CHAPTER IV

The Ideology

The study of the ideology of a party is important for understanding the policies of that party, dynamics of party organization, behaviour of party members and the camouflage to which the party elites may sometimes resort to in order to justify their socio-political actions. This is particularly important in a communist party where ideology is given the greatest importance. Ideology provides a broad spectrum of ideas and values that influences party policies, determines the legitimacy of organizational goals and gives sanctity to the behaviour of party cadres. It provides party members with a sense of purpose, fixes broad parameters, which in a sense provide a frame of reference to think and act, and legitimizes the party and the movement among the masses.

Though the word ideology is frequently used, there has always been controversies about its exact meaning and
The growing popularity of the term has been equally matched by its growing obscurity. This state of affairs has made the use of the term ideology difficult for scholarly purposes. As originally coined, the word ideology was believed to be "a philosophic discipline concerned to examine the methodological foundations of all science and to guarantee their impartial application." But the meaning of the concept has undergone a considerable change since then and scholars have used it in many different ways. It will not, therefore, be out of place to have a digression on this point and to try to understand the meaning of the term ideology for the purpose of this study.

The term ideology was popularised by Marx who viewed it as "false consciousness". By false consciousness, Marx appears to have meant a set of mistaken beliefs about matters important to those shared by a whole group of persons or a class. He believed that human thought is ultimately determined by social existence or material conditions of life. Ideology may thus be viewed as those ideas that represent a particular mode of social organisation and serve the interests of a particular class. Whereas the ideologies of the dominant classes promote their interest by justifying the

established order, the ideologies of the oppressed classes challenge that order. Marx thus viewed ideology as "a specific form of untruth, created by class system and one that would disappear as it was unmasked." In his view, only marxist social theory, based on a true understanding of history, appeared to be free from ideological distortion.

Mannheim accepted Marx’s theory of false consciousness but tried to modify it to make it a less partisan instrument. He believed with Marx that ideas are immediate emanations of social interests. The social milieu of a thinker is of crucial importance in determining his thoughts and what they are intended to do. Mannheim claimed that “every form of historical and political thought is essentially conditioned by the life situation of the thinker and his group.” For him ideology represented the outlook inevitably associated with a given historical and social situation and the weltanschauung and style of thought bound up with it.” Mannheim insisted that the claim of Marxism to be free of such a limited outlook and hence free of “any ideological taint” was untenable. No idea, according to Mannheim, is strictly congruent with reality, nor is there any such thing as


4. Ibid.
disinterested or abstract thought. All ideas are a more or less pathological expression of social discontent. Mannheim noted that in contemporary society utopian thinking has been discredited and each class is adopting its own ideology. In this situation, he believed, only the intelligensia can make a synthesis out of conflicting ideas and point the way to healthy social action. The classlessness of the intelligensia, in Mannheim's view, enables it to avoid the pathological errors of others. Mannheim thus looked at ideology from a theoretical point of view as it affected the thinking of an individual or group and tried to minimize the influence of ideology by assigning an important role to the intelligensia in society.

Edward Shils has defined ideology as "one variant form of those comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral beliefs about man, society and the universe in relation to man and society which flourish in human societies." He further stated that ideologies are characterized by a high degree of explicitness of formulation over a wide range of the objects with which they deal and demand complete subservience from its adherents. Ideology also entails "an aggressive

5. Ibid., pp. 137-146.
7. Ibid.
alienation from the existing society. The hallmarks of ideology, in Shils' opinion, are a totalistic orientation and concern with radical change. He thus used the term ideology in a restrictive sense and applied it only to extremist ideologies which aimed at total reconstruction of society.

As Flementz has pointed out, ideology is generally understood to mean "the doctrines that political parties and other organizations are committed to or which they use in their endeavours to get power and influence." In this sense it is deliberately exploited and refers to indoctrination. Flementz thus emphasized the functional value of ideology in politics.

Sartori has rightly pointed out that the term ideology generally falls into two broad domains, namely ideology in knowledge and ideology in politics. The first area of enquiry relates to the question "whether and to what extent, man's knowledge is ideologically conditioned or distorted." Here ideology is contrasted with truth, science and valid knowledge. The second area of enquiry relates to the issue "whether ideology is an essential feature of politics and if so, what does it explain." Here we are concerned not
with the truth value but with the functional value of ideology. Sartori has thus helped us in understanding the difference between theoretical and practical aspects of ideology.

Schurmann has explained this idea in a different way. He has divided ideology into "pure ideology" and "practical ideology." Pure ideology has been defined as "a set of ideas designed to give the individual a unified and conscious world view" and practical ideology as "a set of ideas designed to give the individual rational instruments for action." In spite of this difference, pure and practical ideology are closely related. The ideas of practical ideology have no legitimation without pure ideology. But without practical ideology an organization cannot transform itself into an efficient instrument of action. However, the merit of Schurmann's distinction between "pure" and "practical" ideology is that it helps us to understand the interaction between the fundamental and operative dimensions of ideology.

But a researcher dealing with the ideology of a communist party is always confronted with the problem of differentiating between ideology and strategy. This problem becomes all the more complex if one takes into consideration the fact that some aspects of the strategy of the party may

15. Ibid., p. 23.
become a part of its ideology with the passage of time. A
certain degree of overlapping between ideology and strategy
thus becomes unavoidable. In fact, ideology acts as a
universal guardian of strategy. As a universal factor it
channels the lessons of similar movements elsewhere to the
organisation that formulates strategy. Strategy, on the
other hand, combines long range considerations represented
by ideology with the immediate needs of the party. In
order to arrive at a working understanding for the purpose
of this study we define ideology as a set of ideas that serve
as guidelines for an organisation and produce action
consequences and strategy as methods and techniques employed
by the party to acquire political power.

