CHAPTER II

STUDENT POLITICS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
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Student activism is a global phenomenon. All over the globe, youth, particularly students, are in revolt against status-quo and authority. Since World War II, student protest politics has been more extensive and more far-reaching than in earlier periods. Students played a vanguard role during the 1950s in dislodging or weakening regimes in the developing and Communist Worlds. During the 1960s, of course, student activism spread to the developed countries of Europe and North America. The 1960s was a turbulent decade which experienced an upsurge of student movements throughout the world. Student politics, both in its constructive and disruptive dimensions, has attracted the attention of ruling elites, policy-makers, educational administrators and social scientists. However, it is impossible to generalise the various ingredients of student politics at a global level on account of the diversity of the sources and in-puts of student politics and its impact on the educational system and the larger society and polity. It is, therefore proposed to examine the various facets of student politics under three broad groups of countries, namely, the advanced capitalist countries, the socialist countries and the Third World countries.

(A) Student Politics in the Advanced Capitalist Countries:

In the post-Second World War period, the cold war between the two super powers—the liberal, democratic U.S.A.
and the socialist U.S.S.R.-shaped the political experience of Western students in the 1940s and 1950s. During this period, the Western World was concerned with the expansionist tendencies of totalitarian systems - Fascists and Communists. The intellectuals and students in the liberal democratic west defended their socio-political system against the possible threat of communist expansion. This led to a decline in ideological controversy within the democratic countries which contributed to the political passivity of their students. However, the post-Stalinist period witnessed a subsidence in the cold war and "from 1956 on......much of the political rationale for domestic consensus based on anti-totalitarianism began to disappear".

In striking contrast to students in many other countries, American students have not been known until the 1960s for their interest in politics and national affairs. There have seldom been a tradition of student politics in American society and few organised interests - labour movement or political parties - challenged the domestic and foreign policies of their country.

In the late 1950s, American students discovered the gap between their sense of what ought to be and what actually existed in their society. "Discovery of the subjection

of the Negroes in the democratic enlightened America gave rise to the radical student movement....It was intensified by the discovery of the grinding poverty in the world's wealthiest nation and by the thought of the world's greatest power, being engaged in a war of attrition in a tiny underdeveloped country. The American student movement first emerged out of the civil rights activities in the South. Student involvement for civil rights for Negroes grew steadily consequent upon the desegregation decision of the American Supreme Court in 1954. It was the young white college students who joined the Negro Civil rights activists in the South in the early sixties in a protracted series of sit-ins, marches and civil disobedience movements that resulted in the passage of extensive civil rights legislation and achieved the supreme ideal of equal rights enshrined in the Constitution.

A New Left Movement swept through the campuses of Great Britain, North America and other areas populated by the people of Anglo-Saxon origin. It began in the early 1960s and its first manifestation in the U.S.A. was at Berkeley in the autumn of 1964. The birth of the New Left in the United States is said to have been due to the civil rights movement, the antipathy of the students to the 'multiversity' and the lack

of a strong left-wing political party through which the students could express their views. The New Left involves the rejection of the old left of the socialists and communists as having compromised easily with the liberal establishment. Its programme includes, "the rejection of many prevailing American institutions, a vaguely democratic-socialist political ideology, a faith in participatory democracy, and a commitment to direct reform social action.....its ultimate goal is radical reform of American society and the characteristic nature of human roles and relationships on which it rests". The novel trend of the New Left was to work outside the framework of party politics. It was attracted to the tactic of direct action. Two threatening terms-'student power' and 'confrontation' have become identified with their action. "The goal of the New Left is to achieve enough student power to share equally in all decision-making so that the University will become a really democratic institution".

The American University crisis has been most graphically manifested in the Berkeley student uprising in 1964 and at Columbia University in 1968. "Far from being an exception, Berkeley has become the paradigm case of the educational malaise in the United States; and in the last

few years, that malaise has been transformed into a movement. Berkeley reflected the long-standing student discontent with the 'depersonalization' of undergraduate at the large state universities. Student radicals demanded right of free speech on the campus and highlighted academic issues. They were able to create big issues. It was the first student uprising to have considered what is still wrong in an affluent, liberal and democratic society.

The decision of the American Government in February, 1965 to escalate American participation in the Vietnam War has been a major source of student activism on many campuses. The faculty lent support to the students in their opposition to the Vietnam War in which the world's mightiest power was engaged in a war in a small under-developed country. Students looked upon American actions at variance with a basic democratic belief - the right to self-determination of peoples. Student agitation at Columbia University in 1968 was stimulated by Columbia's participation in the Secret Institute for Defence Analysis. Students deprecated Columbia's indifferent attitude to its poverty-stricken surrounding neighbourhood and attacked the University's 'ivory tower' attitude to its community. During the Cambodian incursion in May 1970, American students spearheaded opposition to the war through protest movements.

Black students have supported the demand for Black power in the United States. In a relatively brief period, the rebellion of Black students has had a significant impact on the universities. Their demands have been concrete and have gone directly to curriculum and university organisation. "On university campuses they demanded more Negro students and faculty and a curriculum that predominantly featured Afro-American history and experience." They have fought white domination in all aspects of American society. Their politics is 'instrumental' in as much as it has been directed towards realistic, achievable goals.

"Thus racial discrimination, involvement in foreign wars and the defects of the modern university have largely contributed to student unrest in the U.S.A. A new youth culture has emerged in the U.S.A. which is passing through the post-industrial era. It speaks the language of protest: "get out of Vietnam; liberate the Negro; wipe out poverty". "It rejects what it sees to be the operational ideals of American society: materialism, competition, rationalism, technology, consumerism and militarism. This emerging culture is the deeper cause of student protest against war, racial injustice and the abuses of multiversity." Thus student

movement in the United States had played a significant role in vital aspects of American life and society.

