouflage its desires for exploitation and conquest. Only a socialist society will give to all peoples the opportunity to develop their culture completely. Capitalist colonial policy, instead of increasing the collective forces, destroys through the enslavement and impoverishment of the natives, as well as through murderous, devastating wars, the natural riches of the territories into which it transplants its own methods. Thereby, it shows down and hampers even the development of trade and the consumption of the industrial

\textsuperscript{13} J. Lenz, n. 12, p. 85.
products of the civilized states. The Congress condemns the barbarous methods of capitalist colonization and demands, in the interests of development of productive forces, a policy which would permit a peaceful, cultural development and which would place at the service of the progress of all mankind the natural riches of the soil...."^{14}

Igor Krivoguz, a Soviet expert on Second International says that Stuttgart Congress not only confirmed the leading role of the revolutionary socialists and the prevalence of Marxism in the international working class movement despite the stubborn resistance of opportunists and the left wing elements, but also made a significant step forward. It adopted the rules and resolutions aimed towards strengthening the cooperation of Socialist Parties and the trade unions.^{15} Lenin described that the Stuttgart Congress marked the final consolidation of the Second International.^{16}

However, the last phase of the Second International which was confined between 1908-1914 proved to be a difficult affair. With the rapid growth of international working class movement the rift in the Second International also grew very fast. Its climax occurred immediately after the beginning of the World War I in August 1914, which ultimately marked the end of the Second

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^{15} Igor Krivoguz, n. 12, p. 255.

^{16} V. I. Lenin, "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *Collected Works*, vol. 13, p. 93, Quoted in Ibid.
International itself. Though the resolutions of the International's congresses and its other documents had analysed the causes and character of the impending world war long before August 1914, its leaders particularly the social democrats could not act accordingly. Moreover, they went on supporting the war efforts made by their imperialist Governments.

Putting forward a thesis on the war on Sept. 5/6, 1914, Lenin said: "The European and World War has the sharp and definite character of a bourgeois, imperialist, and dynastic war. The struggle for markets and the looting of countries, the intention to deceive, disunite, and kill off the proletarians of all countries, by instigating the hired slaves of one nations against the hired slaves of the other for the benefit of the bourgeoisie—such is the only real meaning and purpose of the war."  

Analysing the existing situation he further says: "The betrayal of socialism by the majority of the leaders of the Second International (1889-1914) means an ideological collapse of that International. The fundamental cause of this collapse is the actual predominance in it of petty-bourgeois opportunism, the bourgeois nature and danger of which has long been pointed out by the best representatives of the proletariat of all countries. Opportunists have long been preparing the collapse of the Second International by renouncing the Socialist revolution and substituting bourgeois reformism for it; by renouncing class struggle, with its transformation into civil war, which is necessary at certain moments; by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the guise of patriotism and defence of the fatherland and by

ignoring or renouncing the ABC truth of socialism expressed long ago in the "Communist Manifesto," that workers have no fatherland ...."^{18}

Earlier, in 1890 Engles wrote in the Russian socialist organ Social Democrat published by Plekhanov and Axelrod in Geneva in an article entitled "The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism", that a Russian revolution would immediately do away with the danger of a world war; but that if the change in Russia were long delayed; Europe would slip down with ever increasing speed into the abyss of a world war of unexampled violence and universality."^{19} In this regard, R. Palme Dutt points out that basing itself on the general theory of Marxism, the Socialist International in the Basle resolution of 1912, reaffirming the previous Stuttgart and Copenhagen resolutions, had defined with very precise accuracy the character of the impending European war, the opposing alliances, the secret treaties, the criminal aims of all the capitalist powers, and even specifying the prospective immediate occasion of the war in "The Austro-Serbian dispute". The resolution thus left no room for subsequent excuse that the war which broke out in 1914 was in any essential respect different from that which had been anticipated, and with regard to which all the parties had unanimously pleaded themselves to pursue a policy of uncompromising opposition.\^{20} The Basle resolution clearly mentioned: "The proletarians consider it

\[^{18}\text{Ibid., p. 141.}\]

\[^{19}\text{R. Palme Dutt, n. 6, p. 127.}\]

\[^{20}\text{Ibid., p. 129.}\]
a crime to fire at each other for the benefit of the capitalists' profits, the ambitions of dynasties or the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties."21

