The term 'nationalism' is not a class neutral category. It has a specific historical context - a class context. The emergence of nationalism is closely associated with the emergence of capitalism in Europe. In marxist literature the term is used in this specific class context. Marxists view nationalism as an ideology - the ideology of the bourgeois class. Though Marx and Engels often praised the bourgeoisie for their historical role in transforming the feudal society of Europe into a qualitatively better society they unhesitatingly criticised the reactionary role of the bourgeois class which after a certain period of its existence, according to Marx and Engels, became a hindrance to the development of the forces of production, owing to its class limitations. Summing up the views of Marx and Engels about nationalism, Lenin observed:

Marxism can not be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the "most just", "purest", most refined and civilised brand. In the place of all forms of nationalism, Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity ........
The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation are progressive. Hence it is the Marxist's bounden duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the "positive" activity of the bourgeoisie striving to fortify nationalism.¹

The phenomenon of nationalism gave birth to further complexities in those countries which, for historical reasons, became colonies of the West. Especially the colonies in the East which before the imperialist inroad had pre-capitalist socio-economic formations and which subsequently underwent lopsided capitalist transformation colonialism posed a serious problem. For the founders of marxism, the crucial question was to explore the revolutionary potentiality of backward societies. In the case of Russia, for instance, Marx and Engels envisaged the possibility of her bypassing the capitalist path and moving towards socialism provided a proletarian revolution successfully utilised the revolutionary potentiality of the peasant masses.²

The emphasis on (i) the revolutionary potentiality of the peasant masses and (ii) the possibility of bypassing the capitalist path and moving towards socialism in the backward countries is also found in the correspondence of Marx and Engels.³ Lenin took up the theoretical clue from this and this had had much influence in shaping his ideas on revolutionary movement in backward countries and in the colonies. In the hands of Lenin the national-colonial question assumed an altogether different character. He dealt with the problem
not in the light of bourgeois nationalism but, on the contrary, in the light of proletarian internationalism; his vision of the future of the colonies was not bourgeois nation-states but socialist ones. In fact, Lenin was quite preoccupied with the national-colonial question long before 1920. This becomes evident from the following important writings of Lenin viz., *The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart* (1907), *Meeting of the International Socialist Bureau* (1908), *Right of Nations to Self-determination* (1914), *A Caricature of Marxism* (1916), *The Junius pamphlet* (1916), etc. Finally, in the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 it got a fuller and concrete shape. Earlier, the Second International which after Marx and Engels dealt with the question had taken a reformist stand. Van Kol, the Dutch delegate, for example, emphasised the necessity of colonial reforms attainable under the imperialist yoke, instead of putting emphasis on mass agitation against the colonial policy. In the Draft Resolution formulated by Van Kol in the Seventh Congress of the Second International at Stuttgart a sentence was inserted, according to Lenin, "to the effect that the Congress did not in principle condemn all colonial policy, for under socialism colonial policy could play a civilising role." 

The Colonial Commission of the Stuttgart Congress was dominated by reformist leaders like Van Kol, Vollmar, Bernstein and David and the difference between the approach of Lenin and Van Kol was sharply evident. However, the resolution was ultimately defeated by a majority of 127 votes against 108. Lenin comments that "This vote on the
colonial question is of very great importance. First, it strikingly showed up socialist opportunism, which succumbs to bourgeois blandishments. Secondly, it revealed a negative feature in the European labour movement......... In Lenin's opinion, the position taken by the Colonial Commission was tantamount to a direct retreat towards bourgeois policy and a bourgeois world outlook that justifies colonial wars and atrocities......... The attempts to justify this retreat by the tasks of a "socialist colonial policy" and of constructive reform work in the colonies were unfortunate in the extreme. Socialism has never refused to advocate reforms in the colonies as well; but this can have nothing in common with weakening our stand in principle against conquests, subjugation of other nations, violence and plunder, which constitute "colonial policy."

Thus Lenin rejected the formulation that there could be any 'socialist colonial policy' and was opposed to subjugation of other nations. That Lenin formulated his thesis on national and colonial question on the basis of concrete historical situation is evident from his The Right of Nations to Self-determination wherein he maintained that the question of national self-determination was closely associated with the emergence of capitalism and the nation-state was nothing but a capitalist state. Though Lenin supported bourgeois national aspirations he made it amply clear that the proletarian concept of nationalism was quite different from that of the bourgeois version. And even if the proletariat had to support the bourgeoisie it would always
remain conditional because the proletariat believed only in internationalism. To quote Lenin:

The bourgeoisie, which naturally assumes the leadership at the start of every national movement, says that support for all national aspirations is practical. However, the proletariat's policy in the national question (as in all others) supports the bourgeoisie only in a certain direction, but it never coincides with the bourgeoisie's policy. The working class supports the bourgeoisie...... in order to secure equal rights and to create the best conditions for the class struggle...... they always give the bourgeoisie only conditional support......

(Emphasis original - U.G.)

Again,

......... The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle...... the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its "own" nation before those of the proletariat. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the negative demand for recognition of the right (Emphasis original - U.G.) to self-determination......

(Emphasis added - U.C.)

Obviously, Lenin formulated his thesis not for the abandonment of class struggle but for furtherance of it. This was evident in his understanding of the character of the colonial bourgeoisie:

...... To the workers the important thing is to distinguish the principles of the two trends. Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than any one else,
for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism, we stand against.....

.... The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support. At the same time we strictly distinguish it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness; .... 9

(Emphasis original - U.G.)

The excerpts prove that Lenin was very much aware of the two faces of the colonial bourgeoisie and he supported the bourgeoisie only on condition that this would mean, in essence, support to fight against oppression of the imperialist powers. We have already seen that for Lenin this kind of support is 'negative' in character. He was very much aware of the vacillating character of the bourgeoisie of the colonies and put emphasis on the revolutionary role of the peasant masses of the East. For him the peasants of the East were more revolutionary and democratic than the colonial bourgeoisie. We have already mentioned that Marx and Engels also foresaw revolutionary potentiality in the peasant masses of Russia and other backward states. Following the positions of Marx and Engels Lenin in his Democracy and Narodism in China wrote:

The chief representative, or the chief social bulwark, of this Asian bourgeoisie that is still capable of supporting a historically progressive course, is the peasant. 10
In A caricature of Marxism Lenin put forward the idea that the proletariat of the advanced countries should support the toiling masses of the oppressed countries. He wrote:

Now, as always, we stand and shall continue to stand for the closest association and merging of the class conscious workers of the advanced countries with the workers, peasants and slaves of all oppressed countries.

This shows that Lenin was very much sympathetic to the revolutionary struggles of the colonial masses. Not only that, opposing Rosa Luxemburg's thesis that national wars were no longer possible in the era of imperialism, as sooner or later it took an imperialist character, Lenin wrote:

.... National wars waged by colonies and semi-colonies in the imperialist era are not only probable but inevitable.... the continuation of national liberation politics in the colonies will inevitably take the form of national wars against imperialism....... 12 (Emphasis original - U.K.)

While Lenin was quite aware of the revolutionary and democratic potentiality of the peasants he was sceptical about the ability of the peasants themselves to carry forward the revolution without the help of the proletariat. Thus about free China (1911-1913) he wrote:
China's freedom was won by an alliance of peasant democrats and the liberal bourgeoisie. Whether the peasants, who are not led by a proletarian party, will be able to retain their democratic positions against the liberals, who are only waiting for an opportunity to shift to the right, will be seen in the near future. 13 (Emphasis original - U.G.)