Viewed from this angle a study of the ideology of the
party would involve an analysis of those ideological issues
which influenced the working of the party organisation. But
the views of the leadership of the party on such issues are
likely to get modified in accordance with the changes in its
environment. A communist party, where it is engaged in a
competition for political power, must pragmatically adjust
itself to the environment in which it is operating. Its

16. Mohanty, K. Revolutionary Violence : A Study of the
Communist Movement in India, op. cit., p. 11.
17. Ibid., p. 10.
success or failure as a political party, would largely depend upon its capacity for such adjustment. In such a situation the ideology of the party is likely to undergo significant changes. It is to be seen how the socio-economic environment of the state and its politico-cultural configuration have affected party's theoretical formulations. We shall discuss the ideology of the party on an issue analytical basis and try to understand the variables which generally influenced party's stand on ideological issues. We begin our discussion with the nature of the epoch.

Nature of the Epoch

An understanding of the nature of the epoch is essential for working out the strategy and tactics of the party. A correct analysis of the epoch enables the Marxists to understand the balance of world forces and the nature of contradictions prevailing at a particular period. It also helps them in finding out the methods of resolving these contradictions and using them to their advantage by working out a correct line at the national and international levels. The understanding of the nature of the epoch became a subject of debate in the Punjab party at the time of the ideological controversy in the International Communist movement during the early sixties. But before we discuss this controversy it would be essential to understand the earlier Marxist thinking on this issue.
In this famous essay "Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism", written in 1916, Lenin had characterized the present epoch as an "epoch of imperialism, wars and proletarian revolution". Since then, many significant changes have taken place and a new balance of forces has come into existence. The world has witnessed socialist revolutions in a number of countries and a powerful socialist camp has come into existence. The old colonial system has disintegrated. All these changes have taken place after Lenin's thesis that "the era of socialist revolution is beginning." It, therefore, became imperative that the present epoch be reassessed and redefined in the light of the above changes.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU, while taking note of these changes, came to the conclusion that a change has taken place in the balance of world forces in favour of socialism. A conference of 12 communist and workers' parties was held in Moscow in November, 1957. It declared that the main content of the present epoch is "the transition from capitalism to socialism." The conference claimed that socialism has proved its superiority over capitalism and consequently,


imperialism was on the decline and defensive. Another conference of the communist parties of the world was held in Moscow in 1960. It defined the "present epoch" as one in which the balance of world forces had gone against imperialism and in which the "world socialist system was becoming the decisive factor in the development of society." The conference also came to the conclusion that the complete triumph of socialism was inevitable. It emphasized that the above developments have created opportunities to solve the main problems of the present epoch in a new way. The new epoch was thus redefined in a way that suited the national interest of the Soviet Union. By laying stress on the increase in the strength of socialism against capitalism, the CPSU leaders essentially wanted to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards capitalist countries. Such a line was essential to protect the infrastructure, which the Soviet Union had built up after the socialist revolution, from the danger of a war.

This redefinition of the new epoch gave rise to a serious debate in the International communist movement. The controversy centred around not only the definition of the new epoch but also about its salient features. The CPC

20. Ibid., p. 2.
22. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
accused the CPSU and other communist parties which supported its stand of making a revisionist interpretation of the new epoch and its salient features. The CPC believed that the Leninist understanding of the present epoch as an epoch of "imperialism, wars and proletarian revolution" is true even today. It also disagreed with the CPSU about the main contradictions in the present epoch. While the CPSU and its allies regarded the contradiction between capitalism and socialism as the principal contradiction of the present epoch, the CPC stressed the contradiction between imperialism and national-liberation movements. In fact, by emphasizing support to the national-liberation movements against imperialism, the Chinese wanted to create their own sphere of influence in the Afro-Asian countries.

This issue came up for discussion in the Central Executive of the CPI and also in the Punjab Party. The Central executive committee of the CPI, in a meeting held in September, 1960, passed a resolution by a majority vote in which it accepted the Russian interpretation of the present epoch and rejected the Chinese stand. However, a strong


minority of the CEC members, including all members from Punjab, voted against the official resolution.25

Although all the members from Punjab in the Central Executive were opposed to the Soviet formulations, Punjab Party was no less divided. The Punjab State Executive Committee of the party rejected the CEC resolution by a majority vote and demanded its withdrawal.26 The leading members of the State Executive Committee criticised the CPSU stand and gave general support to the stand taken by the Chinese Communist Party.27 In fact, the dominant leadership in the Punjab party was not prepared to accept the logical conclusions drawn by the CPSU leadership on the basis of the definition of the new epoch. Nurtured in classical Marxist theory and with an earlier orientation towards armed revolution, it was opposed to undue emphasis being placed on peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism. However, the minority leadership in the State Executive Committee, in a separate dissenting note, supported the CPSU stand and criticised the stand of the CPC. The minority note pointed out that the Chinese communist party, by reiterating the old

25. Ibid.


27. Ibid.
characterization of the present epoch as an epoch of imperialism, wars and proletarian revolution, "missed the shift that has taken place in the balance of world forces arising from socialism becoming a world system and the consequent acceleration of the disintegration of imperialism." The minority note further stated that the CPC missed "the new favourable situation for the success in the struggle for peace and peaceful coexistence and for peaceful transition to socialism." It criticized the Chinese Communist Party for "overestimating imperialism and underestimating the strength of the peace movement." The stand of the minority leadership in the Punjab party on this issue thus synchronized with the views of the dominant leadership of the party at the Centre. As the minority leadership in the Punjab party consisted largely of intellectuals working on the trade union front, it supported the line of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism against the dominant peasantry leadership which emphasized struggle against imperialism.