However, when the world war I broke out many Social Democratic Parties began to support their Governments involved in the war. According to R. Palme Dutt, the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party, the German Social-Democratic Party, the Austrian Social Democratic Party, the Belgian Labour Party and the Australian and South African Labour Parties supported the war and their Governments. The British, French and Belgian leaders joined the capitalist war collision Governments. In Australia the Labour Government was already in office and gave full support to the war. However, the Russian Bolshevik Party and the Serbian Social Democratic Party, as also the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party, stood by the principles of the International, opposed the war and conducted revolutionary agitation. The Mensheviks in Russia, after their deputies had initially joined with the Bolshevik deputies in voting against the war credits, moved over to accepting the slogan of "national defence"; the Socialist Revolutionaries were divided as were also the Mensheviks, between "internationalists" and "defencists."22

Quoting a statement: "The war has devastated socialism as it has devastated the world", by a French Socialist leader, Lazitch and Drachkovitch have correctly pointed out that the guns of August 1914 had shattered the unity of the International Socialist movement; the overwhelmingly majority of socialist

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p. 132.
leaders, as well as the rank and file in both belligerent camps, quickly succumbed to patriotic fever and subordinated the claims of internationalist proletarian class struggle to the requirements of national defence and national solidarity. In the Entente countries the leaders justified their attitudes by invoking the principle of legitimate national defence. They further point out that in Russian Social Democratic emigre circle the war created ever greater divisions. Among the Russian Socialist emigres abroad, specially in the countries of the Entente, the great majority stood under the influence of the ideology of 'Defence of the Fatherland'. The pioneer of the Russian Marxist Georgie Plekhanov, became an ardent "defencist" and supporter of the movement to volunteer for service in the French Army. Prominent Bolsheviks such as N. V. Kuznetsov (Sapozhkov), secretary of the Bolshevik centre in Paris, and former Bolshevik such as G.A. Aleksinsky, deputy to the second state Duma, followed the same patriotic trend. However, the leading Mensheviks abroad, Y. Martov and P. B. Axelrod, opposed the war as internationalists and emphasised the speediest establishment of peace as the imperative of the proletarian struggle.

Following the ideological battle among the leaders of the Second International immediately after the world war I had broken out, the first international conference of Socialists in the belligerent countries for the fight against the war was convened by the International Socialist Women's Bureau of the Second

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24 Ibid., p. 5.
International, whose secretary was Clara Zetkin, and was held at Bern in March 1915. This was a historically significant conference attended among others by Krupskaya in the Bolshevik delegation, as the first international anti-war conference of socialist representatives from the belligerent countries. In the following month and International Socialist Youth Conference, organised by the secretary of the International Socialist Youth Bureau of the Second International, Willi Munzenberg, was also held in Berne.25

In the beginning the war created a lot of confusions among the workers, so they supported it, however, they gradually came to a clear revolutionary understanding of the events. Therefore, the anti-war movement among the workers was a striking manifestation of this profound leftward shift of the masses. It took shape ideologically and organisationally in the autumn of 1915 at the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald (Switzerland) and became known as Zimmerwald movement.26 In fact, the Zimmerwald movement became the real ground for the emergence of the Communist International.

The Zimmerwald conference was held from Sept. 5 to 8, 1915 in which 37 delegates from Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Switzerland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden took part. Politically the conference was heterogeneous, only 8 delegates from 7 countries took revolutionary internationalist stand. These delegates formed the

25 R. Palme Dutt, n. 6, p. 134.

Left Zimmerwald group. This group took shape ideologically when it moved its own draft resolution and manifesto and then organisationally it elected its bureau headed by Lenin. There were two other members of the Bureau-Zinoviev of Russia and Karl Radek of Poland.