In Europe, the student movement has grown out of the New Left. New Left radicalism took shape in 1956 with the opposition to the Anglo-French attack upon Suez and the revolt of Polish and Hungarian intellectuals and workers against Stalinist type of society.

The twentieth century history of student politics in Britain has primarily been a peaceful one. Student activism attracted attention during 1930s specifically as a reaction to the effect of the economic depression on unemployment prospects. Brian Simon, a left activist, wrote the first critique of the university system. The post war decade saw no worthwhile political movement among students. But after 1956, 'the watershed year of British politics', new trends emerged on the national political left in which young people and students played an important part. The British New Left Movement, as it existed between 1957 and 1962, had its genesis in the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956 and the campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the years after 1958.

A major student revolt took place in March, 1967 at the London School of Economics. It was based on eight demands relating to the university structure, reform and change in student status through executive responsibility. The nine day sit-in at LSE was followed by occupation and
administration by students in the other universities of Hall, Hornsey and Essex. Students' protest also hit Oxford University when angry undergraduates besieged university administration office on June 3, 1968, demanding political freedom.

Student radicals in Britain have been influenced by the writings of Herbert Marcuse, Mao-Tse-Tung and Che Guevara. There was a general sense of indignation among university students about the British Government's support for American policy in Vietnam. The obnoxious system of apartheid practised in South Africa and Rhodesia also agitated British students. The National Union of Students (NUS) is recognised as the official spokesman of the students with vast membership and a potential for influence in the British political life. British students have fought for academic reforms, demanding adequate student participation in the decision-making process, greater contact with faculty, curriculum in tune with modern day reality and less number of examinations. However, "British students suffer from a deep sense that they have no place in the political structure of the nation"?

Prior to the American student participation in the Civil Rights Movement, the largest upheaval in the Western World was occasioned by French student protest against the

Algerian War in 1961. The French student movement attained its high water mark in May, 1968. Student militancy culminated in barricades in Paris and street fighting with the police throughout the University-cities of France.

The May Movement of 1968 in France spearheaded by students and teachers was a turning point in French politics which debilitated the Gaullist administration and resulted in the ultimate fall of De Gaulle. The May militancy among students stemmed from overcrowding, rigid discipline in the halls of residence, demand for sexual freedom, inadequate grants, lack of cultural and other facilities. The students of Nanterre, a model campus in the outer suburb of Paris, led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, went to the historic courtyard of Sorbonne in the heart of Paris to protest against the closure of their campus because of disturbances over a free speech issue. When the police was called by the university's dean of letters to clear the buildings, about sixty thousand students fought a pitched battle in the streets of Paris and demonstrations of solidarity took place throughout France. French student movement shed its tradition of elitism in order to achieve a unity among the working class. Nearly a million Parisian workers stopped work and came out into the streets.


to march with the students to demonstrate against the Gaullist government. The General Confederation of Labour declared a general strike.

The May revolt involved the whole fabric of the French society and the university. The radical students consider representative democracy a failure and argue for a participatory democracy "where everybody votes on everything that affects them". French students have pleaded for university reforms as the authority-structure of the university and the methods of teaching and doing research were clearly out dated.

The May revolt accomplished certain things but could not weld the students' and workers' movements into one. Within a month of its success, the student revolutionary elite found itself rejected by the French working class. But students claim a great deal of credit for de-Gaulle's fall after the defeat of the May 1969 referendum.

Student movement in Germany had an inglorious record during Hitler's regime. When the Nazis seized power, the students' cry became, "with the state, against the professors!" During Hitler's regime, the student movement had discredited and de-authoritised itself because it had given itself to the Nazi lock, stock and barrel. After the Second World War, most of the students were rightist or apathetic. The post war German students became known as the 'skeptical generation'. They were without ideology and gave primacy to private life and activity.
Most of them were apathetic and politically conformist in attitude. Almost twenty years elapsed before the signs of a restive new student movement began to appear in West Germany after the Nazi surrender in 1945.

By 1965, however, a new generation of students had come into existence which had no living recollection of the holocaust which the Nazis had brought, and no share of its responsibility as had the immediate post war generation. In 1965, mass demonstrations were launched by students in West Germany against insufficient public funds available for higher education. German student organisations see the main remedy to the crisis of the German university system in 'democratization' - particularly, the participation of the 'intermediate structure' and the students in academic decision-making. The failure to achieve university reform has resulted in the predominance of ideological protest. The Free University of West Berlin has been the centre of radical German student activity. It has been a bastion of the student radicals called the SDS (Socialist German Students' League). It is virtually the sole political organisation on the Left which provides radical leadership to the West German students. Members of the SDS are generally acknowledged as the European experts in


student riots, methods and tactics.

In the spring of 1967, Berlin students demonstrated against the visit of Vice President Hubert Humphrey of the United States as he was a spokesman of the Vietnam War. They also demonstrated against the Shah of Iran whose regime was characterised by repression. Fred Halliday writes: "...The West German experience provides one of the most instructive models of student movement anywhere in the world today: its theoretical emphasis, its mass mobilisations, its outflanking of the existing student union and its total confrontation of the system are all features of international significance." 13

It is the Italian students who have characterised the student revolution as a total or global confrontation. They assail the operational values of modern society and the corrupt and non-responsive institutions of the Establishment.