In fact, the minority leadership wanted to draw such tactical

28. "On CPC Resolution on certain questions before the International Communist Movement" (Dissenting note by five SEC members to Punjab State Executive Resolution for Circulation to National Council Members with the SEC resolution and to the State Council also) in Inner State Council Document No. 2/61, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

29. Ibid., p. 8.

30. Ibid.
conclusions from its support to the stand of the CPSU on the nature of the epoch as suited the requirements of its support base and its factional interests.

This issue again because a subject of debate in the Punjab Party in December, 1960. The Secretary of the State Council of the Party, while reporting the main conclusions of the Moscow Statement (1960) in the party Journal "Sadayug", omitted some important formulations concerning the nature of the present epoch. An important formulation of the statement which stated: "there are now real opportunities of solving cordial problems of modern times in a new way in the interest of peace, democracy and socialism" was not reported. As already indicated the dominant leadership in the Punjab party was not prepared to accept any change in the attitude and tactics of the communist movement towards imperialism on the basis of the redefinition of the epoch. The leader of the minority group in the party, Avtar Singh Malhotra, in a written note, protested against these distortions of the main conclusions of the Moscow Statement. The note accused the dominant leadership of sticking to the old understanding of the nature of the epoch and ignoring new developments.


32. Ibid., p. 9.
When the issue came up for discussion in the National Council of the party, it took the position that the Chinese understanding of the new epoch and its salient characteristics was "contrary to the propositions of the Moscow Declaration and the Moscow statement." It asserted that the main content of the present epoch is its transitional character from capitalism to socialism. The most distinctive feature of the present epoch is that the world socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the development of human society. The resultant shift in the balance of world forces has created new opportunities to solve the problems of the present epoch in a new way. The national council resolution stated that it is this significant change which the CPC leadership "discounts if not virtually ignores." From this analysis the conclusion was inevitable that the Chinese interpretation of the new epoch and its salient features was contrary to the accepted general line of the International Communist Movement. Such a thing only a decade back may have seemed heresy.

By this time the inner party situation in Punjab had completely changed. The minority rightist faction had converted itself into majority through organizational


34. Ibid.
maneuvering in the wake of the Chinese aggression.\textsuperscript{35} The new leadership endorsed the stand of the National Council on this issue.\textsuperscript{36} However, the left group which joined the CPM struck to its old stand. It believed that in the name of new epoch the CFSU leadership underestimated the danger of imperialism and the role of national liberation movements in underdeveloped countries.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, after the split in the party, the CPI endorsed the Russian stand on the nature of the present epoch while CPM's understanding on this issue came closer to the Chinese position.

**Peaceful Coexistence and the Inevitability of War**

Another ideological issue which became a subject of debate in the Punjab party related to peaceful coexistence and the inevitability of war. Before we discuss the ideological controversy on this issue it would be essential to understand the earlier communist thinking on this issue. It may be recalled that the concept of peaceful coexistence between the capitalist and socialist states arose only after the victory of socialist revolution in Russia. Lenin visualized the

\textsuperscript{35} When the leaders of the dominant left faction of the party were arrested by the government, a special party conference was organised at Ludhiana in which a new state council having majority of members from the rightist faction was elected.

\textsuperscript{36} *The Tribune*, October 12, 1964.

possibility of coexistence between capitalism and socialism in a situation when socialist revolution succeeded in one or more countries and capitalism existed in other states. Lenin had realized that "socialism cannot be victorious simultaneously in all countries." But Lenin believed that during this period there will be increasing tension between the two hostile camps. The victory of socialism in one country would not only create friction "but a direct striving on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the victorious proletariat of the socialist country." Lenin thus visualized the possibility of a war between capitalism and socialism. He also emphasized the inevitability of imperialist wars, revolutionary national liberation wars and proletarian wars against the bourgeoisie during this period. In his opinion, wars would become impossible only after the final overthrow of capitalism from the whole world.

It appears that during the time of Lenin imperialism was strong and an all-embracing system whereas the forces of socialism were weak. But significant changes have taken place since then. With the formation of the world socialist camp,

40. Ibid., p. 364.
the emergence of a strong Soviet Union, the development of the international working class movement and the growth of national liberation movements in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the power of imperialism has declined. Accordingly, the 20th Congress of the CPSU laid down that war with capitalism was no more inevitable. It laid increasing emphasis on peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition as a form of struggle against capitalism.41 In fact, the CPSU leadership revised the earlier Marxist theory on these issues to protect its national interest. Emphasis on peaceful coexistence and non-inevitability of war helped the Soviet Union in safeguarding the economic progress, which it had registered after the socialist revolution, from the dangers of a war with capitalist countries. The formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on peaceful coexistence and war were seriously debated in the Punjab party. The dominant “leftist” leadership in the party was unwilling to accept the new Soviet thinking on these issues. It underestimated the role of peaceful coexistence and emphasized struggle against imperialism. The dominant leadership in the Punjab party believed that there could be no coexistence between two opposite social systems.42 The basic reason for this was


42. Based on an informal discussion with Bhag Singh, a member of the State Committee of the CPM.
perhaps the fact that the line of peaceful coexistence did not suit the nature of its support base among the peasantry in the state. Acceptance of the possibility of peaceful coexistence would have meant coexistence not only with imperialism but also a conciliatory attitude towards the Indian bourgeoisie and its government. Such a line of action would have deprived the dominant leadership of its main support among the peasants. But the minority "rightist" leadership in the party welcomed the new developments as a healthy departure from the past. In fact, by supporting the new Soviet thinking on peaceful coexistence, the minority leadership wanted to draw the tactical conclusion of cooperation with the progressive sections of the bourgeoisie. Such a line of action suited its support base in the state among the trade union workers.

The formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on peaceful coexistence and inevitability of war were further confirmed by the Moscow Declaration (1957). It declared that the principle of peaceful coexistence of the two systems should be made the basis of the foreign policy of socialist countries and a dependable pillar of peace and friendship among the people of the world. The declaration also

43. "From Left Sectarianism to Split", op. cit., p. 3.
44. "Declaration of Communist and workers Parties of Socialist Countries" (Moscow, 14-16 November, 1957) in Basic Documents of the Moscow Meetings of Communist and Workers Parties, op. cit., p. 8.
emphasized that the growing strength of the forces of peace has created real possibilities for averting wars.\(^4^5\) The leftist leadership in the Punjab party accepted the formulations of the Moscow Declaration (1957) on these issues in principle but stuck to its earlier stand on them in practice.\(^4^6\)

The issue of peaceful coexistence and inevitability of war again became a subject of debate in the Punjab party at the time of the ideological controversy in the International Communist movement. This controversy had resulted from the differences that arose between the CPC and the CPSU over the interpretation and implementation of the decisions of the Moscow Declaration (1957) and the Moscow Statement (1960).

The Chinese Communist Party criticised the CPSU leadership for interpreting the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence as nothing but ideological struggle and economic competition.\(^4^7\)

The Chinese felt that under the pretext of peaceful coexistence the Russians were undermining the political struggle against imperialism and helping imperialists in their aggressive wars.\(^4^8\) On the issue of war the CPC took

\(^{4^5}\) Ibid., p. 3.

\(^{4^6}\) "From Left Sectarianism to Split", op. cit., p. 6.


\(^{4^8}\) Ibid.
the stand that so long as imperialism was there, wars of one kind or the other will always appear. In fact, the line of struggle against imperialism suited the national interest of China. By advocating such a line it could hope to win influence in Afro-Asian countries where wars of national liberation were being fought against imperialist countries.

When the issue came up for discussion in the CPI in September, 1960, the CEC passed a resolution entitled "On Certain Questions Before the International Communist Movement" and supported the Russian stand on peaceful coexistence and non-inevitability of war. The CEC resolution stated that peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems does not mean the elimination of class struggle in different countries. The resolution also stated that while the danger of war will continue to exist as long as imperialism existed, certain basic changes had taken place in the world since the end of the last war which necessitated a reassessment of the idea of inevitability of wars in the epoch of imperialism. In fact, the central leadership of the CPI thought that the CFC was deviating from the accepted line of the international communist movement on these issues as enunciated by the

49. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
Moscow Declaration (1957).

However, the Punjab State Executive of the party rejected the CEC resolution and demanded its withdrawal. The majority leadership in the Punjab party, while accepting the principle of peaceful coexistence, accused the central leadership of the party of violating this principle by declaring China as aggressor in the Sino-Indian border dispute under the pressure of bourgeois nationalism. But the minority leadership in the Punjab party, in a separate dissenting note, supported the CEC resolution and rejected the Chinese stand. The minority note stated that the CEC stand on peaceful coexistence and war was contrary to Moscow Declaration and Peace Manifesto. It further stated that the Chinese, by negating the possibility of preventing wars, were missing the new balance of world forces and thus confusing the potential with the real and going beyond "Vigilance to fatalism". Such an understanding led to an important consequence from the perspective of the CEC: an underestimation of the importance of the struggle for peace and peaceful coexistence, thus missing their objective role and significance as forms of struggle against imperialism. The dominant


53. Ibid., p. 3.

94. "On CEC Resolution" on certain Questions Before the International Communist Movement", (Dissenting note by five CEC members to Punjab State Executive Resolution), op. cit., p. 8.

55. Ibid.
leftist leadership of Punjab, however, continued to ridicule this position on peaceful coexistence and insisted on the inevitability of war. Its opposition to the stand of the CPSU on these issues became further clear after the Moscow statement (1960). While formally agreeing with the conclusions of the Moscow statement, the dominant leftist leadership of Punjab tried to underestimate some of its key formulations on peaceful coexistence and war.\footnote{56} It may be recalled that the Moscow statement had pointed out that "peaceful coexistence of countries with different systems or destructive war - this is the alternative today."\footnote{57} It was further stated in the Moscow statement that the "coexistence of states with different social systems is a form of class struggle between socialism and capitalism.\"\footnote{58} The Moscow statement also emphasized that "the aggressive nature of imperialism has not changed but real forces have appeared that are capable of foiling its plans of aggression.\"\footnote{59} It is thus clear that the Moscow statement gave added importance to peaceful coexistence and recognized the possibility of avoiding war. But the dominant

\footnote{56} "From Left Sectarianism to Split", op. cit., p. 8.

\footnote{57} "Statement of Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Worker's Parties", (Moscow, November, 1960), op. cit., p. 38.

\footnote{58} Ibid.

\footnote{59} Ibid., p. 34.
leftist leadership of Punjab Party was not prepared to accept these formulations and tried to minimize their importance. 60

These issues were again discussed in the Punjab Party at the time of the Seventh Party Congress held in 1964. As we discussed earlier, the complexion of the CPI had undergone a change by this time. And the previous minority leadership had, as a consequence of the Sino-Indian border dispute and the resultant inner party crisis, converted itself into a majority. The new leadership of the Punjab Party criticised the Chinese viewpoint and supported the stand of the CPSU on peaceful coexistence and war. 62 However, some members of the state council were not prepared to accept peaceful coexistence as a form of class struggle. They believed that there could be no peaceful coexistence between two opposite social systems. 63 The Seventh Party Congress gave a final touch to the views of the party on these issues. It stated that the correlation between the forces of war and those of peace was constantly changing in favour of peace. If was, therefore, wrong to put equal emphasis on the possibility of preventing

61. Ibid.
63. An expression of this view is found in Chais Singh Chain "Draft Programme Vick Sajje Sudharwadi Kuraha Virodh" (Against Right Reformist Deviation in the Draft Programme), Navneetnama, October 25, 1964.
war and of its breaking out. The party congress also rejected the view that peaceful coexistence weakened national liberation struggles and class struggles in capitalist countries.