The other 29 delegates formed the right-wing of the conference, known as Zimmerwald majority. The main issue on the Zimmerwald agenda was the question of the proletariat's action for peace. The Zimmerwald Left pointed out in their documents that the only way to put an end to the imperialist war by openly calling and leading the masses of the workers to a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist Governments to win political power for the purpose of a socialist organisation of society.

At Zimmerwald a joint declaration was adopted by the French and German delegates, thus recalling the exchange of fraternal messages between the French and German section of the First International during the Franco-German war. A general manifesto was adopted, proclaiming international working class solidarity against imperialism. This was signed by all the delegates, including Ledebour and Hoffman for the Germans, Merrheim and Bourderon for the French, Lazzari and Modigliani for the Italians, and Lenin, Axelrod and Bobrov for the Russians. A permanent "International socialist Commission" was formed at Zimmerwald which held together the parties concerned in an unofficial bloc, and received fresh affiliations. This commission

27 Ibid., p. 29.

28 Ibid.
organised further conferences at Kienthal in April 1916, and at Stockholm in Sept. 1917. Thus the basis of the new International had begun to develop.29

According to Lazith and Drachkovitch, during the summer of 1915, Lenin and Zinoviev were busy writing a pamphlet entitled Socialism and War. Lenin was also corresponding with friends in different countries urging them to arrange for reliable leftists to attend the forthcoming conference, or to have them send their proxies to Lenin. The pamphlet itself, translated into French and English, contained some very precise ideas which merit close attention. The first chapter concentrated on the issue of "Social chauvinism" or Socialist "defensism, which was called a betrayal of Socialism and of the text and spirit of the revolutions of the congresses of the Second International.30

Zimmerwald conference offered to Lenin his first opportunity to take personal leadership in a complicated political battle, which he eagerly approached with three objectives in mind: to forge a coherent international nucleus of like-minded revolutionaries; to influence as much as possible the other participants who were not likely to subscribe to his political line; and to widen the rift between the internationalists in attendance and the absent" defensist" socialist. The heterogeneity of the conference facilitated Lenin's task. Out of 38 delegates he could count on eight to support him on the basic issues. They were, besides himself and Zinoviev: Ian Berzin (Winter), representing the leftist social democrats; Karl Radek,

29 R. Palme Dutt, n. 6, p. 135.

30 Branko Lezitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, n. 23, p. 10.
representing the left wing of the Polish Socialist Party; Zeth Hoglund and Ture Nerman, representing the Social Democratic Youth organizations of Sweden and Norway; Fritz Platten, a Swiss Social Democrat; and Julian Borchardt from Berlin, editor of the left-socialist magazine Lichtstrahlen.31

The Zimmerwald conference, by a majority of 19 to 12, rejected the principled resolution proposed by the left and declared for a manifesto which failed to concretise the tasks and methods of the struggle. The conference adopted also a declaration of solidarity with the victims of the war calling upon socialist to follow the example of the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma, the example of Liebknecht and other revolutionary fighter for peace and socialism. The conference elected a governing body-the International Socialist Commission-consisting of Robert Grimm, Charles Naine, Oddino Morgari, and Angelica Balabanova....Weighing the importance of the Zimmerwald decision for the Left wing of international Social-Democracy, Lenin wrote that the conference was the "first step to the Third International."32

During post First Zimmerwald Conference period Lenin continued to wage ideological offensive against Social chauvinists. That is why, analysing their character as 'Socialist in words and chauvinist in deeds', he termed them to be class

31 Lezitch and Drachkovitch, n. 23, pp. 11-12; also see, Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher, n. 14, pp. 348-9.

enemies who has gone over to the bourgeoisie. Lenin further elaborated;" Everyone knows that on the question of the attitude to be adopted towards the war the socialist all over the world, in all countries, belligerent as well as neutral, split into two large main division. Some took the side of their Governments, of their bourgeoisie. These we call Social-chauvinist.... A chauvinist is one who concealed the defense of the predatory interest of his own ruling classes with the concept' defence of the fatherland'."