"Italian students condemn with equal vigour Vietnam and Czechoslovakia, American economic investment in Western Europe and Russian economic domination of Eastern Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw Pact. 14 Italian students have fought against a most 'authoritarian pedagogical regime' of the Italian universities. They have fought against overcrowding, antiquated curriculum, distance between Professors and students and overall authoritarianism. They have demanded greater student participation in university affairs.

In the academic year 1967-68, student revolt swept the Italian campuses - beginning with the seizure of the Turin University, nineteen of the thirty-three state universities were affected. The charter of demands worked out by the students primarily aimed at the reform of the content and organisation of higher education. Although Italian students developed their movement later than some of their European counterparts, and despite organisational constraints, they have displayed greater student power within the universities than in most other countries.

The fascist regime in Spain during the 1930s was violently hostile to the intellectuals and continued to neglect the educational system. Spanish student movement symbolised the struggle for democracy and the reform of the university system. Spanish students spearheaded open popular struggle against Franco's military dictatorship. Comparative calm on the Spanish campuses was broken in 1965. Students demanded free speech and free discussion on the campus and modernisation of the universities through much needed reforms.

Spanish students have campaigned for the right to form free unions and this has brought them closer to the workers who had been struggling for free trade unions. Theirs has been the first European movement to achieve an organised alliance with the workers. The fall of Franco's fascist regime and the consequent democratization of the Spanish polity owe a lot to the student movement.
The Portuguese student movement has been characterized as a "revoé against gerentocratic fascism". Portuguese students, of whom an overwhelming majority belong to the upper classes, have shaped the pattern of self-sacrifice and revolted against fascist dictatorship of old men and secret police. Students have provided a base for political opposition and have protected against Portuguese involvement in several colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique. They have also, like their West European counterparts, demanded student self-government, academic freedom and university reform.

Student politics, in the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, has been characterized by a low level of activism and a low degree of 'Confrontation politics' primarily on account of the stability and legitimacy of the established political structures. In many respects, student politics, in this region, presents an ideal model. "There is a strong element of trade unionism in Scandinavian student politics.... The student bodies are, to a large extent, responsible for social welfare among the students.... The student bodies often own property, and thus student government assumes a considerable amount of economic and social responsibility. Moreover, the student bodies can negotiate directly with the National government concerning loans, support

for students and their general welfare. 16

In general, Scandinavian countries provide institutionalised channels for the expression of student demands and grievances. Students find representation in policy-making and decision-making bodies of universities. Student unions at Scandinavian universities are not bound to any political party, but display a commitment to the ideologies of democracy and internationalism. Notwithstanding well-developed welfare systems, student activists on the Left have criticised structural imbalances in their own societies. But right-wing radicalism has been very rare in Scandinavian student politics in the post-war period.

Students in such countries have occasionally risen in revolt. In Sweden, they planned to invade Stockholm in May 1968 to demand increased aid to underdeveloped countries. They demonstrated to sympathise with their counterparts in France in the wake of the May Revolt of 1968. In Norway, students have demonstrated for state loans to all students irrespective of parental economic status.

In sharp contrast to Scandinavian student politics, student politics in Japan is marked by a high degree of radicalism. Compared to their European and American counterparts, the Japanese radical students are relatively well organised and

financed. Fred Halliday writes: "The Japanese student movement has played a historic role in any world perspective. It pioneered mass revolutionary action in an industrialised country, years before it was achieved in Europe and America. It was radical in methods and aims, and showed the way for uncompromising and unconventional forms of struggle".\(^{17}\)

Japanese student politics has had a long tradition of activism stretching back to 1879. The transformation of the Japanese University since World War II, from an elitist institution to a mass system, has accentuated academic problems. Student activism at Japanese universities has "combined political dissent with educational complaints in a manner similar to other countries".\(^{18}\) The university-oriented targets of the Japanese students are: overcrowding, lack of contact with professors, meaningless courses and inadequate student participation in decision-making process.

The involvement of Japanese radical students in national political affairs has attracted global attention. Anti-Americanism has been the major source of political activism since the Second World War. The most famous political revolt of Japanese students occurred in 1960 against the renewal of the Security Treaty between Japan and the U.S.A. Prior to this, Japanese student movement has been active in all the major political struggles of the post war period:

against the Mac Arthur Purge in 1950, against the Subversive Activities Prevention Law in 1952 and against special police power in 1958.

Japan's national Students Union - Zengakuren - has been the focus of radical student politics since its inception in September, 1948. It has mobilized large number of students to participate in political demonstrations during the 1960s. Mass demonstrations led to the cancellation of the visit of the American President Eisenhower. Students were also instrumental in toppling the then Prime Minister Kishi. In 1968, massive student demonstrations were organized against the Vietnam War. Japanese student militants have forged alliance with the workers and the peasants on important domestic issues. In terms of successful disruption of university and in some cases, even national activity, the Japanese radical students are, by far, the most successful in the world.

The foregoing survey of student politics in U.S.A., Western Europe and Japan leads to some common elements of student politics in advanced capitalist countries. The objectives of student movements are directed at the whole fabric of the society, not merely at the university. After the abatement of the Cold War and anti-communism during the 1960s, "the Western world has returned to a more 'normal' or peaceful social environment in which the main focus of intellectual
and student politics has been able to return to the domestic scene. The domestic system, including the educational system itself, is criticised for not living up to the ideals fostered by the society. Students have brought problems of the society and the university to limelight by dramatizing events and in a few cases have exerted considerable influence on the decision-making process. They have voiced dissatisfaction with the capitalistic democracies in which they live and the Soviet model of communism as they consider both "as inherently violent societies... and dehumanising".

