CHAPTER - I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND : A STUDY OF THE EMERGENCE OF SUPERPOWERS
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INTRODUCTION

The approach of the Superpowers towards India during 1947-1964 cannot be dealt with in isolation, because its roots are definitely in the past of these countries. They are ‘Superpowers’ not by accident or by one single historical event of great import. Their present has too much of their past. In fact, they have acquired the present status through an evolutionary process, which is characterised by a deep sense of historical consciousness. Their leaders led their people from darkness to light, from servitude to freedom and from oppression and subjugation to a new life of joy and comfort. They infused a spirit of self-realisation to their national ethos and stirred the creative urge of the people. For centuries their people toiled and laboured and overcame their despondency. Today, they are Superpowers, but yesterday they were like several other countries steeped in political immaturity, economic backwardness and social and cultural degeneration. How could they rise to the present status? What did they do and how did they think? It is imperative to know the answers of these questions for the logical development of this study. Hence the historical background.

The present chapter comprises of three broad and distinctive phases of the past (A) the emergence of Superpowers, (B) the patterns and influence of Cold War and (C) the Superpowers’ policy towards Asia and (D) ties with pre-independence India.
With this backdrop the examination of their approaches towards India shall be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

(A) EMERGENCE OF SUPERPOWERS

The rise of America and the Soviet Union as Superpowers by the middle of the twentieth century deserves a dispassionate study of the events as "super" in the international life of the world. The treatment of their emergence as superpowers cannot and should not be disposed of by the isolated event of the Second World War as some contemporary historians do. To say that "the two nations became so-called superpowers not as a result of deliberate planning by either country but because the aggressive actions of other nations during World War II"\(^1\) is to view the subject from a narrow perspective without due regard to the currents and forces that worked underneath and beyond its present shape. The dynamics of their cultures, political attitudes and systems, their approaches to other nations and their mutual rivalry and deep-rooted hatred cannot be understood by one single historical event, no matter how significant it was. The rise of a nation itself implies that its past is the most important factor in shaping its present and delineating its future.

In order to comprehend their approaches to India, it is, therefore, appropriate to view the events that took place in these countries from a historical perspective.

In view of the exceptional breadth of the subject, the present chapter is an

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attempt to deal with, in condensed form, only those main events and undercurrents of these countries which has a direct bearing on their subsequent rise to the superpower position. These events—political, economic, social and cultural—are dealt with by striking a balance on time-scale generally followed in dealing with the national histories of America and Russia. For providing a more coherent picture, the events of both countries are compared and contrasted, wherever possible.

Before the historical development of the Superpowers is undertaken, it is pertinent to recall the forecasts made as back as 1790 by Baron Melchoir von Grimm while writing to Catherine. He said: "America and Russia would soon be so powerful that Europe would be crushed between them." Similarly, in 1877, the American diplomat Silas Dean had forecast: "Russia like America is a new state and rises with the most astounding rapidity." How these forecasts have come true is one of the most fascinating chapters of contemporary history.

(1) THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR

Geographically, nature has sided more with the U.S. than with the Soviet Union. Although Russia's coastline is very long but much of it is north of the Arctic Circle. America, on the other hand, is endowed with exploitative coastline. The Russian rivers—Kieve, Muscovy, Don and Volga—were vital arteries of the new society in Russia, while in America, St. Lawrence and Mississippi-Missouri did not become very important until 19th century. The rivers, remote from the first centres of civilisation

2 Paul Dukes: "Emergence of Superpowers", Macmillan & Co., London, pp.32-33
3 Ibid. p.33
assisted exploration and communication whether through Siberia along the Ob, Yenisei and Lena or down to the American South-West along Rio Grander and Colorado in America. The heartland of the U.S. is bigger and more yielding than that of Russia whose two-third is covered by forests and desolate Tundras. Comparing the mountains, the Urals are no more than high hills and Caucasus does not come on the scene significantly until the 19th century for at least another hundred years and the crossing of the Rocky Mountain barrier was one of the most momentous episodes in the great trek west. As regards natural resources, the fuel and water power constituting the total energy resources of the Soviet Union have been calculated to be 23% of the world’s total as compared with America’s 29%.

The U.S. borders on only two countries—Canada and Mexico, whereas the Soviet Union borders on twelve. Concern for politics in neighbouring countries is naturally greater in the USSR than in the U.S. which enjoyed the relative security of distance afforded by two bordering oceans. Soviet Union had never such advantage. It had been invaded several times and the historic home of its civilisation was conquered once. (Russia was held by the Mongols and Tartars for almost two hundred years).