Later on second was held in Berne and Kienthal (April 24-30,1916) which was described by Zenoviev as another step forward for the Zimmerwald Left. Quoting different sources S. W. Page has pointed out that in his theses of April 1917, Lenin had made the demand, fantastic to his Russian comrades that the Bolsheviks break with the Zimmerwald bloc and themselves proclaim the Third International. Having politely turned down Lenin's demand, the Bolsheviks sent delegates to the Third Zimmerward conference, held in Stockholm, Sept. 1917. Early in 1918 Lenin tried again, through delegates from Soviet Russia, to transmit the stimulus of the Bolshevik revolution to Europe at large. But the missionaries assigned by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet regime to the task of arranging contacts preliminary to a conference of left-wingers failed to get through the blocked. At the end of January, 1918, there took place in


34 Ibid., p. 14.

35 Lazitch and Drachkovitch, n. 23, p. 15.
Petrograd a meeting of so-called "representatives of left-socialist parties" (attended only by revolutionaries then residing in Russia) and they elected an International Bureau. He further points out that from the foregoing two things are obvious. First, Lenin tried at every possible opportunity to bring the Third International into existence, and second, he made his attempts without any reference whatsoever to the wishes of the European proletariat. From this it may be deduced that Lenin had a strong personal interest in fathering the new International. Why this was so is not difficult to imagine. While in Switzerland in 1915-1917, he had decided to take the leadership in what he considered the impending European revolution.

In the meantime the victory of October Revolution 1917 brought qualitative changes in the contemporary revolutionary processes. Consequently with the foundation of German Communist Party from the former Spartacus league in December 1918 the task became imperatively urgent, however the great the difficulties of communication on account of the imperialist blocked. On January 24 the invitation to the Foundation Congress was sent out in the name of six Communist Parties (Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Latvia and Finland), the Balkan Revolutionary Social Democratic Federation and an individual representative of the Socialist Labour Party of the United States.

The invitation set out in summary form the purposed basis and principles of the new International and was addressed to


37 Ibid., p. 123.
thirty-nine organizations or groups, including all Communist Parties, five socialist or Social Democrat Parties regarded as ranged with the left, and nineteen left minorities within socialist parties or militant industrial grouping. Urgently was increased by the fact that the discredited leaders of the old Second International were planning to meet at Berne in February 1919, in order to resurrect the old Second International. For this leadership, favoured by the Governments, there were none of the difficulties of coming together which faced the still developing revolutionary section of the working-class movement in the conditions of the beginning of 1919.38

The new International was an urgent need in order to revive the international revolutionary solidarity of the national contingents of the working class, divided by the war and the fit of jingoism and chauvinism, and in order to coordinate the efforts of those involved in the spontaneous revolutionary upsurge that was sweeping many countries in various degrees. The Communist International had to help informing and consolidating still weak communist parties and other left revolutionary groups and organisations. It had also to provide the conditions for collective working out of revolutionary strategy and tactics.39 In those days Lenin drafted a concrete plan to arrange and International Socialist Conference to found the Third International. In a note the G. V. Chicherin, he twice underscored that it must be convened" urgently", "very soon".... Lenin considered that the Third

38 R. Palme Dutt, n. 6, p. 156.

International should not only include the communist parties already founded but from the start should also incorporate those parties and groups that were drawing near to Bolshevism, including existing groups within social democratic parties. At the same time, while delineating this circle, he suggested inviting to the constituent Congress those who resolutely stood for the break with the social-patriots who were for a socialist revolution and for the dictatorship of the proletariat... who were in principle for "Soviet power" and against limitation of bourgeois parliamentarianism, against subordination to it and who recognised the fact that the Soviet type of Government was higher and closer to socialism.

Following the above theoretical framework in January 1918 the first international meeting for the preparation of the Communist International was held in Petrograd, which was attended by the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist-revolutionaries and the left social democrats of Sweden, Norway, Britain, USA, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia etc. According to Pravda of January 30, 1918, the meeting decided to call a conference of the left on the following conditions:

1. Consent of parties and organisations to engage in revolutionary struggle against their governments for an immediate peace;
2. Support of the October Revolution and Soviet Government.

This decision was circulated to Left parties and groups which became the backbone of uniting the internationalist forces of different countries into Communist International. At that time

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40 Ibid., p. 165.