It is clear from the above discussion that two divergent views prevailed in the Punjab Party on the issues of peaceful coexistence and the inevitability of war. The dominant leftist leadership of Punjab was opposed to undue emphasis being placed by the CPSU on peaceful coexistence and the possibility of preventing war. But the minority faction in the Punjab Party supported the stand of the CPSU and criticized the views of the CPC on these issues. The difference in the views of the majority and minority leadership of the party in the state probably stemmed from their desire to draw two different tactical lines for the state. The dominant leadership favoured a line of opposition to the Indian bourgeoisie and its government and its opposition to the stand of the CPSU on peaceful coexistence was meant to achieve this end. Negation of the possibility of peaceful coexistence implied struggle not only against imperialism but also the bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries. But the minority leadership was in favour of a line of close


65. Ibid., p. 86.
cooperation with the progressive sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and its support to the stand of the CPSU on peaceful coexistence was probably meant to achieve this end. The Sino-Indian border dispute provided an opportunity to the minority leadership to convert itself into a majority and then onwards it supported the stand of the CPSU on these issues.

**Forms of Transition to Socialism**

Should the transition to socialism be peaceful or must it always be accompanied by civil war and revolutionary violence? In other words, what is the role of violence in social transformation? This issue became a subject of debate in the Punjab party in the wake of the formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU held in 1956. But a proper understanding of the controversy on this issue would require a reference to earlier Marxist theory on the role of violence in social transformation. In their earlier writings, Marx and Engels had stated that an armed uprising would probably be the only method by which the proletariat could wrest power from the capitalist class. The Communist Manifesto of 1848 exhorts the proletariat to prepare for a class war, in which it will be necessary to use force and violence.66 However,

66. In the closing words of the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels wrote, "The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution".
in their later years both Marx and Engels conceded that in certain countries such as United States and England, where the traditions of the representative government were firmly established, the workers might "hope to secure their ends by peaceful means". But Lenin rejected the possibility of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. He realised that the International bourgeoisie was increasingly resorting to violence and was not permitting peaceful transition to socialism. Lenin believed that socialism could not be achieved without violent overthrow of the capitalist order. 67 Later, Stalin also emphasized the role of violence in proletarian revolution and ruled out the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. 68

The 20th Congress of the CPSU, however, made a significant departure from the views expressed by Lenin and Stalin. It laid down that communist parties in capitalist countries could conceivably come to power through peaceful means and thus bring about peaceful transition to socialism. In his speech to the delegates to the 20th Congress of the CPSU,

67. This view is repeatedly found in his essays "The State and Revolution" and "The Disarmament Slogan".

68. Stalin wrote "to think that such a revolution can be carried out peacefully within the framework of bourgeois democracy, within the framework of the system that is adapted to maintain bourgeois rule, means one of two things. Either it means madness, an inability to understand the normal significance of words; or else it means a cynical repudiation of the proletarian revolution". See his Leninism, Vol. I, (New York : International Publishers, 1923), pp. 22-23.
Khrushchev made it clear that transition to socialism need not be associated with civil war and violence. He maintained that possibilities had grown in a number of countries of peaceful transition to socialism.69

The formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on peaceful transition to socialism became a subject of debate in the Punjab party. The majority leadership in the Punjab party was not prepared to accept the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. It disagreed with the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU in this regard and regarded them as revisionist and anti-Marxist.70 In fact, the earlier association of some of the leaders of the dominant faction with the Terrorist movement in the state stood in the way of their acceptance of the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. However, the minority faction in the Punjab party attached great importance to the formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on peaceful transition and maintained that such a possibility existed in India.71

69. In his speech to the delegates to the 20th Congress of the CPSU Khrushchev said: "It is very probable that forms of transition to socialism will become more and more varied. And it is not necessarily true that pursuit of these forms involves civil war in all cases." See "Extracts from the Debates of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" in Marxism and Asia, op. cit., p. 283.

70. "From Left Lectarianism to Split", op. cit., p. 3.

The decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on peaceful transition to socialism were confirmed by the Moscow Declaration (1957). It stated that "the forms of the transition to socialism may vary for different countries. The working class and its vanguard - the Marxist - Leninist party - seek to achieve socialist revolution by peaceful means." However, the Moscow Declaration did not altogether rule out the possibility of the use of violence in bringing about social transformation. It stated that "in the event of the ruling classes resorting to violence against people, the possibility of non-peaceful transition to socialism should be borne in mind." In fact, it was a concession to the Chinese communist party which was opposed to undue importance being attached to the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. The Moscow Declaration thus accepted the possibility of both peaceful and non-peaceful transition to socialism. The dominant leadership in the Punjab party, however, attached no importance to the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. A reference in the Moscow Declaration to the fact "that ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily" was interpreted by the majority leadership of