That not out of sheer opportunism but out of a zeal to bring forth revolutionary changes in the countries of the East, Lenin formulated his understanding of the colonial question is also found in his Address to the Second All Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East on November 22, 1919. In this address Lenin reminded the representatives of the communist organisations of the East that they must adapt themselves to 'specific conditions', because in the colonies the bulk of the population were peasants and their major task was to 'wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism'. He advised them to carry forward this struggle with the help of the working class parties affiliated to the Communist International, through the communist cells of their own countries, "to arouse the working masses (for Lenin, the working masses of the East were typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who were victims of medieval oppression - U.G.) to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; ...." 14
It is obvious that Lenin put emphasis on the toiling poor, on the native communist organisations and on the working class - peasant alliance. In the process, he stressed the revolutionary potentiality of the peasant masses of the colonies and thus added an important dimension to marxism. This deserves special attention, because the founders of marxism, mainly preoccupied as they were with bringing about proletarian revolution in the West and also because the colonial question did not take a concrete shape then, could not precisely examine the different aspects of the colonial question. Again, the Second International also did not pay much attention to the problem. But in this connection it should be mentioned that Marx and Engels were optimistic about a revolutionary change in Russia provided the Russian working class could successfully utilize the revolutionary potentiality of the peasant masses. Lenin took up this cue from the writings of Marx and Engels and developed it in the form of a theory which was manifest in his colonial theses at the Second Congress of the Communist International (CI) in 1920.

The Second Congress of the CI thoroughly discussed the colonial question and Lenin was the main speaker. In his Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions Lenin fully discussed the problems and prospects of the movements in the colonies. First, he made a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; secondly, he made a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people,
and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of ruling class; third, he made an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations. Putting emphasis on these three points Lenin discussed the specificities of the policy especially relating to the more backward states or nations in which 'feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate'. Firstly, Lenin observed, the communist parties in such states 'must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries'. Secondly, he pointed out the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends which attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, Mullahs, etc.' Thirdly, he observed that the CPs in backward countries should 'give special support to the peasant movement against landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the West European proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies, and in the backward countries generally'. Not only that, Lenin also drew attention to the necessity of applying the basic principles of the 'Soviet System' in countries where pre-capitalist relations predominate. He also cautioned against "attempts to give communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends" in the backward nations and made it clear that

.... the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries
only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future proletariat parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form; ....... (Emphasis added - U.G.)

This passage deserves special emphasis because it emphasises the need of maintaining independent stance by the CPs vis-à-vis the colonial bourgeoisie, despite their 'temporary alliance' (emphasis added - U.G.) with the latter. It epitomises the fact that Lenin did make no compromise with bourgeois nationalism and proletarian inter-nationalism. Though he was in favour of supporting 'bourgeois - democratic national movements' he was against 'the communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in backward countries'. He criticised the prevalence of 'petty-bourgeois nationalism' amongst the communist parties which tend to preserve the 'national self-interest' - the interest of the ruling class - intact and observed that proletarian internationalism demanded,

... first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a worldwide scale, and second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital. 18
Obviously, Lenin visualised the possibility of a united front between the toiling people and the bourgeoisie of the colonies in the struggle against imperialism. But Lenin's theses were somehow misunderstood by many like Chicherin, Stalin, Preobrazhensky, Sultan Zade, M.N. Roy et al. However, the serious challenge came from M.N. Roy, the Indian delegate to the Colonial Commission of the Congress. Roy's viewpoint was fundamentally different. He differed on the question of (i) economic development of India, (ii) on the role of the Indian bourgeoisie and (iii) on the revolutionary potential of the toiling people of the colonies.

According to Roy, after the establishment of British rule in India 80 per cent of the agricultural population had lost their property and a huge mass of rural proletariat was rapidly growing. According to Roy's estimate, though the growth of industrial proletariat was slow it was not less than five million. Not only that, he saw the birth of professional movement among the workers and he described the strike of the railway workers in 1906 as some sort of real uprising. In Roy's vision a strong proletariat class was rapidly developing in India due to British policy of industrialization of India pursued since World War I. Similarly, though Roy acknowledged that the nationalist movement began to take concrete shape through the INC he, however, was of opinion that its call did not find response from the masses who, according to Roy, had 'nothing in
common with the national liberation movement'. In the seventh thesis of his original draft Roy wrote that the nationalist movement was confined to the 'small middle class', that the masses were not with them as such leaders always led 'them astray and prevent(ed) them from revolutionary action', and he maintained that the masses were 'moving towards revolution independently of the bourgeois nationalist movement ....' So, Roy argued in the tenth thesis that the CI should support 'the revolutionary mass action through the medium of a communist party of the proletarians' which would overthrow imperialism and lead 'to the development of Soviet power' and thus help prevent the rise of indigenous capitalism. In the eleventh thesis Roy insisted on early initiation of class struggle in the colonies. Again, Roy sincerely believed that the future of world communism depended on the victory of communism in the East.

At the very outset it should be mentioned that Roy's Draft Supplementary Thesis had been drastically altered by Lenin in the Colonial Commission of the Second Congress on July 25, 1920 and the Supplementary Thesis as produced before the plenary session on July 26, 1920 were amended theses which, along with Lenin's Draft Theses (with some minor changes) were adopted by the Congress. A close look at Roy's original draft and the adopted one reveals how drastically Lenin had amended Roy's
Theses. As Roy differed from Lenin about the nature of production
relations in the colonies he disagreed with Lenin on the question
of forming united front with the national bourgeoisie as, according
to Roy, the bourgeoisie in the colonies was seeking a compromise with
imperialism. Lenin, on the other hand, repeatedly stressed the need
for co-operation with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism.
But he did never think of unconditional co-operation; on the contrary,
Lenin clearly stated in his Preliminary Draft Theses that the CI should
support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and
backward countries only on condition (emphasis added - U.G.) that,
in these countries, the elements of future proletarian parties, which
will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained
to understand their special tasks .......

In the latter part of this point (point 5 of the eleventh thesis - U.G.) Lenin wrote:

.... The Communist International must enter into a temporary
alliance (emphasis added - U.G.) with bourgeois democracy
in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it (emphasis added - U.G.), and should under all circumstances (emphasis added - U.G.) uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form (emphasis added - U.G.); .... 28

This point was further emphasised by Lenin in his speech in the
Colonial Commission on July 25, 1920. The minutes of the session run thus:

In Russia we supported the national liberation movement at the
time of opposing Czarism. The Indian communists are bound to
support the bourgeois communist democratic movement, without merging with it. 29
In his 'Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Questions' Lenin maintained that in the Commission it was 'irrefutably' proved that there had been a certain rapprochement between the colonial bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that the latter was 'doing everything in its power to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations' and that the Commission decided to distinguish between reformist and revolutionary movements. According to Lenin:

.... The significance of this change is that, we as communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, .... 30

Finally, Roy's point of difference with Lenin veered around the question of tactics to be followed in the colonies. While Lenin spoke of a united front Roy, on the other hand, was dreaming of a revolution by the colonial proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party. Stressing the need of co-operation with the 'bourgeois nationalist revolutionary elements' (emphasis added - U.G.) Lenin amended the concluding portion of Roy's theses in the following way:

.... the foremost and necessary task is the formation of communist parties which will organise the peasants and workers and lead them to revolution and to the establishment of Soviet Republics ....... 31 (Emphasis added - U.G.)

The change of the concluding portion and his emphasis on the formation of communist parties and establishment of Soviet Republics deserve attention. As Lenin did not share Roy's view that in most of
the colonies there existed communist parties, he stressed the establishment of Soviets. In doing so Lenin had probably in mind the pre-capitalist mode of production prevalent in the colonies. For Lenin, the adoption of the Soviet idea meant integrating the two forces, viz., the rising peasants' and workers' movement and the national liberation movement in such a fashion that the national liberation movement would develop in a revolutionary direction and the independence of the movement of the peasants and workers would be maintained. Thus Lenin's approach was fundamentally different from Roy's sectarian approach to the colonial question.