41 Lenin's letter to Chicherin, Quoted in Ibid.
the main task was to unite the Communist movement organisationally due to European Social Democrats' chauvinist position, who had begun to build up a "reformist international organisation in a bid to reestablish the Second International. Following this development, the Russian Communist party (Bolshevik) made an urgent appeal to the Communists of other countries to get united in the Third International. Moscow hosted another international meeting in January 1919, which unanimously adopted Lenin's proposal for convening an inaugural Congress to found the Communist International soon in future. So, an appeal signed by eight parties, was published in Pravda on January 24, 1919 which had formulated the ideological and political platform for the proposed international.

Quoting different original sources an American scholar, James W. Hulse writes: "The organizational history of the Communist International begins with a riddle. The radio station of the Soviet Government directed a broadcast to revolutionary groups throughout the world on January 24, 1919, inviting them to send representatives to a congress that would create a new Communist International. The invitation asserted that the establishment of a revolutionary International was urgently necessary, but it did not specify a time or place for the delegates to meet. The Bolshevik leaders apparently did not repeat the invitation, and between January 24 and the beginning of the conference on March 2. They made no further efforts to draw attention to their plan. When the conference opened in the Moscow


43 Ibid., also see, V. V. Zagladin, n. 39, p. 226.
Kremlin, a veil of secrecy surrounded its early session, even though the messianic nature of the proposed organization had previously been stressed. These circumstances have never been adequately explained."44

He further says that there is one eyewitness account of the meeting of which the decision to summon the Moscow Congress was presumably made. J. Fineberg, an Englishman who had attached himself to the Bolshevik cause, wrote a description of the gathering ten years after the event, but his statement contains much internal evidence that he had difficulty remembering details. According to Fineberg, the meeting was held in the Kremlin, one evening in January, in the room that had been Nicholas II's bed chamber; Lenin presented the draft of an invitation to be sent to parties that opposed the Second International calling them to an inaugural meeting of the Third International. Fineberg said the invitation and a 'manifesto' were broadcasted a day or two later.45 Giving another interesting account from Russian sources Hulse writes; "the Bolshevik had achieved the organizational structure they had sought. The form of new agency had been outlined not only in the January 24 invitation, but also in a statement made on the opening day of the Congress. On March 2, Zinoviev published an article in Pravda in which he predicted that the programme of Russian Communist Party would be accepted to the parties that would participate in the founding congress of the Third International. The article did


not reveal that the conference had been convened on that very day; it was not a news account of a current event but a propaganda statement designed to win support for a Bolshevik scheme. It may have been directed toward the delegates to the conference as well as the reading public. On the question of organizational form and leadership, Zinoviev was explicit. The organizational form of the Third International must be determined at the First Congress of the Communist Parties. A strong guiding centre must be established, which will be able to lead, in ideas and organization, the movement in all countries.46

Later on, a preliminary meeting held on March 1, 1919 under the chairmanship of Lenin discussed the agenda of the forthcoming Congress, however, due to the opposition of Hugo Eberlein of German Communist Party, the question of constituting Communist International could not be decided. Eberlein had got mandate from his party to oppose the immediate formation of the Comintern, as a result of which it was decided to go directly in the session of International Communist Conference which was held in Kremlin on March 2, 1919.

The International Communist Conference was inaugurated in the evening of March 2, 1919 at Kremlin presided over by a three member committee consisted of Lenin, Hugo Eberlein (Germany) and Platten of Sweden. Conference was attended by 52 delegates from thirty five organisations of 21 countries of Europe, America and Asia. Out of this organisations, 19 had voting rights while 16 were without this right. The delegates represented the Communist and Left Socialist parties and groups of Austria.