Climatically, humid climate in American South and humid arctic climate in the Soviet North are quite different. One geographer notes that the burden of anti-resources means "the Russians are constantly at war with their environment."4

Both the powers orginated as frontier off-shoots of Western European civilisation. Russia evolved into modern age while America was born into it. The

Russian frontier was for a long time land-locked, starting at the Moscovite centre and then radiating outwards, while the American frontier moved westward. Fredrick Jackson Turner in his epoch-making paper entitled "The Significance of Frontier in American History" propounded a thesis. He declared: "Up to our day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonisation of the Great West. The existence of the area of free land, its continuous recession and the advance of American Settlements westward, explain American development." The English colonies that became the United States in 1776 thus possessed a unique heritage of ideas and institutions. "Most of the new nations created from colonies during the 19th and 20th centuries have lacked the relative stability that the U.S. was able to achieve almost at once."

(2) POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

Between 1763-1815, centralisation remained the predominant Russian theme while the American colonies took some further steps towards a federal organisation at the same time as conducting separate administrations usually more connected to the mother country than to each other. This period in American history is unique for it was a period of the Enlightenment--"a great revolution in man’s style of thinking that came to dominate the western world among ideas and events, inventions and expectations; its raw materials were the triumph of Newtonian science, striking improvements in industrial and agricultural techniques, a widespread loss of religious fervour and a

corresponding rise of 'reasonable' religion, an ever bolder play of the critical spirit among the old mysteries of church and state which had for centuries escaped criticism, a new sense of confidence in man’s power over his worldly destiny. The Declaration of Independence was both a political as well as a philosophical document and was supremely successful. It was clear, circumstantial, dignified and pursuasive. More so, it was a "symbol of the shift of the American Enlightenment from consumer to producer, from importer to exporter, a shift that became manifest in the 1770s."  

In Russia, the reign of Peter, the Great, is extremely significant, with its introduction of the Senate, colleges and other bodies, with its military bureaucratic absolutism supported by an all-powerful nobility. He regarded the reforms as a condition necessary to overcome Russia's backwardness. After three months before the outbreak of the War of Independence in America, a great emancipationist peasant war had come to an end in Russia with the execution of its leader Emelin Pugachev. His widow Catherine II (1762-96) though tried to alleviate the economic predicament but there was much more eradication by force than amelioration through reforms. The law of 1775 (administration of provinces) attempted to increase the government's control over the Empire by allowing an elective noble element to dominate the lower levels of provincial administration. In America the federal constitution produced at long last the form of government that might have been brought in more than thirty years before. In Russia, the out-break of the French revolutionary wars transformed an already conservative Catherine II into an old reactionary. The reign of her son Paul

came to an abrupt end in palace revolution. Then followed Alexander I, a rational and pragmatic monarch. He tried to improve the old Russian methods of administration. In 1814 he led his troops to Paris. However, this was an extremely important period in the formation of the respective national ideologies.

"The Americans thought like Europeans because they were transplanted Europeans. Their only culture was an English and European culture, modified and diluted by the experience of living in a new and simpler environment. They drew their ideas from the same sources as Europeans, from their own experience in affairs, from their churches and from Greek and Latin classics read in school, from Cicero and Plutarch, from Livy and Tacitus, and from the modern philosophers of natural law, such as Grotius, Pufendorf and John Locke." 9

In Russia, progressive social thought was accompanied by an emancipation trend in Ukrainian writings. Criticism of serfdom also entered in the poetry of Gavrila Derzhavin. The folklore of the period was permeated with the appeal for an active struggle against feudal oppression. "Between 1768 and 1774 scholarship progressed simultaneously with the natural sciences and engineering. The growing national consciousness engendered a fresh interest in the past history of the country. Prominent historians like M.Shcherbatov and I.Boltin infused new aristocratic revolutionary trend in the Russian historiography." 10

In the age of democratic revolutions (1763-1815) both the American and Russian economies were showing signs of self reliance and growth. Government policies in both countries tended to be laissez faire, in the spirit of the age, although historic traditions made the tendency weaker in Russia than in America. Mobility was greater in America than Russia. Russia made her entry into manufacturing stage of capitalism in 1760s although it was to be another century before the industrial phase was reached. But the American industry moved forward after the War of Independence and was given a further boost by embargo policies. In the case of America, domestic commerce multiplied more than five times and in Russia less than 5% of the grain produced left the Empire, although it was the most important item of export. Russia's internal trade, like America's was probably more important than foreign trade towards the end of the 18th century.