Student unrest in advanced capitalist countries is, to a large extent, the consequence of affluence and alienation. Students of affluent West are little concerned about the essential material things of life and are free to turn their energies to educational and societal concerns. Student radicals mostly belong to affluent families and spend more years at the university than is actually necessary.

The student New Left is perhaps the first to have highlighted the alienation of students in affluent societies. It has rejected the old Left of the Communists and the Socialists for having too readily compromised with the liberal establishments. It also rejects the liberal democrats for their reformist approach. They are alienated from the 'psychological brutality', authoritarianism, corruption, hypocrisy

and consumerism of their societies. They suffer from a profound crisis of belief engendered by the hypocrisy of adults - parents, teachers and authorities. "In asserting the need for more individual freedom from the complexities of technological urban life, the young have struck an immensely appealing chord across post-industrial societies around the world."  

The alienation of students of affluent societies is also caused by the university environment. The capitalist system has used the university as a 'knowledge factory' which is an exploited part of productive process. Clark Kerr remarks, "The university and segments of industry are becoming more and more alike."

Universities have been turned into recruiting centres for an increasingly complex technological society and students have been treated as numbers by a machine-like system. The form and content of education have been determined by the needs of the capitalist society.

Students have been more active in pressing for educational reforms. These have included better teaching, more contact with professors, relevant courses, examination reform, larger budget allocation for higher education, free speech on the campus and above all, a share in decision-making process of the educational system. The demand for 'student power' really means student participation in academic decision-making.

21. Kerr, Clark, Uses of the University, p. 90.
Invariably, the number of hardcore radical students is quite small. "In most countries, the radicals are estimated at one per cent of the university population and then only at some universities." The New Left in the U.S. A. and the U.K., the SDS in West Germany and the Zengakure in Japan have numerically small but radical students who mobilise the mass of students for a cause and are capable of creating serious problems for authorities. They verbally reflect significant influence by romantic notions of Mao, Castro, Guevera, Marcuse and some of the old anarchists.

Notwithstanding the stability and legitimacy of the political structures and value systems in most of the advanced capitalist countries, student movements have stood for important changes in the social and educational systems. "The Civil Rights Movement and campaign against the Vietnam War by the American students, the revolt of the Japanese students against the Japan-U.S. Security Pact, the opposition of the French students to the Gaullist government, the role of the German students as an extra-parliamentary opposition and the opposition of the Spanish and Portuguese students to fascist regimes have been politically significant for their societies." Students have, by and large, failed to forge a permanent alliance with the workers and the peasants, although


23. Hazary, S.C., Student Politics in India, New Delhi, 1987, p.41.\]
in countries like France, Spain and Japan, they have succeeded in eliciting workers' support on several occasions. There has been a divergence of interests of students and intellectuals who offer a moral criticism of the society and of the workers and other deprived sections who are engaged in the very practical struggles to improve their life situation within the broad framework of industrial societies. This has adversely affected the continuity and effectiveness of student movements.

Most students agree with Trever Fiske: "The quickest way to broaden the base of the radical students is by unfair discipline". When student demonstrators are disciplined outside the normal channels by university authorities and subjected to police repression, the movement gathers momentum and draws public sympathy to its side.

Califano writes from his experience that he found no evidence of an international conspiracy among students except for occasional allegations that the Chinese Communists were putting funds into radical student movements. There are no radical plotters with an international network who manipulate certain political issues to mobilise students in country after country. The striking similarity in student tactics is largely attributable to the enormous impact of the media.

particularly television and the increase in student travel.... students watch each other's technique to see what succeeds and fails.  

(B) Student Politics in the Socialist Countries:

The developed and developing non-capitalist countries which have adopted the ideology of Marxism with varying interpretations have also experienced youth and student revolts. Notwithstanding the highly centralised political systems in the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe and a few other countries, student activism is a significant phenomenon within socialist systems. Student activism in Communist societies is critical of the existing regime as authoritarian and oppressive and is also critical of their international orientation. Student unrest in various communist countries "has been based at least in part on the differences which young people perceive between the theory and practice of communism." Public oppositional politics has rarely been possible in various communist countries. It is noteworthy, however, that "students and intellectuals have played a major role in the movements to liberalise the totalitarian regimes".

25. Ibid., p.53.


Soviet Russia has a long and glorious tradition of revolutionary student movement stretching back to the 1860s and 1870s when student-youth inspired by feelings of guilt and responsibility for the backward people, embarked on their 'back-to-the-people' movement. Students have been the bearers of a higher ethic of social reconstruction and altruism, as the carriers of the revolutionary outlook, universities were a focus of revolution in Czarist Russia and they were credited with terrorist activities to undermine the autocratic system. However, Lenin and other leaders of the Bolshevik revolution did not allow students a vanguard role as they were considered a reactionary element. In the Stalinist era, student activism was severely suppressed.

The de-Stalinisation campaign initiated by the powerful speech of Nikita Krushchev of February, 1956 encouraged students and intellectuals to criticise the unsavoury features of the Soviet society and life. "The speech set in motion a crisis of de-authoritisation of the elder generation... There was a muted confrontation in the Soviet society between the existentialist student generation and those of middle age who in varying degrees bear the guilt or corruption of Stalinism".  

In Soviet Union, students are part of the broad youth organisation subject to party control. This has prevented major student revolt in the post war period. Even then

students along with intellectuals have played a major role in demanding reforms of the Soviet society, insisting on more freedom and greater intellectual integrity. In recent years, President Gorbachev has taken the initiative to introduce far-reaching reform measures to democratise and liberalise Soviet society and political system. His policies of Perestroika and Glasnost and initiative in the reduction of super power arms-race appear to herald a great change in the domestic politics of the Soviet Union and her international orientation. These progressive measures are likely to reduce student activism in the foreseeable future.