46 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, Soviet Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. There were separate delegation from Ukrain, Latvia, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Estonia, Armenia, the Volga Region Germans, Turkestan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The representatives of Iran, China, Korea and Turkey also attended the conference.47

The International Conference was declared open by Lenin and his first act was to appeal the delegates to rise in honour of the memory of the best representatives of the Third International, Karl Liebknecht and Roza Luxemburg. After paying homage to them, Lenin said: The bourgeoisie is mad with fear in face of the growing revolutionary movement of the proletariat. This will become understandable if we take into consideration the fact that the progress of events since the imperialist war is inevitably facilitating the revolutionary movement of the proletariat that the International World revolution is beginning and gaining strength in all countries.48 After two days of hectic discussions on different issues including whether Communist International should be established or not, ultimately the International Communist Conference decided in favour of establishing the Comintern. When this issue was placed before the Conference, all the delegates voted in favour except Hugo Eberlein of German Communist Party who abstained. The resolution related to the foundation of the Comintern stated: " All parties, organisations and groups retain the right of declaring their adhesion to the


Third International with in a space of eight months. After the voting, Hugo Eberlein assured the Conference that after returning back to Germany he would do every thing in persuading his party to join the Comintern. It is a fact that the Communist Party of Germany was one of the First parties to join the Comintern.

Thus, the International Communist Conference was converted into the First Congress of the Communist International March 4, which ended on March 6, 1919. This is how, the Communist International came into existence on March 4, 1919. The Congress indorsed the famous "Manifesto of the Communist International to the workers of the World" and "the Appeal to the Workers and Soldiers of All Countries." The Congress appointed G. Zinoviev as first Chairman of the Communist International along with Angelica Balabanova and J. Berzin as secretaries.

In his concluding speech Lenin declared: "Let the bourgeoisie of the whole world continue to rage, let it deport, imprison and even Kill the Spartacists and Bolsheviks- this will help it no longer. It will merely serve to enlighten the masses, to liberate them from the old bourgeois-democratic prejudices and to harden them in the struggle. The victory of proletarian revolution all over the world is assured. The foundation of the international Soviet Republic is impending." Writing about the Third International's (Communist International) place on history on April 15, 1919 Lenin said: "The First International (1864-72) laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for

49 The Communist International, n. 1, 1919, p. 68, Quoted in Ibid., p. 57.

50 V. I. Lenin, n. 33, p. 28.
socialism. The Second International (1889-1914) marked the epoch in which the ground was prepared for a broad, mass, widespread movement in a number of countries. The Third International gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International, purged it of its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois dross, and has begun to effect the dictatorship of proletariat."

Thus, after the formation of Communist International, the World Communist movement as well as anti-colonial national liberation movements got a new life and began to emerge everywhere in the world. Many new Communist Parties were also set up within a year before the Second Congress of Comintern was convened in 1920. The Comintern created a wave specially in the colonies of the East.

To sum up, Lenin was motivated into action towards the formation of Comintern for the following specific long as well as short-term reasons. Firstly, with the war being over the Second International of social democratic parties was being reconstituted. A conference had been held from 3 to 10 February 1919. Lenin surely would have liked to take some prestige away from the Social Democrats while at the same time demonstrating that Communist Internationalism was able to found its own organization. If he did not, the Communist movement would look to the world as if it were disintegrating. The motion passed on 4 March that instituted the Comintern included the admission:

If the Conference convoked in Moscow were not to create the Third International, it might give the impression that the

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51 Ibid., p. 31.
communist parties were in disagreement among themselves. This would bring discredit upon our position and increase the confusion among those elements of the proletariat that are vacillating on all countries.\textsuperscript{52}

Interestingly, the Russian Communist Party, too, had been invited to attend the aforesaid Social-Democratic Conference. On December 24, 1918, in reply to their invitation, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, sent a telegram, published the next day in Pravda, calling upon all the revolutionary and internationalist elements in the European Socialist movement to boycott this "conference of enemies of the working class disguised as Socialists", pointing out that "the Third International, in charge of the world revolution, already exists."