73. Ibid., p. 14.
the Punjab party as a confirmation of its viewpoint and rejection of revisionist understanding. 74

The dominant leadership in the Punjab party could not continue its opposition to the peaceful transition line for long. The CPI victory in Kerala in the 1957 general elections confirmed the party's faith in the strategy of peaceful transition to socialism. At its Extraordinary Congress at Amritsar (1953) the CPI adopted a new constitution. The preamble to the new constitution stated that the CPI would strive to achieve "full democracy and socialism through peaceful means." 75 It was further clarified by Ajoy Ghosh at a news conference that while the CPI could not guarantee that violence would never occur, it accepted the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism in India. And we shall try our utmost to make this possibility into a reality in our country. 76 These developments in the party considerably influenced the thinking of party leaders in Punjab and they started recognizing the possibility of peaceful change towards socialism in India. However, the dismissal of the communist ministry in Kerala by the central government in 1959 created serious apprehensions among the leftist leaders of the Punjab party about the possibility of peaceful

76. New Age, May 18, 1953.
transition to socialism in India.

The issue of peaceful transition to socialism was again debated in the Punjab party in 1960 when differences arose between the CPSU and the CPC over this issue. It may be recalled that the CPC of the CPI had passed a resolution in September, 1960 in which it supported the stand of the CPSU on this issue. The CPC resolution stated that under the changed circumstances the conquest of power need not be accompanied by civil war. But the dominant leadership of the Punjab party rejected the CPC resolution and supported the stand of the CPC on this issue. The resolution passed by the Punjab State Executive Committee of the party criticised the practice in the party of taking peaceful path to be the "only" path and not merely as a tactical form of struggle. It was argued that peaceful transition was only a possibility and not a certainty, but the CPI had so interpreted it in practice as if what had been conceded as a possibility was a certainty. This attitude they characterised as "parliamentarism" which is almost a word of abuse in Communist terminology. But the minority leadership in the Punjab party,

77. The CPC argued that the thesis of peaceful transition to socialism was based on "historical idealism" and that there were no historical precedents for peaceful transition. It accused the CPSU of laying one-sided stress on the "growing, immediate possibility of peaceful transition. See "Chance the Differences", op. cit., p. 170.

78. "Resolution on CPC resolution" on "some Ideological Problems of the International Communist Movement"(Adopted by the State Executive), op. cit., p. 4.
In a separate note, rejected the Chinese stand on this issue. The minority note stated that the Chinese, by refusing to accept the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism or just paying lip service to it, violated the understanding of the Moscow Declaration (1957). It criticized the Chinese view of treating the whole parliamentary work as opportunism and thus weakening the chances of converting the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism into a reality.  

It is thus clear that the majority leadership in the Punjab party had not much faith in the concept of peaceful transition to socialism. Nurtured as it was in the cradle of the concept of armed revolution, the concept of peaceful transition to socialism did not suit its mental make up and traditions of political culture. Alignment with the pro-Chinese leftist group in the CPI leadership at the Centre also contributed to the opposition of the Punjab party leaders to the concept of peaceful transition to socialism.

When the issue came up for discussion in the National Council of the party it stated that the change in the balance of world forces had created increasing possibilities of peaceful transition to socialism in a number of countries. It criticized the Chinese leaders for refusing to recognize the possibility of peaceful transition and laying one-sided...

79. "On CEC Resolution" on "Certain Questions before the International Communist Movement" (Dissenting Note by Five SEC Members), op. cit., p. 10.
emphasis on non-peaceful means. The new leadership of the Punjab party dittoed the stand of the National Council on this issue. But during the discussions on the draft programme before the Seventh Congress of the party (1964), some members criticised the new thinking in the party on this issue. For example, Master Hari Singh, a member of the State Council of the party criticised the tendency in the draft programme to equate the possibility of peaceful transition to a certainty. He expressed the apprehension that if this view was allowed to prevail, the party would get a social democratic orientation and ideologically disarmed. The programme finally adopted by the Seventh Congress of the party accepted the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. It stated that to conceive of peaceful transition to socialism in India does not amount to renunciation of Marxism-Leninism but involves the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the special conditions prevailing in India where universal franchise has been established and strong mass movements have developed. It emphasised that by developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement and by winning a stable majority in the parliament, the working class and its allies in India will be able to


overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction. The parliament could thus be used as an instrument for affecting the desired socio-economic changes in the country. However, the party programme does not altogether rule out the possibility of non-peaceful transition to socialism. It points out that if the ruling classes resort to violence the working class would also be entitled to the use of violence. The party programme thus lays increasing stress on the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism.

The above discussion indicates that two different views were expressed in the Punjab Party on the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. The dominant leadership of the party in the state was not in favour of placing undue emphasis on the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. It believed that the ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily. But the minority leadership believed that with the change in the balance of world forces increasing possibilities had arisen for peaceful transition to socialism. The differences in the party leadership on this issue probably resulted from the historical circumstances associated with the growth of the communist movement in the state and the class composition of party leadership. As the dominant leadership consisted mainly of peasants, some of whom

had participated in terrorist activities in their early career, it was not prepared to accept seriously the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. The minority leadership, however, consisted mainly of intellectuals who were in touch with the latest developments in the communist world and as such it was willing to accept the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism under the changed circumstances. However, after the split in the party in 1964 the leadership laid increasing emphasis on the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism.

The issue of non-capitalist path became a subject of debate in the CPI in 1956 when an article by Modeste Rubinstein entitled "A non-capitalist Path for Underdeveloped Countries" appeared in "New Times" of July, 1956. Rubinstein elaborated his views on the subject in a subsequent article one month later. The articles contained the view that it might be possible for India which was advancing along the road of independent political and economic development to develop along socialist lines through a non-capitalist path. Rubinstein noted the ruling party's socialist stance, particularly after the Avadi session of the All India Congress Committee. He noted that in India the trend had been to expand the state and the cooperative sectors. These measures, he believed were not in themselves of a socialist character because the state owned enterprises existed even in the
capitalist countries. But he pointed out that the purpose of the state enterprises in India was to facilitate industrialization and general economic growth. Rubinstein's articles were discussed by party units throughout the country. The issue of debate was: could the concept of non-capitalist path be applied to India in the then existing circumstances and how far the ruling party was taking the country in that direction?