The role of Chinese students has been of crucial political significance since the turn of the nineteenth century. Chinese students were important in their country's modern transformation and an essential ingredient in the victory of Chinese Communism. They played a crucial role in the downfall of the Manchu Dynasty at the turn of this century. They backed Sun-yat-Sen and helped spread radical ideas of democracy and modernisation throughout the country. With the overthrow of monarchy in 1911, they rallied around Chen Tuhsiu who called for a thoroughly democratic and egalitarian society. It was Peking students who heralded modern Chinese revolutionary politics when they launched a gigantic

demonstration against Japanese imperialist pressure against China on 4 May, 1919. It was the second Chinese revolution and was the immediate ancestor of the Chinese Communist Party, which was formed in 1920 by leading participants in the 4 May movement. Radical ideas and organisations in Japan, France and after 1917, the Soviet Union, helped to turn Chinese students towards revolutionary movements.

Student movements and demonstrations played a major role in undermining Chiang-Kai-shek during the 1930s. They organised a united resistance to the Japanese. In the fight between the Communists and the Koumintang (Nationalists), Chinese student movements increasingly turned to the Left and "the effect of the post war (World War Second) student riots was to hasten the downfall of Chiang's government and the Communist Victory".  

In the eyes of many observers, Chinese university students seem to have been driven to communism by their relentless hostility to legitimate authority. Richard Walker opines that China's students and intellectuals were victims of 'the mistique of the revolution'. Since the twenties, the Chinese Communist Party has realised the value of students in


early fifties, the party prompted student political action in a series of mass movements, controlled by it and the youth league. "Mao adopted a radically modern ideology, but he adopted it to Chinese conditions by finding the source of absolute virtue in the down-trodden rural masses. In the Communist countryside, students found the assurance that they could be both pure and progressive, radical reformers and hundred per cent Chinese."  

The role of the Chinese students in the Cultural Revolution of 1966 made them famous all over the world. Millions of students participated in vast rallies, long marches, and turbulent struggles throughout China. In the University of Peking, Professors and administrators were the object of violent student attacks. Student militancy in the initial period of the Cultural Revolution was directed against non-party and anti-party tendencies of the campus, but with the emergence of the Red Guards, prominent party leaders became the target of attack. "In the shake up of the university system that followed the Cultural Revolution it was decided to induct 'more revolutionary sons of workers and peasants' and students in Peking University wrote the press declaring the need for students to divide their time between military training, manual labour and academic study."  

From 1949 student movement in China continued to become a tool of party control. In recent years, student unrest in China has been a source of worry for the authorities. In Beijing University, anger over murder of a student "quickly snowballed into a demand for democratisation and greater political freedom". Student protests in 1987 led to the downfall of the then party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang and triggered a political campaign against Western influences. Chinese students have protested against what they feel is the government's neglect of the universities; big character posters criticising the party over this question appeared during the Seventh National People's Congress in March 1988. Student unrest has jolted China all through 1988. 77 centres of higher learning in 25 cities and provinces were involved in incidents which included protest marches, and distributing leaflets from January to July 1988. In June, a planned demonstration in Tienanmen square by Beijing students nominally for human rights led the authorities to bring out hundreds of police who sealed off the square, amid public discontent over stiff price rises and double-digit inflation. Progressive measures in Soviet Russia are likely to put greater pressure on the Chinese authorities for democratisation and university reform in coming years.

The Eastern European Communist Countries live in the shadow of student revolution which took place in Hungary in 1956. Richard Cornell writes: Student political activity in Eastern Europe has usually taken the form of opposition to an antiquated ecclesiastical system, to outside political domination, to oppressive political regimes, or to attempts to organise, regulate, direct and control student life, thought and activity.\(^{35}\)

The major thrust of student activities throughout Eastern Europe in the inter war period was directed towards improving living conditions and educational facilities. By the late 1940s, youth and student organisations in the Communist states of Eastern Europe were reproductions of the Soviet Comsomol. This condition has changed a little as a result of the increasing nationalism in Eastern Europe.

The Hungarian student revolt of October, 1956 was aimed at "shaking off the tutelage of the regime's control organs". Students founded their own independent organisation which was a challenge to the party veterans of the Old Guard. Student protesters on the streets of Budapest were joined by the crowd who destroyed the Communist Party headquarters, stormed the citadel of the secret police and toppled Stalin's statue. Students were moved by ideals, not economic considerations. They resented dictatorial controls and repression. "The

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student uprising was directed against the corrupt leaders whose corruption had been made manifest to all. The uprising was crushed, but its spectre continues to haunt the communist World.  

The Polish students have been critical of the regime's authoritarian measures and rose in revolt in the anti-Stalinist demonstration of October, 1956. Surveys in 1958 and 1961 testify that Polish University students were found "to be unhappy with the regime of authoritarian socialism and planned economy". In March 1968, Warsaw University students ignored the new warnings of the authorities and demanded the re-instatement of the six dismissed professors. They denounced censorship and demanded the release of their Colleagues, arrested and drafted into the armed services, because of their participation in demonstrations.

Students of Czechoslovakia have been in the forefront of demands for liberalisation and democratisation. In 1967, students protested against bad living conditions and political repression by the Communist regime. Students were a crucial force in the decline of the old Stalinists and the introduction of liberal measures.