Though the Third Congress of the Comintern did not elaborately deal with the colonial question it does not mean that after 1920 the CI did make no thinking about it. For example, Lenin in his 'Theses for a Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.' hoped that (a) national liberation movements would play a revolutionary role against capitalism and imperialism and (b) the peasantry of these countries would play an important role in this context. In the Fourth Congress of the CI M. N. Roy in his 'Report on the Eastern Question' almost repeated the points elaborated in his original draft theses in the Second Congress of the Comintern. However, the 'Theses on the Eastern Question' adopted by the Fourth Comintern Congress contradicted almost all the positions taken by Roy and other Eastern delegates and reaffirmed the position of Lenin in the Second Congress in 1920.
The Fifth Comintern Congress was held in Moscow from June 17 to July 8, 1924. The resolution adopted by the ECCI pointed to the fact that the CPs of the colonies 'were not carrying out the decisions of the Second Congress satisfactorily'. It also observed:

In addition to the winning the support of the peasant masses and of the oppressed national minorities, the Executive Committee in its instructions always emphasised the necessity for winning over the revolutionary movements for emancipation of colonial peoples and for all peoples of the east so as to make them the allies of the revolutionary proletariat of the capitalist countries.\textsuperscript{34} (Emphasis added - U.G.)

Till the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI the CI followed the Leninist principle of united front, i.e., endorsed the principle of supporting the colonial bourgeoisie as a whole class and organising the peasants and trade unions.\textsuperscript{35} Stalin, however, distinguished between the reformist and revolutionary wing of the Indian bourgeoisie and advised the CPs to collaborate with the revolutionary section with a view to organising the masses. Stalin thought that because of the export of capital in the colonies from the advanced countries the colonies were undergoing industrialisation and consequently the colonial bourgeoisie had split into two sections, viz., revolutionary and reformist.\textsuperscript{36} Incidentally, Stalin's position regarding industrialisation of the colonies appears to be identical with that of Roy. But Adhikari\textsuperscript{37} is correct when he refers to a fundamental difference between Roy and Stalin. While Roy thought that the entire colonial bourgeoisie had gone to the imperialist bloc Stalin observed that only a part of the bourgeoisie, viz.,
the reformist section had gone over to imperialism and hence he suggested co-operation with the revolutionary section only. It deserves special attention that Stalin's position differed not only from Roy's but also from Lenin's. Lenin suggested to support the colonial bourgeoisie as a whole class but Stalin was in favour of lending support only to the revolutionary section of the bourgeoisie. This position was reflected in the colonial theses adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928. Meanwhile, an embryonic communist movement was slowly coming to surface in India and it is necessary at this stage to explore this development which predates the Sixth Congress of the CI.

II

Before 1920 there was no Communist Party in India and it was M.N. Roy who took the initiative in founding the CPI on October 17, 1920 in Tashkent, a city in the Soviet Union. In India the emergence of the CPI in the 1920s was necessitated by the needs of anti-imperialist struggle and almost all the communists of the early days were staunch anti-imperialists. The inability of the Indian National Congress during 1885-1914 to make a breakthrough in this regard inspired the Indian youth to follow the path of revolutionary terrorism. M.N. Roy and Abani Mukherjee, two prominent communists of the early days who
played a leading part in the formation of the CPI, participated in the Indian revolutionary movement. Men like Roy and Mukherjee were dissatisfied with the non-co-operation and Khilafat programmes and dreamt of a revolution in India. In fact, however, long before this Lalal Har-dyal, one of the emigre revolutionaries, wrote a biography of Marx; this was published in 1912 in the March issue of the Modern Review. Later, Swadeshabhimani Ramkrisna Pillai published a biography of Marx in Malayalam. With the victory of the Russian working class and the peasantry in the October Revolution of 1917 the ideas of Marx and Engels began to spread among the freedom fighters in India. Revolutionary nationalists of the early years may be classified into four categories. Persons like Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, M. Barkatullah, M.P.B.T. Acharya, M.N.Roy and Abani Mukherjee who operated from abroad during the First World War and thereafter from Germany, the USA, Turkey and Afganistan fell in the first category. Persons who constitute the second category of national revolutionaries came from the Pan-Islamic Khilafat and the great hijrat movement. Both these groups came under the influence of the October Revolution. The important personalities were Mohammad Ali Sepasi, Rahmat Ali Khan, Firozuddin Mansoor, Abdul Majid and Shaukat Usmani. The third category comprised the national revolutionaries of the Ghadar Party organised among the Sikh and Punjabi emigrant labourers (USA). The fourth group consisted of the national revolutionaries in India itself, viz., the left wing of the INC,
the Khilafat movement, the Akali movements (especially the Rabbar Akalis), the disillusioned followers of Gandhi (who entered the communist movement after the withdrawal of the first non-co-operation movement) etc. This group adopted the goal of scientific socialism and influenced by the October Revolution organised the Indian peasants and workers in different parts of the country. S.A. Dange was very active in Bombay. Singaravelu Chettiar, Muzaffar Ahmad and the Inquilab group played crucial role in Madras, Bengal and Lahore respectively.

These various splinter groups came together at the Kanpur conference in December 1925 which was convened by Satyabhakta. The CPI founded in Tashkent in 1920 comprised seven members including Roy and it had got recognition by the Turkestan Bureau of the CI on December 20, 1920. The CPI formed abroad was engaged for quite sometime in wide ideological and propaganda work and it co-ordinated different communist groups formed in different parts of India.\(^{38}\) In India, an evening daily, *Nabayan*, was published by Muzaffar Ahmad, Nazrul Islam, a revolutionary Bengali poet, and others on July 12, 1920. Ahmad informs that 'Inflammatory articles about the masses, especially workers, appeared in the paper.'\(^{39}\) By the end of 1920 Roy and his associates organised an Indian Military School in Tashkent which imparted military training to the Muhajir youths who had crossed over through Afghanistan into Soviet territory. In 1921 this school was
disbanded because of the Afgan government's categorical refusal to allow the Muhajirs cross Afgani than on way to India. In this year Roy and Abani Mukherjee published on behalf of the CPI a manifesto which was addressed to the 36th session of the INC in Ahmedabad. In this manifesto a full-fledged programme of anti-imperialist democratic revolution was elaborated and affiliation of the workers and peasants inside the INC was advocated; on the basis of this manifesto Hasrat Mohani moved the resolution for complete independence which, however, was not accepted. Since 1922 Roy was publishing Vanguard of Indian Independence - a fortnightly - from Berlin. In this year he also wrote India in Transition which happened to be the first marxist analysis of the then Indian society. Following the lead given by the Vanguard of Indian Independence several left-wing papers appeared in different parts of India in 1922. The most notable were Atmasakti and Dhumketu (both from Bengal), Navayugam in Telegu (Madras), Desher Bani (Noakhali, Bengal), Vartaman (Kanpur) and Socialist (Bombay). By the end of 1922 Roy had been able to establish some secret links with embryonic communist groups which emerged in different parts of India through emisisaries like Nalini Gupta and Shaukat Usmani. Singaravelu Chettiar announced the formation of a Labour Kisan party in May 1923 in Madras.

The budding communists tried to provide a radical turn to the proceedings of the 37th session of the INC held at Gaya in 1922. Roy popularised communist programmatic statements for circulation among the
delegates of the Gaya session in the form of a brochure entitled *What Do We Want*. In this brochure Roy put forward a programme of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution the aims of which were political independence, abolition of landlordism, nationalisation of public utilities, minimum wage and eight-hour day for the toilers and workers' control of industry. All these were but a popularised version of Roy's *Action Programme of the Indian National Congress* written towards the end of 1922. At the Gaya Congress Singaravelu made a speech in the name of the 'great order of the world communists' and urged that 'the workers in India should be made a part of our Congress organisation'. The failure of the INC to do so lay, according to Chettiar, in the Gardoli resolution which in his opinion was a 'disaster'.