It may be recalled that the concept of non-capitalist path arose in the context of the question: whether the capitalist stage of development is inevitable for independent underdeveloped countries in order to achieve socialism. Is there any possibility of "skipping" the stage of capitalist development? The issue had long been debated in the communist world after the Bolshevik revolution. At the Second Congress of the Third International, held in 1920, Lenin answered this question in the affirmative and believed that such a possibility really existed for underdeveloped countries. He formulated the thesis "that with the aid of the proletariat of the most advanced countries, the backward countries may pass to the Soviet system and, after passing through a definite stage of development, to communism, without passing

through the capitalist stage of development." M. W. Roy also recognized the possibility of non-capitalist path for underdeveloped countries. He argued that "the masses in the backward countries may reach communism, not through capitalist development, but led by the class conscious proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries." Lenin's thesis was endorsed by the Congress.

The concept of non-capitalist path was again seriously debated at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International held in 1928. The Congress slightly modified Lenin's thesis and decided that non-capitalist path of development was applicable only in those countries where the national liberation revolution had been won under the leadership of the working class and the countries were aligned to the country of victorious socialism. This analysis of the Communist International about the non-capitalist path remained valid up to the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

The publication of Rubinstein's article provided an opportunity to the party members to assess the possibility of non-capitalist path in India in the light of the Marxist

84. Lenin, V. I., quoted in Marxism and Asia by N. C. Emsusse and S. R. Schram, op. cit., p. 159.
86. Adikari, G., Communist Party and India's Path to National Regeneration and Socialism (New Delhi: CPI publication, June, 1988), pp. 13-16.
theory. The political of the party rejected Rubinstein's thesis. Ajoy Ghosh at once joined issue with Rubinstein and criticized his perspective in the following words: "There undoubtedly exists a non-capitalist path of development for the underdeveloped countries like India. But it would be an illusion to think that the present government headed by the bourgeoisie can advance on that path. The communist party of India does not suffer from such illusions."87

Ajoy Ghosh was thus not prepared to accept Rubinstein's assessment of the Congress government. In fact, acceptance of the socialist credentials of the Congress would have harmed the independent existence of the CPI.

There was a mixed reaction towards the Rubinstein thesis among the leaders of the communist party in Punjab. The majority leadership rejected the article as "revisionist" and condemned its main thesis that the Congress can also bring socialism in India as a "reformist mistake".88 In fact, acceptance of Rubinstein's conclusion that the Congress could also bring socialism in India would have implied support to the progressive policies of the Congress government. But such a line of action did not suit the support structure of the party in the state. The dominant leadership could hope to


retain its support among the peasantry of the state only by opposition to the policies of the Congress government. However, the minority faction in the Punjab party, instead of rejecting it for its anti-party line, welcomed it and demanded its publication and circulation. The article was regarded as a corrective to the line of the Palghat Congress which had ruled out the possibility of non-capitalist path for India under the Congress rule. The minority faction thus wanted to use the Rubinstein article in support of its earlier demand for a line of closer cooperation with the progressive sections inside the Congress. Such a line of action suited its support base among the trade unions. The article created serious misgivings among some leading members of the Punjab party who started questioning the very desirability of having a communist party. Some members left the party and joined the Kisan wing of the Congress and many others lost their moorings. The article also provided ideological material to Congressmen to attack the communist party and to advocate their own path to socialism.

The differences on the issue of non-capitalist path again cropped up in the Punjab party at the time of the Vijayawada party congress held in 1961. It may be recalled that the majority and the minority factions in the National

89. Ibid.
90. Ibid., p. 6.
Council of the party had prepared two separate resolutions and two programmes for the party Congress. While the draft programme of the majority faction stated that the fight for non-capitalist path was possible only through national democracy (a government in which state power is shared jointly by the working class and the bourgeoisie), the minority draft visualized that the realization of non-capitalist path was possible only under a people's democracy.\(^1\) The dominant leadership in the Punjab party supported the documents of the minority leftist faction in the National Council and passed them by a majority vote.\(^2\) As already indicated, it was not prepared to accept the possibility of non-capitalist path and national democracy in India because it would have implied not only cooperation with the progressive sections inside the Congress but also sharing leadership with them in the united front. Such a line was not suitable for the support structure of the party in the state.

The issue of non-capitalist path was again discussed in the Punjab party at the time of discussions on the draft programme before the Seventh Congress of the party held in

---

\(^1\) In national democracy state power is shared by "all those classes, including sections of the national bourgeoisie which are anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly." It is different from a people's democracy in the sense that it does not lay emphasis on the sole leadership of the working class so far as the sharing of state power is concerned. See Bhuvan Sen and Mohit Sen, National Democracy and People's Democracy, (New Delhi : CPI Publication, June, 1972), pp. 20-29.

\(^2\) "From Left Sectarianism to Split", op. cit., p. 12.
1964. The new leadership of the party in the state that came to power after the split in the party expressed the view that India could progress towards the goal of socialism through non-capitalist path and the establishment of national democracy. As the new leadership of the party was interested in cooperating with the congress against the communal parties in the state, its support to the possibility of non-capitalist path and national democracy suited its strategic and tactical objectives. Some leaders of the party, however, did not agree with this view and ruled out the possibility of non-capitalist path for India. For example, Master Hari Singh, a member of the State Council of the party expressed the view that "this path does not apply to India where the national bourgeoisie is so well developed and under its leadership the country has already embarked on the road of independent capitalist development." As a result of the development of monopolies, India cannot skip over the capitalist stage. He also expressed the apprehension that the slogan of non-capitalist path "will hamper the formation of the national democratic front" because the bourgeoisie will not join it for a non-capitalist path.