Yugoslav students were less disaffected with their socialist society on account of the liberal political system with a more decentralised type of socialist economy under President Tito who maintained an independent line from Soviet

hagemony. However, in June 1968, students of Belgrade University engaged in a sit-in on the issues of poor food, crowded dormitories, poor instruction etc. Students also raised the deeper generational issues, with the slogan, "Down with the Red-Bourgeoisie". They fought for "greater democracy, especially in the League of Communists".

Richard Cornell has examined at length the common elements of student politics in East European Communist Countries. Youth and student movements in such countries are characterised by similarity in "organisational structure, basic goals, and policies". There are separate autonomous student organisations which are actually under the control of the party - approved leaders of the youth organisation.

The universities and educational process, in general, have an important influence on student behaviour and political activities. The educational system has been oriented along Marxist-Leninist line in such a way that the party's monopoly of power is not challenged and institutions of higher learning are organised for strictly utilitarian purposes—the creation of a 'new socialist man', the consolidation of 'socialist power' and the development of a 'socialist society'.

Youth and students were enthusiastic supporters of the Communists in the early years after the accession to power. "The failure of the Communists in Eastern Europe to provide a free, democratic alternative to the pre-war authoritarian
regimes, however, has led to the disillusionment. The desire for more individual freedom—both intellectual and physical—an end to censorship and more travel abroad are the most frequently observed demands of young students and intellectuals.  

Students are resentful of the restrictions imposed by the party. They have resisted the direction of their life by the Party, both overtly and covertly. Since 1956, Eastern Europe has witnessed student-led riots, demonstrations, meetings, discussions critical of the regime on the campus and in East Germany, at least, flights from the country. By far the most significant political manifestation by students in Communist countries in Eastern Europe is their passive refusal to accept the role delineated for them by the Party. The more liberal of the East European regimes—Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia—have allowed more scope for individual, non-party activity.

The student activists in European Communist countries are, in one vital respect, different from their American and West European counterparts. They share with their parents and elders the oppression and bureaucratisation of the same totalitarian system. There is less of a generational conflict. As Lewis S. Feuer succinctly observes:“With such a shared experience, student activists in communist countries are not moved to agitate for 'student power'; what they seek are liberties for all, not the elitists' status which attracts Western European student activists”.

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38. Ibid., p.176.
Student activists in Communist Countries could seldom hope to man the leadership positions in their societies like their counterparts in the new nations of Asia and Africa. Leadership of political, social and economic organisations was and is clearly under 'adult' party control. The path for political leadership remains basically outside the educational system since full-time party work is the basic route to political leadership.

In other communist countries such as Cuba and Vietnam, students have provided both the initial leadership and a large part of the mass base. The Communist Party of Cuba was founded after a massive student demonstration in the University of Havana and the Castro movement developed from student activities in the same university. The Vietnamese communist movement was, to a large extent, the offshoot of student movement in that country. Under Ho Chi Minh's inspiring leadership student revolutionaries played a crucial role in resisting American intervention and finally succeeded in achieving a unified communist political system. Student politics in such communist countries, where the regime is engaged in achieving political stability and economic progress, are seldom opposed to the policies of the party and the government.

Students constitute a vocal and modernised segment of the population of the new nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They constitute a significant proportion of the activist elements in their respective societies and as such play an important part in political life. Despite the numerically small student population in the developing societies, "students are among the few modern and politically conscious elements in their societies".41 They are, in a real sense, a 'presumptive elite' which plays a significant role in the modernisation of traditional societies. As Samuel Huntington put it: in modernising societies, "the city is the source of opposition in the country; the middle class is the focus of opposition within the city; the intelligentsia is the most active oppositional group within the middle class; and the students are the most coherent and effective revolutionaries within the intelligentsia".42 In their quest for development of nationhood and efforts at modernisation, it is but natural that the new nations should express a great deal of concern for the contribution on the part of their youth to this developmental process. It is felt that the youth, especially student youth, have to play a very significant role in creating and adopting


new models of development and change.

Many developing societies have highly articulated traditions of student participation in, and sometimes leadership of, political events. In Latin America, students have participated in political affairs for generations and have important powers in the governance of the universities. In many Asian and African countries, students formed an integral part of the struggle for freedom and many former student leaders often achieved political power in the post-independence governments.

In the developing nations, students constitute a crucial element in the political equation. In addition to preparing themselves for future roles in public life, "they play a significant part in the political life of their countries even during their studenthood. The intensity of the university students' political activity is in some sense a measure of the failure of the university as an academic community."43 Much before the dramatic events of the Berkeley student revolt of 1964, student movements had shaken or toppled a number of governments in the developing areas. The roster of governments whose downfall was associated with major student agitations between 1958 and 1966 is impressive: Venezuela in 1958, Japan in 1960, South Korea in 1960, Turkey in 1960, South Vietnam in 1963, Bolivia in 1964 and Indonesia in 1966. A number of governments in the Third World have also been shaken

by violent outbursts of students. Seldom a political crisis in the new nations has taken place in which students have not taken active part.

Among the factors contributing to student political activism in most of the new nations the political situation of the country has been the most significant. Many of the nations have encountered political crises and suffered from instability after independence. The euphoria generated by visions of independence during freedom struggles has vanished by the stark realities of a crisis-ridden political situation in the post-independence period. Such situations of political flux have had a disturbing effect on students' concern for academics and have driven them into the vortex of national politics.