All these events made the British rulers panicky and in the succeeding years it arrested the communist workers throughout India in a series of conspiracy cases. The Muhajirs who in the Autumn of 1920 crossed over to the Soviet Union started returning in 1921-1922. On their return they were implicated in Peshawar Conspiracy cases during 1922-1927. They were charged for conspiracy to overthrow the British raj in India and were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment ranging from one to seven years. Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and Gulam Hussain were arrested in 1923. Initially, the government was not clear whether these convicts would be tried in the Peshwar Conspiracy cases or a new case would be instituted. And ultimately on February 20, 1924 the government
decided to launch a new conspiracy case — the Kanpur conspiracy case — and listed thirteen persons for arrests. Two main charges against them were (i) that the CI was trying to set up a branch in India through the accused; and (ii) that the accused were trying to set up a workers' and peasants' party. The most prominent among the accused were Roy, Muzaffar Ahmad, Usmani, Singaravelu, Dange, Nalini Gupta et al. Ahmad, Usmani, Dange and Gupta were sentenced to four years of imprisonment. Roy, who was in Germany, proposed to Dange, on the eve of the Fourth Comintern Congress, to set up an open legal mass party. On October 1, 1922, Roy wrote in his *The Advanced Guard*:

> The leadership of the national struggle must be taken over by a mass party consciously representing the interests ... of the workers and peasants ... what is needed at the present crisis is a political party of the masses based on the principle of class interest and with a programme advocating mass action for carrying forward the struggle for national liberation ... 45

In his letter to Dange dated November 2, 1922, Roy appreciated Dange's proposal to form a labour socialist party of India but suggested that it should have an unofficial name ('The Peoples Party') in order that the communists and socialists are not isolated in small sects....' 46 After the Gaya Congress in an 'Open Letter to C.R. Das' Roy characterised Das as 'declassed', and hoped that he would lead a third party which would be 'the political expression of the working masses.' 47 The editorial of the *Vanguard* entitled 'Ourselves', however, observed, "the Congress as a body will remain a bourgeois political organ. It will never be able to lead the workers and peasants..."
in the revolutionary struggle for national freedom .... The Communist Party of India is called upon by history to play this role ...." 48

As to the CPI's objectives and immediate course of action the editorial maintained

.... Our first object is to secure national freedom for the people of India. We will fight as a part of the National Congress; ... we will co-operate with every social element that is objectively antagonistic to the imperialist domination; and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with every political party so long as it carries on the struggle against foreign domination .... 49

Anyway, it appears that sincere attempts were being made for establishing a party of the toiling masses by Dange, Singaravelu, Mukherjee, Dr. Manilal et al. at the time of the Gaya Congress. Dr. Manilal along with Abani Mukherjee published a manifesto in early 1923 - known as Manilal manifesto - which proposed a labour peasant party of India. As the relation between Roy and Mukherjee got soured Roy did not want to give any chance to Mukherjee to take the credit of founding an all-India centre (i.e., Party) of the different communist groups. This becomes evident when we take note of Roy's letters to Dange, Singaravelu and Ahmad inviting them to Europe where a conference of the groups could be held so that the proposed party could be inaugurated under the auspices of the Comintern. 50 This idea, however, never materialised. Singaravelu and his colleagues in Madras inaugurated the Labour Kisan Party at the end of April 1923. Singaravelu published a manifesto entitled 'Manifesto to Hindustan Labourers and Kisans for organising a political Party of their Own' on May 1, 1923 which attempted
to formulate a concrete political-economic programme for national freedom, urged the formation of a legal left-wing mass party inside the INC and put emphasis on forming workers' and peasants' mass organisations for securing urgent class demands. All these goals, it appears, were very close to Roy's ideas. However, such attempts at founding an open mass party of workers' and peasants' party or communist party ended in smoke when the leaders of splinter communist groups were arrested or sentenced to years of rigorous imprisonment in the Kanpur Conspiracy case on May 22, 1924.

An enlarged meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was held during March 18 -- April 14, 1925 wherein the national and colonial question was discussed in detail. The plenum adopted a resolution evaluating the political situation in India on April 6, 1925. The Colonial Commission of the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI (of which Roy was a member and secretary) heard extensive reports from China, Turkey, India, Java, Egypt and the American colonies. The Fifth Plenum put forward three main suggestions for the Indian communists. Firstly, it was stated, that the communists must work inside the INC and in the left wing of the Swaraj Party headed by C.R. Das and Matilal Nehru; secondly, that the communists should attempt to form a broad anti-imperialist front in unison with the INC and the Swaraj Party; and thirdly, that the communists should form a broad mass revolutionary party (a people's party, or a workers'
and peasants' party) which should act inside the Congress.

All these suggestions, it appears, were made following the spirit of the Fourth Comintern Congress. As regards the first Indian communist conference, Satyabhakta's aim was to found a legal communist party in India. However, by mid 1924, Dange was in favour of organising an open conference of the communists and the Socialist in early 1924 mooted the same idea and openly discussed it in the pages of the same journal. That is to say, the whole credit of organising an open conference does not go entirely to Satyabhakta. Satyabhakta formed his Indian Communist Party (Bharatiya Samyabadi Dal) on September 1, 1924; its aim was to propagate 'national communism' having no connection with the Comintern which, Satyabhakta believed, might incur the wrath of the British administration as had been the case (so believed Satyabhakta) with the communist groups convicted in the Kanpur Conspiracy case. Anyway, Satyabhakta invited the communist groups functioning in India to join the conference. Representatives of the communist groups from Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and Madras joined the conference and took major initiative to form the Communist Party of India (rejecting Satyabhakta's idea of forming an Indian Communist Party). Satyabhakta was elected to the central executive committee, but later resigned. The meeting of the central executive committee was held on December 28, 1925. The committee included J.P.Bagharatta, K.N.Joglekar, S.V.Ghate,
R.S. Nimbakar, Hasrat Mahani, Azad Sobhani, S. Satyabhakta, Baba Rana Choube, Muzaffar Ahmad, Radha Mohan Gokulji, Kameswara Rao, Krishna-swami Ayyangar, S.D. Hassan, Ram Chandra and Abdul Majid. Bagarhatta and Ghate were elected general secretaries of the central executive, while Ayyangar, Satyabhakta, Gokulji, Ahmad, Hassan were appointed secretaries for their respective areas. Muzaffar Ahmad in his Myself and the Communist Party of India has written that the year 1920 was the foundation year of the CPI. However, the central secretariat of the undivided CPI on August 19, 1959 agreed to accept 1925 as the year of foundation of the party. Adhikari's observation seems to be very cogent when he writes:

True, the Kanpur Communist Conference of 1925 did not have the features of a proper foundation congress of a communist party. But the creation of an all India nucleus of a central leadership at the conference and its continuity and role through succeeding years in building the mass base for the Communist Party of India make the conference a turning point in the life of the party. That is why the leadership of the united communist Party of India in 1958 decided to adopt the date of the conference as the foundation date of the Communist Party of India.