95. Ibid.
The CPI programme, adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Party, stated that the non-capitalist path is the first requirement in the present pre-socialist national democratic stage of the Indian revolution. Non-capitalist path has been defined "as a stage in which the growth of capitalism would be progressively restricted and the prerequisites created for putting the country on the road to socialism."96 It is a transitional stage from capitalism to socialism and is essential for carrying out the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, anti-monopoly, and general democratic tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution.97 But in India the non-capitalist path does not mean, as in the case of some newly independent countries, merely the avoidance of capitalist path. Capitalism in India has already fairly developed and even monopoly capitalism has grown. Therefore, the non-capitalist path in India would imply not only the reversal of the present capitalist way but also firm anti-monopoly and anti-capitalist measures.99 In this stage the main direction of the economy


98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.
will be on such lines that the growth of capitalism would be progressively restricted and prerequisites created for putting the country on the road to socialism.

The party programme further pointed out that national democracy is the most suitable state political form for the non-capitalist path of development. To establish national democracy and put the country on a non-capitalist path, it is essential to form a national democratic front. This front will be based on worker-peasant alliance and will be led jointly by the working class, peasantry and anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly sections of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, what emerges is not at once socialism but neither it is capitalism. It is, therefore, termed non-capitalist path which creates prerequisites for socialism.\(^{100}\)

It is clear from the above discussion that the majority and minority leadership of the party in the state held different views on the possibility of non-capitalist path in India. The majority leadership held the view that the Congress was developing India along capitalist lines and as such there existed no possibility of a non-capitalist path under its rule. Such a path could be possible only under a people's democracy. But the minority leadership maintained that non-capitalist path in India could be realised through the establishment of

a national democracy in which the working class shared state power with the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal sections of the bourgeoisie. As already indicated, the difference in the views of the majority and the minority leadership was the result of two different perspectives about the line of the party viz. opposition to or unity with the Congress.

The new programme adopted by the CPI after the split in 1964 reiterated that non-capitalist path in India could be realized only through a national democracy. It appears that the party leadership has slightly modified classical Marxist theory on non-capitalist path. Lenin undoubtedly recognized the possibility of non-capitalist path for underdeveloped countries, but he nowhere stated, as emphasized in the CPI programme, that this possibility will be realized in a state form where the working class shared state power with the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal sections of the bourgeoisie. It appears that in its anxiety to capture power through an alliance from above with the progressive sections of the Indian bourgeoisie, the CPI has recognized the possibility of non-capitalist path in India under a national democracy.

**Summing Up**

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the majority leadership in the Punjab party, before the split in the party in 1964, took a leftist stand on all ideological issues and stood in opposition to the majority view of party
leadership at the national level. It opposed the main formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and gave its own leftist interpretation to the decisions of the Moscow Declaration (1957) and the Moscow Statement (1960). During the great ideological debate that took place in the communist camp during the 60's it supported the Chinese stand on all ideological issues. The leadership in the Punjab party was haunted by the spectre of right revisionism and was thus not prepared to accept the Russian stand on the nature of the epoch, peaceful coexistence, inevitability of war and peaceful transition to socialism. However, the new leadership that came to power in the state as a result of the organizational changes made in the wake of the Chinese aggression denounced the leftist stand of the previous leadership and aligned itself with the majority leadership at the national level. It supported the Russian stand on all issues pertaining to the ideological controversy in the International Communist Movement.

It appears that the support base of the party, the historical circumstances associated with its formation and growth and factional alignments between the state and the central leaders were some of the factors that influenced the stand of the party on ideological issues. The support base of the party among the rural peasantry of the state compelled it to take a leftist stand on all ideological issues and
brought it closer to the stand of the Chinese communist party. In fact, support to the stand of the CPSU on ideological issues would have implied cooperation with the progressive sections of the national bourgeoisie in India. Such a strategy would have alienated the peasantry from the party in the state. The influence of the concept of armed revolution which was a legacy of the Glader Movement and the Terrorist Movement in the state led the party leadership to underestimate the possibility of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism. The alignment of the dominant leadership of the party in the state with the minority leftist faction at the centre, which was itself aligned with the CPC, was another factor that contributed to its leftist stand on ideological issues. Presumably, the upper and middle peasant background of the party leadership in the state was also responsible for this phenomenon. In Marxist terms, the relative backwardness of the peasant consciousness led it to oppose the new ideological developments in the communist world. A rightward shift in the stand of the party on ideological issues after the split in the party (1964) was a result of the change in the support structure of the party and the new factional alignments in the party. As the party lost heavily its support among the peasants after the split, the new leadership of the party took a rightist stand on ideological issues in order to draw strategic conclusions which would enable it to strengthen
its support among other sections of the social strata. Its support to the stand of the CPSU on ideological issues enabled it to pursue a line of close cooperation with the progressive sections of the national bourgeoisie. The alignment of the new leadership of the party in the state with the majority rightist faction at the centre was also responsible for a rightward shift in the stand of the party on ideological issues.

It seems that the stand of the party on ideological issues is also influenced by the power concerns of the party. It results in new ideological innovations. But such departures from classical Marxist theory are resolutely defended in the name of Marxism-Leninism. The stand of the CPI on non-capitalist path clearly indicates that ideology can often be manipulated for political purposes.

In order to give a practical shape to its ideology and achieve its goals, the party has to chalk out its strategy or plan of action. The strategy of the party is directed towards the acquisition of political power and involves short range and long range objectives. We shall deal with the strategy of the party in the next chapter.