The university, based on universalistic values, is one of the modernising elements in largely traditional societies. "Education is only a sub system of the society. Its linkage with the stratification system and the polity and economy introduced various complexities impairing thereby the efficacy of education." An important source of student protest in the Third World may be found in the wide gap between the outlook of the educated younger groups and the more traditional, less educated older age-groups. Students have fought for such modern values as academic freedom, university autonomy, merit system of recruitment, economic and social modernisation and greater freedom in political life. Much of the student agitation

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in tradition-bound and developing societies has been in response to the strains of modernisation. "The quality of a nation's modernising experience... is a critical factor in student politics." 45

Yet another important source of student activism in developing nations has centred around the university and the educational system. Much of the student frustration grows out of shortages and deficiencies of an academic nature. On account of scarcity of resources, developing nations are unable to provide ideal conditions of life and study for students. The expansion of education on account of a commitment to mass education has been out of tune with the resource position of these countries. Again, "the poor prospects of employment following the degree are fundamental to the insecurity of the university youth. Since the intellectual and humane values of education do not interest most of the students and the pursuit of learning is rare, the dim practical prospects further the demoralisation and alienation of the students." 46

Thus academic and educational issues and problems generate the frustration which account for the majority of student protest activities in such countries.

Analysis of student politics in the developing nations may broadly be classified under three heads, namely, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Student activism in Latin America is well publicized, and with good reason. During the past several years, nearly every country in the region has experienced some form of organized student activity. Of all national or regional groups, the students of Latin America have been the most significant politically for the longest period of time. Student activism in Latin America has been the most continuous in modern history and "Latin America probably harbours the politically most active and powerful body of university students in the world." Students played an important part in the events leading up to the attainment of independence in the early 19th century and then continued to be active in succeeding decades.

Latin American students have alternated in their concerns between the campus and the realms of national politics. The Córdoba Manifesto of 1918 marks the large scale entry of university students into national politics when the students of the University of Córdoba in Argentina presented a manifesto demanding university autonomy and student participation in university administration through Co-gobierno (student membership in all University Committees and governing bodies). Student participation was perceived as a positive force for academic reform and improvement. A subsequent meeting of the Argentinian Students' Union made eight further demands which were considered as central to the reform movement: optional attendance, abolition

47. Ibid., p. 40.
of religious restrictions on what could be taught and who could be appointed to university posts, financial assistance to students, social orientation to the university organisation. Within the next few years, demand for university reforms was voiced throughout Latin America - in Peru, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico and Costa Rica.

This programme of reform constituted a total break with the conservative view of university life. In point of fact, much of the change that has occurred in most universities of Latin America has been rather piece meal and has failed to alleviate student frustrations and insecurities. The academic environment with part-time educators, easy examinations and low academic requirements is far from being conducive to equip students to operate in a real world. Within a short time the promise of reformist measures was largely distorted. "The slogans of 'autonomy' and 'co-government' became the tools of a growing student anti-intellectualism used to advance the selfish, narrow aims of a student elite." Nevertheless, the Reform Movement politicised university life in many Latin American countries. Robert Alexander reports: "There is no doubt that after 1918, each generation of students passed on to the next what had become a tradition of intense political activity by an appreciable part of the student body".

Latin American student activists are dissatisfied with both educational and general conditions and look upon themselves as agents of change. In much of Latin America, the student movements have attacked the traditional oligarchic elements in the society for resisting economic and social modernization. As Robert E. Scott observes: "In well over half of Latin America... University politicians already are an important political force, for the pressures of the society have carried the students past the stage of recruitment into that of involvement in national policy question." 

The most significant role of the Latin American students remains their deep involvement in the political life of their countries. Students have "been a major force in opposing and overthrowing rightist and military dictatorships throughout the region." In the late fifties, Fidel Castro became the symbol of student political activism in Latin America. Student movements resorted to guerrilla warfare and violence to achieve a general social revolution. Students played an important role in the events which led to the overthrow of the authoritarian regimes of Peron in Argentina and Peroz Jimenez in Venezuela. During 1966 many of the larger republics witnessed open clashes between governmental forces and student revolutionaries. Student guerrilla warfare challenged the


regimes became a reality in most of the countries-Venezuela, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In Fidel Castro, Latin American students found a model who took over political power in Cuba through a movement, led and officered by students. Most of the Latin American countries are yet to achieve national integration, political stability, universalistic values and a broad consensus about the legitimacy of the government. Students are bound to play an active political role in countries where the masses were sunk in political apathy and well established traditional elites have resisted continuing demands for political participation in the political process and more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth.

Student politics in most parts of Africa under colonial rule has had a glorious tradition of fighting for national liberation. Students from privileged families studying in metropolitan centres of London and Paris were exposed to modern ideas. During colonial rule, nationalist student organizations were formed by African students overseas and when these students returned home they participated in and sometimes led nationalist movements.

In the North African countries of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria under French colonial rule, students played a key
role in the nationalist struggles. After independence the Moroccan student unions fought against the abolition of the authoritarian regime. Casablanca riots in 1965 were suppressed with brutal force. The student unions fought relentlessly against the feudal and despotic political elites. In Algeria, freedom was achieved only after a protracted and violent attack against the French, and national liberation was an intensely political experience for the students. After independence, students in Tunisia and Algeria were in greater touch with the regime and as such, student activism was much less anti-government.

According to D.K. Emmerson, "In the tropical African countries that acquired their independence through a gradual transfer of power from the metropole, university students were comparatively much less politicised as a group. In Ghana, under N. Krumah, a procommunist, students opposed the regime, demanding greater freedom within the university and the political life in general. Students in South Africa have occasionally fought against government's apartheid policy and interference in academic affairs. Students all over Africa have raised a powerful protest against South Africa's policy of racial discrimination. There is an element of economic survival and

53. For the organisation and trends of student movements in these countries, See Moore, Clement, H. and Hochschild, Arlier, "Student Unions in North African Countries" in Daedalus Winter, 1968.

patriotism present in most of the pre-industrial countries of Africa and student youth in countries like Kenya and Tanzania are deeply committed to the future of their nation.\footnote{55}{See Califano, J.A., \textit{Op.Cit.}, pp.36-39.}

Student participation in freedom struggle in a large number of Asian countries under colonial rule forms a glorious chapter of Asian history in the present century. Many patriotic students left their studies to join the mainstream of national liberation movements and a generation of political leaders were trained in these student movements. The tradition of student political participation in freedom struggles has continued in the post-independence period and students have assumed an oppositional role against their governments.