After the collapse of the non-co-operation movement several communal riots took place in north India in 1923-1924. In 1926 again fierce communal riots took place in many places, especially in Calcutta. Roy wrote in Inprecor that the Calcutta riots were but a result of British instigation on the eve of the election of the legislative council. He wrote: "The next election will take place at
the end of the year. The plan of the government is to break-up the hindu-muslim (sic) pact so that the swarajist (sic) majority in the provincial legislative council will be eliminated ...." 59 A Safdar wrote in Communist International " .... the only way hindu - muslim (sic) strife can be abolished in India is through the class struggle and the elimination of the survivals of religious ideals in the country ..." 60 In 1926 two important books, M.N.Roy's The Future of Indian Politics and R. P. Dutt's Modern India, were published. With some minor variations both Roy and Dutt came to the conclusion that (a) in the post-war period British imperialism was conceding the demand for independent industrialisation of India; (b) that the colonial bourgeoisie was going to co-operate with the Britishers and (c) thus losing its erstwhile significance in anti-imperialist struggle. However, both the books concluded that the communist groups must form a broad open party - a peoples' party or a workers' and peasants' party - through which they would, firstly, organise the workers and peasants and, secondly, put forward a revolutionary programme before the national movement. But they were not, however, clear about the way in which the new party would arise, i.e., whether the party would work inside the INC (maintaining its independent class-conscious stance) or would be an organisation rival to the INC.

This problem was to some extent solved when in 1926 the long-cherished goal of founding a peoples' party and/or workers' and peasants' party was materialised with the foundation of Bengal Peasants' and Workers'
Party on February 6-7, 1926 at Krishnagar in the session of the All Bengal Praja Conference. The declared object was 'the attainment of swaraj in the sense of complete independence of India based on the political, social and economic equality of women and men.' This was to be achieved through non-violent mass movement 'together with the use of force.' The proceedings declared that its policy would be to 'co-operate whenever possible with all other parties engaged in national activities.'

The Bengali weekly, Lannal, initially started as an organ of the Labour Swaraj Party on December 25, 1925, continued as organ of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party. The paper was republished with a new name Ganabani on and from August 12, 1926 under Muzaffar Ahmad's editorship. But after a short period its publication ceased. In Bombay the WPP was formed in February 1927, in Punjab (under the name Kirti Kisan Party) in April 1928, in U.P. in October 1928. According to Adhikari, the All-Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party (precursor of the WPPs that emerged subsequently in different provinces) 'was not the peoples' party of M. N. Roy's conception', but was an 'open forum' through which the CPI sought to function in times of repression. It rejected the INC's path of pure non-violence and also the path of individual terrorism but projected a plan of independence through countrywide general strike and no-tax, no-rent campaign along with programmes of anti-feudal socio-economic changes. Adhikari further observes: "Actually a people's party of Roy's conception i.e. a broad open party, seeking to
rally all national-revolutionary elements, but projected as a body parallel and rival to the Indian National Congress, was never formed in India. The workers' and peasants' parties .... played a dual role. On the one hand they pioneered the building of class-conscious organisation and movement of workers and peasants - the red flag movement - and began building a national - revolutionary left wing inside the national movement."

In 1926, at the Gauhati session of the INC the CPI distributed a Manifesto which criticised the Congress demand of dominion status and demanded 'freedom, complete and unconditional', a 'national assembly elected by universal adult (man and woman) suffrage', land to the tiller, eight-hour day and minimum living wage etc. The document stipulated that the colonial bourgeoisie had entered into 'an agreement with imperialism to exploit the Indian people jointly.' This had happened, the manifesto stipulates, because of four reasons: (i) the general crisis of capitalism had weakened the basis of imperialism to such an extent that it had to change its line of traditional colonial domination; (ii) Britain had adopted the policy of industrialising India because of the penetration of Japan, America and Germany in the Indian market; (iii) the decline of capital accumulation in Britain stood in her way of sparing the capital needed for the industrialisation of India; (iv) the popular revolts in the post-war India had forced imperialism to win over to its side 'ever-wider strata' of the Indian society. The new ally of the British, according to this Manifesto, was the colonial bourgeoisie. Afraid of the
rebellious mood of the peasant masses this section, so stipulated the
Manifesto, "decided to travel the safer way, and accept the junior
partnership with imperialism in the exploitation of the Indian people." 67

The members of the CEC of the CPI elected at Kanpur met in Bombay
on January 16, 1927. 68 It proposed to hold the second communist con- 
ference in Lahore during March 17-20, 1927. However, this proposed com- 
nist conference never took place and instead an extended meeting of the
CEC was held in Bombay between May 29 and 31, 1927. 69 In this meeting
a revised constitution of the CPI was adopted. The meeting called upon
all its members "to enrol themselves as members of the Indian National
Congress, and form a strong left wing in all its organs for the purpose
of wresting them from the present alien control." 70 The declared ob-
jectives were more or less the same as declared in the Kanpur conferen-
cce. It also called upon its members to enter the AITUC and form a left
wing there. 71 On the eve of the Madras session (last week of December
1927) of the INC the WPP published a manifesto addressed to the INC
which demanded boycott of the Simon Commission, a national Constituent
Assembly based on adult franchise, general strike, exemption from rent,
land to the peasant, eight-hour day and minimum wage for workers, pro-
tection of minorities etc. 72 During the Madras session of the Congress
a meeting of the CEC of the CPI was held from December 28 to 30, 1927.
In the meeting it was decided that an All India Workers' and Peasants' Party would be set up and that the Simon Commission would be boycotted.

The years 1926-1929 also happened to be the years of unprecedented strike movements by the working class of India. Besides the AITUC, communists as WPP members organised large demonstrations and strikes and the government saw behind every movement signs of communist conspiracy. The year 1928 began with the slogan of boycotting the Simon Commission. In April began the six-month long textile mill workers' strike of Bombay. At the end of the strike the Girni Kamgar Union was born. Strike also took place in the Indian Railways and jute mills. In 1925 the total number of working days lost in the jute mills was 242,906 whereas in 1928 the number was 1,508,708. According to one commentator, an industry-wise analysis of the strikes of the year 1927 "indicates 46.51 per cent of these strikes occurred in cotton textile industry only .... of the total number of working days lost, strikes in the railways alone claimed as large as 61.9 per cent." The strikes during 1928-1929 took so serious a shape that in 1928 three and half million working days were lost.

The first All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party conference was held on December 21-23, 1928 in Calcutta where Sohan Singh Josb was the president. The conference demanded complete independence, abolition of landlordism, establishment of peasant proprietorship and emphasised on the importance of class struggle and international affiliation. In a manifesto to all
workers the CPI warned the working class that "the bourgeois nationalists of the congress (sic) were putting themselves at the head of the mass movement, ... simply in order to betray it."  It also pointed out that the trade unions should be freed "from bourgeois congressmen (sic) and imbued with the militant policy and theory of communism." It was stipulated that it was the working class which could and would fight to the end for socialism. In the midst of unprecedented working class movements during 1927-1929, the manifesto rightly emphasised on the necessity of trade union unity against the vacillating role of the nationalist leaders both in the trade union and political fronts. In fact, the AIUUC got split twice, once, at Nagercoil session (November 26-30, 1929) because of frictions between the communists and the reformist leadership on the question of Whitley Commission (in July 1929 a Royal Commission on Labour in India was appointed under the presidency of J.H. Whiteley - U.G.) and, later, at the Calcutta session (July 3-7, 1931) giving birth to the All India Red Trade Union Congress. The second split was the result of a conflict between the communists and the radical-nationalists. However, the working class militancy got a jolt when most of the leading communists were arrested in 1929 and
III

The view that the Indian bourgeoisie would betray the masses, as evident in the Manifesto, seems to be the reflection of the Colonial Theses adopted by the Sixth Congress of Comintern in 1928. The Comintern position was a critique of the idea of decolonisation which maintained that facing severe crisis at home British imperialism reversed its erstwhile policy of keeping India an industrially backward colony and allowed the Indian capitalists to participate in the industrialisation of India as a junior partner of the bourgeoisie of the metropolis. From this a political conclusion was drawn that the Indian bourgeoisie as a whole class along with the feudalist strata had joined the imperialist camp and, hence, it was reasoned, no united front with the bourgeoisie was possible. The anti-imperialist liberation struggle can be led, as the theorists of decolonisation maintained, only by a united front of the workers, the peasants and the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie and the rural poor.