In such a situation Lenin was left with no alternative but to immediately proceed to set up the Comintern. Indeed he would not sit calmly by and do nothing while his revolutionary International which he had been the first to advocate back in 1914 and which he considered to have been in existence since the revolution in Russia, was outshined by the Second International, that "Corpse" he had so often proclaimed dead since 1914 and whose leaders, in his eyes, were pack of traitors.\textsuperscript{53}

Secondly, the troubled international situation of those times and the Soviet distrust of the League of Nations were the immediate factors behind the formation of Comintern. The


\textsuperscript{53} Branko Lazitch and Milord M. Drachkovitch, n. 23, p. 52.
"Appeal for the formation of Communist International" declared that it was in response to the "capitalist alliance under the banners of the League of Nations" which "will strangle this revolution", that it became necessary to convene the Communist International to further the revolution and promote alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the country which had carried out a socialist revolution. The objective of the Comintern was, thus, clearly recognised to be revolutionary and safeguard the socialist revolution which in this case meant safeguarding first of all Soviet State.

Thirdly, the success of October Revolution and the Bolshevik ideology had given a tremendous boost to the aspirations of the toiling and exploited people in Europe as well as Asia. The Bolshevik sincerely believed that they were working for the World revolution and regarded their own revolution as part of it. At the same time they would not like to forego the benefit from the belief spread World-wide among Socialist organisations, according to which the Soviet Russia seemed to realise their aspirations. Moreover, since the Bolsheviks were desperately searching for outside support they could not have missed the opportunities that this belief offered them. They hoped to set up a centralised net work of Communist Parties capable of what Lenin wrote: "Subordinating the interest of the movement within each country to the common interests of the revolution on an international scale."\(^\text{54}\) The other parties of the Comintern would be subordinated to Russia's as Lenin explicitly put it:

**Leadership in the revolutionary proletarian International**

\(^{54}\) Piero Melograni, n. 52, p. 57 (Qouted).
has passed for a time—for a short time, it goes without saying—to the Russians, just as at various periods of the nineteenth century it was in the hands of the British, then of the French, then of the Germans. Thus as the newly founded International stood, there could be no doubt as to its leadership. Compared to the small groups which had joined them, the Russians were like giants to dwarfs. Moscow became the seat of the International, and Geogory Zinoviev was made its Chairman.

Fourthly, there was a strong section among the Bolsheviks still planning revolution on a global scale, which was thought to be the key to enable Russia to overcome her political isolation and make an economic recovery. Occasionally some of them indulged in wildest dreams. The Russians, as they were largely cut off from the rest of the world saw events as they wanted to see them, and as the revolutionary atmosphere of their own country suggested to be. Trotsky, in the gazette of his armoured train, wrote an article in which he claimed to see the Red Army, after defeating the whites, conquer the Europe and attack America. Zinoviev in number I of The Communist International, prophecies that within a year not only would all Europe be a Soviet Republic, but would already he forgetting that there had ever been a fight for it. For such revolutionaries the Comintern signified a different meaning. The existence of Comintern would give these Bolsheviks the feeling that something was moving in the right direction.

Fifthly, it was clearly seen by Lenin that the Comintern

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56 Branko Lazitch and M. M. Drachkovitch, n. 23, p. 165.
would serve him very well in pursuing his objectives in International politics. The policy of "co-existence" which he advocated with the West did not imply any kind of immediate "ideological disarmament." In various messages sent to the Allies, Chicherin and Litvinov promised to stop revolutionary propaganda only after a peace settlement had been signed. Until peace was concluded, the fact that the Third International existed strengthened the Bolsheviks' diplomatic position.

Finally, it was the vast colonised world of Asia and Africa which was the focus of the Russian revolutionary attention. The "weakest link of imperialism" was lying in Asia. For the final defeat of imperialism the liberation of colonies was essential. Hence the alliance had to be forged between the revolutionary Russia, the Western Proletarian movement and national liberation movement in the colonies.

This was one of the strongest considerations in the formation of the Comintern through whose instrumentalities these various revolutionary trends would be coordinated and guided. Hence the colonial dimension of the Comintern's policy becomes an important subject of enquiry. Thus the foundational Congress of the Third International laid the seed-bed of the policy pursued by it subsequently toward colonialism and national liberation movement. The most significant in this respect was the Second Comintern Congress well known in history for its debate on the colonial question and formulation of concrete strategy towards that we shall take it up in the next chapter.