The political power of students assumes national proportions in the revolutions and political turmoils in such countries as South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Burma, Iran and Turkey during the turbulent sixties. The Korean student revolution of April, 1960 was a spontaneous and unplanned mass uprising that, in large measure, contributed to the abrupt downfall of Syng man Rhee. "To be sure, Korean students were alienated and frustrated by University conditions but the greatest disenchantment stemmed from their realisation of a sharp discrepancy existing between what they learn about the democratic system and 'heroes' and what they actually witnessed
under Syngman Rhee. In the late eighties, South Korean students helped to force their country's transition to democracy. "Disillusioned by the failure of the opposition parties to defeat the military-backed President Roh Tae Woo, the students now seem to be rallying to the banner of a militant, though somewhat naive nationalism with calls for the reunification of the two Koreas and touches of Xenophobia, much of it directed against the U.S.A. The demand for the merger of the two Koreas is far more vehemently expressed in Communist North Korea as it wants to share in the South's booming prosperity. Students of South Korea fought pitched battles with police who tried to stop them from marching to the border for meetings with their North Korean counterparts. For the present, what Koreans, on either side of the ideological great divide, really want is an open border and free trade.

In Thailand, the student uprising of October 1973 was, in actual fact, a re-emergence of the urban left-wing movement after a long period of severe repression.

Independence brought not stability but revolt and civil war to Burma. Burmese students clashed violently with the soldier-rulers in 1962 and 1963 consequent upon the

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military coup of 1962. The military rulers began to implement basic changes in the educational system in 1964. Education was to be equated with livelihood and based on socialist-moral values. Despite heavy suppression of student political activity, many support outlawed parties and guerrilla movements. After the coup, student political leaders used student issues as a means for uniting campus opposition to the military government. A minority of student chose to leave the university and join their ethnic group in underground movements.59 Recently nothing less than a people's revolution has overtaken Burma. The twenty-six year old brutal, authoritarian Ne-Win military regime has caved in. The military blunder-buzz, U Sein Lwin who succeeded Ne-Win, quit office only after fifteen days. The demonstrations against Burma's militaristic-socialist power structure have been spearheaded by Burma's main Student Union. This time the students have been able to tap deep resentment among the people over the country's chronic economic ills. Hundreds of civilians have lost their lives in army action. The revolutionaries and agitationists in Burma today are asking for the total overthrow of the Ne Win regime, for the trial and execution of U Sien Lwin, for the setting up of a transitional people's government to draw up a new Constitution and call for free elections on a multi-party basis. A change appears inevitable, sooner or later.

Indonesian students were politically quiescent prior to the "30th September movement", 1965 when the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) made an attempt to seize power. This coup triggered off students' entry into national politics. Students were instrumental in the ouster of President Sukarno and in foiling the attempts of the Communists to capture power in the open struggle for succession. Since then there has been an uneasy partnership between the students and the Indonesian army led by General Suharto who controlled political power. Students have been critical of corruption and 'militarism' in government. In the absence of well organised political parties and interest groups, students continue to get a hearing on broad range of issues.

Philippines and Malaysia have experienced intense student and youth action. With the death of four students in January, 1970, students in Philippines have not rested content and have succeeded in considerably politicising the masses. Students played an important role in the events which led to the downfall of the authoritarian regimes of Ferdinand Marcos and the installation of a democratic government under the leadership of Mrs. Korazon Aquino.

Student politics in Pakistan has primarily been characterised by political protests closely connected with


political instability, military rule and the threat of
external enemy. Students dramatised the tyranny of the Ayub
regime and were later joined by opposition politicians and
the people in voicing dissent against military rule. Pakistan's
return to parliamentary democracy in November 1988 owes, in
no small measure, to the support given by students and youth
to the Pakistan Peoples Party under the leadership of
Mrs. Benazir Bhutto.

Bangladesh, as former East Pakistan, had long
experienced student unrest against the exploitation and
hagemony by West Pakistan. The liberation struggle in East
Pakistan brought students and youth to the forefront of a
brutal conflict against the Pakistani army. Youth formed the
backbone in such fighting organisations as the Mukti Bahini,
Rakhi Bahini as well as other guerrilla groups. With a brief
experiment of parliamentary democracy, Bangladesh came back to
military rule and students continue to play an oppositional
role against the military regime.

Turkish students were the most active and effective
political force in deposing Sultans and in plotting revolu-
tions between 1850 and 1920. The student movement in 1960
initiated the series of events which led to the overthrow of

62. See Roos Jr., Leslie, Roos, Noralou P. and Field, Gary,
pp. 184-203.
the Menderes government. Since then students continue to be active in national politics.

In Iran, students of the University of Teheran constantly flaunted the authority of the regime of the Shah despite repressive military action. Youth and students of Iran played a crucial role in the Iranian revolution which led to the downfall of the Shah despite the backing of the powerful U.S.A.

Students demonstrated against the government of President Abdel Rehman Aref of Iraq in June 1968. This was followed by a coup on July 17, 1978 which was plotted by left wing elements on the ground that President Aref's government was one of 'corruption and thievery'.