Some scholars have argued that the finally adopted 'Theses on the revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies' was substantially modified after prolonged discussions in the Comintern Congress and seemed to be akin to the views held by Roy since 1920. But a close scrutiny of the final Theses shows that while Roy maintained that the colonial bourgeoisie as a whole class was counter revolutionary the
Theses adopted an intermediate position and dubbed it as vacillating between the imperialist and the national revolutionary camps. Citing the example of the Kuomintang, the Theses argued that the bulk of the Chinese national bourgeoisie in the beginning had joined and led the anti-imperialist camp but later finally went over to the counter-revolutionary camp. But "In India and Egypt", the Theses stipulated, we still observe, for the time-being, the typical bourgeois-nationalist movement - an opportunist movement, subject to great vacillations, balancing between imperialism and revolution. The independence of the country in relation to imperialism, being to the advantage of the whole colonial people, corresponds also to the interests of the national bourgeoisie, but is irreconcilable contradiction to the whole nature of the imperialist system .... In this respect the contradiction of interests between the national bourgeoisie of the colonial country and imperialism is objectively of a radical character. In this respect, imperialism demands capitulation on the part of the national bourgeoisie. 83

The Theses maintained that a contradiction existed between imperialism and the colonial bourgeoisie and suggested that some form of temporary alliance with the reformist section of the bourgeoisie was possible. In this connection it should be mentioned that during this period the Comintern was becoming increasingly optimistic about the strength of the working class in the colonies, especially in India, and perhaps because of such understanding the Sixth Congress rejected any kind of united front with the bourgeoisie as was suggested in the previous Congress. It rather suggested:
the formation of temporary agreements and the co-ordinating of separate activities in connection with definite anti-imperialist demonstrations, provided that these demonstrations of the bourgeois opposition can be utilised for the development of the mass movement, and provided that these agreements do not in any way limit the freedom of the Communist Parties in the matter of agitation among the masses and among the organisations of the latter.

Perhaps the Comintern's experience of the betrayal of the Chinese bourgeoisie in this period helped formulate such a strategy. The Theses emphasised the role of the colonial proletariat and the independent activities of the CPs but simultaneously it put emphasis on the peasant question and specifically pointed to the peculiar nature of the proletariat of the colonies. Though the Theses hoped that the proletariat of the colonies would be able to emerge as an independent force and in due course it should get rid of the influence of the reformist nationalist leaders it did not fail to note the social background of the colonial proletariat. The Theses stipulated:

The predominant part of the colonial proletariat is derived from the pauperised village, with which the worker remains in connection even when engaged in production. In the majority of the colonies (with the exception of some large factory towns such as Shanghai, Bombay, Calcutta etc.) we find, as a general rule, only a first generation of proletariat engaged in large scale production. Another portion is made up of the ruined artisans who are being driven out of the decaying handicrafts, which are widely spread even in the most advanced colonies. The ruined artisan, a petty owner, carries with him into the working class a guild tendency and ideology which serves as a basis for the penetration of nationalist-reformist influence into the labour movement of the colonies.
This passage is strikingly similar with Lenin's Draft Theses adopted at the Second Congress. The Theses also suggested that the CPs should keep close eyes on the development of agrarian crises and class contradictions and try to provide from the very outset 'a consciously-revolutionary direction to the dissatisfaction of the workers and the incipient peasant movement' and must direct it against imperialism and also against dominant pre-capitalist relationships.

Adhikari later observed that the line adopted by the Comintern at the Sixth Congress and its mechanical application by the CPI led to left-sectarian mistakes. The Theses adopted at the Sixth Congress characterised the colonial bourgeoisie as divided into two wings. One section, according to the Theses, joined the camp of imperialism while the other wing (the national reformists) wavered between the imperialist and revolutionary camps. This position was almost a replica of Stalin's understanding of the nature of the colonial bourgeoisie as mentioned earlier. Secondly, the Theses put emphasis on the united revolutionary work of the peasants and workers led by the CPI, and not on united front with any section of the bourgeoisie as proposed by previous Congresses. This happened because of two reasons: on the one hand, the Comintern foresaw an impending crisis of capitalism the world over, which, in fact, was evident in the great depression of 1929-1931. The Comintern visualised a situation when with the aggravation of the crisis of capitalism the working class would
be in a position to take advantage of such crisis and fight for socialism. Moreover, as the Comintern was engaged in fighting the Social-Democrats who propagated the idea that capitalism was being firmly established instead of being restrained, the Comintern by emphasising the prospect of proletarian revolution made an attempt to outdo the social-democratic tendency. On the other hand, the Comintern's experience in China was also responsible for a left-sectarian shift. The betrayal of the Chinese bourgeoisie forced the Comintern not to take any risk that might lead to a similar disaster for the working class movement in the colonies. Moreover, the Sixth Congress of the CPC which was held in Moscow in mid-1928 put emphasis on winning over the masses, especially the peasant masses, and thus preparing a revolutionary base. It discarded the policy of immediate launching of attacks in urban centres. This phenomenon might have influenced the Comintern also. Perhaps, keeping in mind the fate of the Chinese communists in 1925-1927 the Theses observed that the basic tasks of the Indian communists were struggle against imperialism and precapitalist relationships, and organisation of the peasantry 'in the form of Soviet Republic'. The growing mass movements also made the leaders of the Comintern hopeful about a prospect of revolution in India. As such movements were marked by militant working class movements in the form of strikes etc., in the metropolitan cities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, along with the peasantry, the Comintern was gradually becoming hopeful.
about the independent strength of the Indian proletariat and hence the Theses abandoned the previous policy of united front with the bourgeoisie and preferred a temporary alliance only.

But during the next three years after the Sixth Congress was over the Comintern took further leftward turn and at a certain stage propagated the idea that the entire national bourgeoisie had become comprador. Comparing the left-nationalists like Nehru with the Social-Democrat leaders of Europe the Comintern advised the Indian communists to concentrate attack on the 'Left' elements within the nationalist camp. From this position the Comintern put more emphasis on independent activities of the CPI against imperialism. The new Comintern position became clear at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (July 1929). One commentator had observed before the Plenum began that the national bourgeoisie including its petty-bourgeois sect had entirely gone over to the side of imperialism. The new position was also supported by Stalin. Earlier, Stalin made distinction between the compromising and the reformist section of the bourgeoisie but in 1929 Stalin discarded his early position and dubbed the entire bourgeoisie as comprador. And the entire theme took a concrete shape in the 'Theses on the International Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist International' adopted in 1929. Referring to the adoption of Dominion Status by the INC as its immediate goal and the repression of strike movements of the workers during 1928-1929, the Theses observed that all this 'exposed the counter-revolutionary role of the Indian bourgeoisie.' Again, it was categorically
mentioned that

... the independence of India, the improvement of the conditions of the working class and the solution of the agrarian problem, can be achieved only by means of the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants led by the proletariat in the struggle against British imperialism, the Indian feudal rulers and Indian capital. The tasks of the Indian revolution can only be solved through struggle for the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry under the banner of Soviets. 93

The Comintern urged the CPI to withdraw from the WPPs 94 as these were, in the opinion of the Comintern, two-class parties composed of the working class and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. In a letter to P.C. Joshi, C.P. Dutt suggested that the CPI should try to depend on its own strength and produce its own leaders from their own ranks. "The experience of China", he wrote, "is of overwhelming importance for us just on this point, for the history of the Kuo-Ming-tang has given us a gigantic lesson of the dangers confronting any mass movement which is led by the bourgeoisie or even by the petty bourgeoisie when the latter is left with sole control". 95

The Comintern's hardening of attitude towards the Indian bourgeoisie can be in a way explained if we take into account the politics of the National Congress during 1928-1929. After the boycott of the Simon Commission the Congress leadership tried for a compromise with imperialism which was manifest in the adoption of the goal of Dominion Status in the Calcutta session of the INC in December 1928 on the basis of
(Motilal) Nehru Report. Facing opposition from even among the Congress leaders it was proposed that if Dominion Status did not come in one year a call would be given for non-violent non-co-operation movement. Bose's proposal for immediate struggle for complete independence and non payment of tax was defeated. Perhaps this led the Comintern to believe that the bourgeoisie had gone over to imperialism en bloc. The second important reason was the growing militancy of the peasants and workers in the late-twenties and early thirties. Due to the Great Depression, the Indian industries and agriculture were hardly hit; Prices of agricultural produce fell sharply and industrial exports considerably declined. A good many peasant movements and industrial strikes occurred during 1928-1933. Boycott of the Simon Commission was a great success. Even after the Meerut round up in which almost all working class leaders were arrested working class movements did not fritter away despite brutal repression. In 1930 when Gandhi gave a call for Civil Disobedience Movement, people from all strata of society, especially the peasant masses, joined the same enthusiastically. But the Gandhi-Irwin agreement (1931) and subsequent failures of the Round Table Conferences threw cold water on such mass enthusiasm. Such growing movements of the workers and the peasants alongwith the fact of Gandhi's refusal to give a call for mass movement in 1929 led the Comintern leaders to believe that only a party exclusively of the workers and peasants could lead the Indian revolution. Perhaps keeping this in mind they advised the CPI to desert the WAPs, though not the reformist trade unions. And all this explains why the Comintern suggested
a class versus class strategy.

The 'Draft Platform of Action of the C.P. of India', an important document of the CPI published in 1930, reflected the above line and vehemently attacked the Gandhian leadership and especially the left nationalists like Nehru and Bose. The document stipulated that under the cloak of leftism these leaders, in reality, were hoodwinking the masses and that they in fact stood for a compromise with imperialism. It propagated the idea of organising the workers and peasants under the banner of an independent party, viz., the CPI. It asked the people to establish 'Indian Federal Workers' and peasants' Soviet Republic'. This pamphlet was distributed in the Karachi session of the INC (1931). Moreover, as the CPI was opposed to the Round Table Conference, in a Manifesto it vehemently attacked the Congress leadership and tried to make the Congress ranks aware of the national betrayal and put emphasis on the need for fighting both imperialism and its allies, viz., the Indian bourgeoisie, the princes and the zamindars. This new stand of the CPI was fully endorsed by the Eleventh Plenum of the CI which was held in March-April 1931.

Though the Comintern was gradually becoming highly optimistic about the possibility of an independent proletarian revolution in India the CPI was in fact isolated from the masses, had no Central Committee and after the Meerut round up almost all the leading communists were in jail. It is an irony of history that amidst such tragic isolation the leaders of the CPI who remained outside the jail gave a call for armed
struggle under communist leadership and advised to expose the Congress.

The situation, however, changed somewhat after 1931. From British intelligence reports it becomes evident that William Nathan Kweit and Harry Sommers and Henry G. Lynd came to India as Comintern emissaries during this period. They were able to contact the Bombay and Calcutta groups of the CPI and thus the Comintern came to know the tragic situation in which the CPI got entrapped. From these reports we also come to know that the Meerut Prisoners managed to send a detailed self critical report to the Comintern stipulating the causes of its tragic isolation and suggested measures for strengthening the party e.g., the establishment of a provisional Central Committee, adoption of a party Constitution, publication of vernacular weeklies etc.

The Comintern now tried to rectify the mistakes of the CPI in accordance with the suggestions made by the emissaries and the Meerut prisoners. Thus Valiya wrote that despite its betrayal the INC still managed to keep intact its anti-imperialist image, that the Indian working class was immature, that the reformist leaders had a considerable control over the labour movement; he admonished the CPI for its failure to participate in anti-imperialist demonstrations. He suggested that the CPI should try to organise agricultural workers separately and also form party organisations in towns, workshops, factories, plantations etc. In May 1932 an Open Letter of the CPC, CPGA and CPR was issued
wherein the CPI was criticised for its mechanical application of the Sixth Congress line and thus giving undue importance to the class interest of the proletariat vis-à-vis the independence movement which, according to the letter, ultimately alienated the masses. It put emphasis on the formation of a centralised illegal party. In November 1933 the CPC issued another Open Letter 103 to the CPI which advised the latter to follow the tactic of united front in order to paralyse the influence of the bourgeoisie. That the CPI then tried to rectify its errors to some extent could be found in some important documents. The most important one was the Draft Political Theses published by the CC of the CPI in 1934. Admitting its errors committed during 1928-1933 the Theses stipulated "...The isolation of the national reformist organisation and leadership from the toiling masses can be achieved only when the Communists prove able to demonstrate in action their leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle and in the struggles of the peasants and workers ...." 105 The necessity of defending the 'interests and demands of all the classes against British imperialism' was emphasised.

The increasing isolation of communist parties, along with the growing necessity of united front in the struggle against fascism made it gradually an imperative for the Comintern to effect a shift in its sectarian line. It was in the Seventh Congress of the Comintern when the full implications of the sectarian outlook as proposed in the Sixth
Congress were analysed and consequently rectified. Georgi Dimitrov delivered the main report at the Seventh Congress of the CI which was held in Moscow from July 25 to August 21, 1935. Dimitrov observed in this connection that the Indian communists should and must 'support, extend and participate' in the anti-imperialist mass movements and should not exclude the reformist national leadership. He further suggested that the Indian communists must carry on active work inside the organisations which took part in the INC and thus try to form a 'national revolutionary wing' among them to carry on national liberation struggle against British imperialism. Thus the Comintern turned back to the Second Congress position. That the process had already started becomes evident from the directives sent to the CPI by the fraternal parties like the CPC, CPGB, CPB and the Comintern during 1930-1933. These were in fact, attempts aimed at helping the CPI to come out of its tragic isolation from the national political mainstream. All this shows that the Comintern began to reconsider the feasibility of its colonial policy and gradually felt the need for reorienting its strategy which got a concrete shape in the Seventh Congress. Adhikari pointed out that the letters from the fraternal parties helped the CPI correct its sectarianism but nevertheless, he stated, there prevailed some confusion about the future course of action. He maintained that difference of opinion existed inside the CPI about working inside the Congress and also about the attitude to be taken towards the bourgeoisie. Though
the roots of sectarianism lay in the Sixth Congress Theses mechanical interpretation of the same and 'inadequate theoretical and ideological work to solve the concrete problems', observed Adhikari, were also responsible for the errors.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


3. Marx' letter to the Editorial Board of the Otechestvennie Zapiski in November 1877, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, \textit{Selected Correspondence} (Moscow, 1985), pp. 311-13. Also see Marx's communication to V. I. Dazarl, 8 March 1881 in ibid., pp. 319-340.


5. ibid., pp. 76-77, 96-87.

6. ibid., pp. 86-87.


8. ibid., p. 410.

9. ibid., p. 412.


15. See F. Engels, 'On Social Relations in Russia', _MECW_, vol. 2, pp. 397-98. Engels writes:

"... Here all the conditions of a revolution are combined, of a revolution which, started by the upper classes of the capital, perhaps even by the government itself, must be rapidly carried further, beyond the first constitutional phase, by the masses; of a revolution which will be of greatest importance for the whole of Europe if only because it will destroy at one blow the last, so far intact, reserve of the entire European reaction. This revolution is surely more than..."


17. ibid., pp. 149-50.
18. Ibid., p.148.


23. Ibid., p.188.

24. Ibid., p.188.


...


28. ibid., p.150.

29. M. Pavlovich, 'V sektsiyakh kongressa', p.2. According to Reznikov there is a misprint in these lines of the minutes. See A. B. Reznikov, 'Bor'ba V.I.Lenina protiv sektantskih izvrashchenii v natsional'n kolonial 'nom voprose' (V.I. Lenin's struggle against sectarian distortions in the National-Colonial Question), Kommunist, No.5 (March 1968), n.2, p.38. If we closely study Article 11 of Lenin's Draft Theses it becomes clear that the reference was to the bourgeois-democratic movement, not bourgeois-communist as recorded by Pavlovich. See Dutta Gupta, op. cit., p.32.


32. V. I. Lenin, 'Theses for a Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.' in LCW, vol.32, p.482. Lenin delivered it on July 5, 1921. Lenin wrote:

"It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect."

* * * *

"And inspite of the fact that the masses of toilers the peasants in the colonial countries - are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution."


35. See Inprecor, 5 (39), 28 April 1925, p.513.

36. J. V. Stalin, 'The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P. (B)', May 9, 1925', Works, (Moscow, 1954), vol.7, pp. 107-9. For his specific reference to India see 'The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East' – Speech delivered at a Meeting of Students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, May 18, 1925' in ibid., pp.149-51.


39. Ahmad, op. cit., p.77.


41. Ibid., pp.567-604. This volume includes two important letters written by Roy to S.A. Dange wherein a plan for coming together of different communist groups in India to form a communist party is made. Roy also suggested, as it appears from these letters, that the four
communist group. In Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore should send representatives to Berlin for a conference with the leaders of the Communist International (henceforth CI) where an All-India central organ of the CPI could be set up and its programme drawn up. But ultimately this idea did not materialise. pp.592-96.

42. For Subramanrao Chelbar's speech see ibid., pp.588-91.


44. ibid., pp.27-1.

45. Adhikari, Document I, p.589. Adhikari informs us that besides being proposal of a semi-party Nature put forward a similar proposal for creating a Socialist Labour Party of India which was endorsed by 23 in a letter dated October 7, 1927. ibid., p.503. At about the same time, Adhikari says, about October or trying to organize the Labour Maraj party to work inside the Congress. ibid., p.518. In the Socialist, 11(2), 16 September 1929, a proposal was put forward for setting up an Indian Socialist labour party of the IPC whose immediate objectives, it was stated, would be to disseminate knowledge of socialist principles, to obtain control of the national and local (governing) bodies, to co-ordinate and develop trade union organisations and to strengthen and extend the co-operative movement. See Adhikari, Document II, pp.163-66.


47. ibid., pp.6-16.

48. ibid., p.21.

49. ibid., p.22.
50. Exhibit No.33. in Kanpur Case as cited in ibid., p.103.

51. ibid., pp.102-5.

52. For Singaravelu's Manifesto see ibid., pp.114-29.

53. ibid., pp.546-51.

54. ibid., pp.594-95, 606. For documents on first communist conference see pp.630-70.

55. ibid., p.667.

56. Ahmad, op. cit., p.64.


58. ibid., p.629.

59. Adhikari, Documents IIIA, p.79.

60. ibid., p.85

61. ibid., pp.155-62. For detailed information about foundation of the WPP's in Punjab, Bombay and U.P. see Ahmad, op. cit., p.420.

62. Adhikari, Documents IIIA, p.159.

63. ibid., p.32.

64. ibid., p.33.
65. See 'A Manifesto to the All-India National Congress' in Adhikari, Documents IIIA, pp.245-46. Also Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 492-510.

66. ibid., pp.241-42.

67. ibid., p.242.

68. Adhikari, Documents IIIB, pp.6, 2, 139-40, 210-15.

69. ibid., p.7.

70. ibid., p.212.

71. ibid., p.213.

72. 'Manifesto of the Workers' and Peasants' Party to the Indian National Congress' in ibid., pp.304-5.

73. ibid., pp.134-38.

74. Sukomol Sen, Working Class of India. History of Emergence and Movement (Calcutta, 1979), pp.265,244.

75. ibid., p.244.

76. ibid., p.244.

77. Adhikari, Documents IIIC, pp. 708-11

78. 'Manifesto of CPI to All Workers' in ibid., pp.788-91.
79. ibid., p.790.

80. ibid., p.791.


83. 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies', Inprecor, 8(88), 12 December 1928, pp. 1665-66.

84. ibid., p.1668.

85. ibid., p.1667.

86. ibid., p.1673.


88. 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-colonies', p.1673.

89. Inprecor, 9(44), 30 August. 1929, pp.943-44.


92. 'Theses on the International Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist International', Inprecor, 9(46), 4 September 1929, p. 975.

93. ibid., p. 975.

94. Letter of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to the All-India Conference of Workers' and Peasants' Parties, dated 2 December 1928, Meerut, District. Proceedings of the Meerut Conspiracy Case, vol. 1 (Meerut, 1929), Exhibit No. p. 334. Also see C.P.Dutt's letter to P.C. Joshi, 29 November 1928 in ibid., Exhibit No. p. 345 in Datta Gupta, op. cit., p. 182. The arrest of the leading Congressmen in 1930 was described by R. P. Dutt as British attempt to dissociate the leadership from the rank and file as the leaders failed to keep the Indian masses within the confines of peaceful movement and thus kept open the scope for further negotiation. See his 'The Path to Proletarian Hegemony in the Indian Revolution' (II), Communist International, 7(14), 15 December 1930, p. 315. However, Palme Dutt pointed out that though the masses were gradually turning towards militant anti-imperialist struggle the CPI failed to lead them because (a) there was no organised communist party; (b) concentration of trade unions in metropolitan cities like Bombay and Calcutta while miners and plantation workers were virtually left unorganised; (c) the predominant influence of reformist tendency in the trade unions and (d) the organisational lacunae created by the Meerut Round up. ibid., pp. 313-14. For his critique of the 'Left' Congressmen see R. P. Dutt, 'Notes of the month', Labour Monthly (Hindceforth Ltd.), vol. 13 (May 1931), pp. 273-74.


100. See India and Communism (Revised up to 1 January 1935) (Simla,1935), pp. 175-84. This document was compiled by the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department, Government of India. The Meerut prisoners were somewhat sceptical about the Tenth Plenum Position which stipulated that the Indian bourgeoisie had turned out and out counter revolutionary like its Chinese counterpart; they also betrayed scepticism about the feasibility of immediate establishment of a Soviet Republic. See Communists Challenge Imperialism from the Dock (Calcutta, 1967), pp.82-94, 103-7.

101. See India and Communism, pp.182-84.


103. 'Open Letter to the Indian Communists from the C.C. of the C. P. of China', Inpraco, 13(51), 24 November 1933, pp.1154-57.
104. For example, the Calcutta branch of the CPI published Indian Revolution and Our Task, Manifesto of the Communist Party of India (n.p., 1933), pp.11-15. V. Basak, 'The Present Situation in India' (II), Inprecor, 13(41), 15 September 1933, pp. 896-97.

105. 'Abridged Draft of Political Theses of the C.C. of the C. P. of India', Inprecor, 14(40), 20 July 1934, pp.1025-31, especially, pp.1030-31. The CC of the CPI was formed in 1933 after the Meerut prisoners were released.


107. 'Open Letter to Indian Communists', Inprecor, 12(22), 19 May 1932, pp.436-42.