From 1815 onwards both Russia and the U.S. enjoyed a decade or so of comparative political stability. An era of good feeling followed the end of the Napoleonic period in the U.S.A. while geniality was not so wide spread in Russia. There was no major disturbance of the internal peace before the death of Alexander I. At the same time, however, the ripples of the age of democratic revolution were felt in both countries. In the Empire, just as the 1917 revolution was preceded by an attempt to adopt Marxist ideas for the purpose of the Tsarist State, so the Decemberists outbreak was anticipated by the adaptation of some of the principles of American and French revolutions towards the same end, although there was little of the earlier official enthusiasm in the endeavour.
Having started off his reign in a blaze of liberal and high sounding sentiment, under the influence of Napoleon and Jefferson, Alexander finished it in an inert reactionary mood, compounded by a transition from an outward looking desire for the salvation of his soul. The alienation from Tsarism of a section of the nobility which remained more faithful to the revolutionary principles now led to the abortive Decemberist uprising. "What was intended to be a spring of freedom turned out after an hour of confusion to be further even a deeper period of reaction under Nicholas I."\textsuperscript{11} The Decemberists failed because they could not agree among themselves about what they were trying to do and because there was no social basis for their action. In Russia there had been a half-hearted attempt to introduce democracy from above, at about the same time, it was arriving in America from below. The election of President Andrew Jackson was hailed by the West as well as by the adherents of the traditional Jeffersonianism.

By 1850, absolutism had gained ground in Russia as well as in the USA. Autocratic Russia and democratic America seemed bound to sway the destinies of half the globe. Alexis de Tocqueville, in his "Democracy in America" first published in 1835, wrote: "Both (U.S. and USSR) of them have grown up unnoticed and while the attention of the world was directed elsewhere, they have suddenly assumed a prominent place among the nations and the world learned their existence and their greatness at almost the same time... Though their starting point is different and their courses are not the same, yet each of them seems to be marked out by the will of Heaven to sway

\textsuperscript{11} N.Y. Nosov: "History of the USSR", Moscow, 1965, p. 38
the destinies of half the globe." Thus by the end of 1850 the two great nations saw themselves possessing a unique ideology and an exclusive mission.

Economically, during 1815-1850 the lack of social mobility in Russia was the reflection of a static economy. In the late 18th century, Russia had been one of Europe's leading powers, by the middle of the 19th century she was leading behind. The reasons for this were partly institutional. Terrified by the democratic revolution, the Tsar government retained serfdom and was averse to its subjects moving around in an uncontrolled manner. Russia's backwardness in communication can be seen as somewhat less extreme if the vital part played by her waterways is recalled. The Volga, Dnieper and Neva were busy with steamships at a time when even in USA, the railways were ancilliary to waterways.

Another reason of Russia's backwardness was the maladministration of her natural resources. Charcoal was everywhere giving way to cooking coal as the chief means of something and the Urals were deficient in this indispensable mineral. The U.S., on the other hand, had all the fundamental requirements for industrial revolution, conveniently located in the north-east and moved quickly to the great change. "Of course, America's freer social system was at least as much an asset as Russia's rigidly stratified society was a handicap."\textsuperscript{12}

In the American case, the domestic commerce multiplied more than five times and in Russia less than 5% of the grain produced left the Empire.

Government finances in both future Superpowers were ill-organised. Both

\textsuperscript{12} Paul Dukes: "Emergence of Superpowers, London 1967, p.315
governments were beset by the problem of paper inflation; America more so because of the existence there of wild-cat banking. Both governments had a national debt to worry about.

During 1850-1880 the USA and Russia experienced an armed conflict of great importance— the Civil War and the Crimean. Both wars brought forward the demise of slavery in their respective countries and speeded up development in other directions too. The period was something of a Watershed in the history of both nations. It marked half-way point between the bourgeois-democratic and proletarian revolutions. In 1850 a great compromise brought a lull to the troubles produced in America by the clash between slave and free states by Lincoln with his patriotic vision and humanitarianism and superlative political talent. In Russia, Alexander II was prepared to go more than half-way to meet the liberal opinion which was pressing for an end to serfdom at the beginning of his reign. In America too, reaction set in during the aftermath of its war following an early promise of liberalism.

In the realm of economic development, at the end of the age of transition, most Americans and Russians were still farmers of one sort of or the other. According to Lenin "about 80% of European rural Russia was still being formed by pre-emancipation methods in the late 1880s". Nevertheless, the area of cultivation was being expanded, particularly in south. This led to rise in grain trade. While communes and the landlords

preserved much of their power in Russia, the family-farm remained the basic unit of American agriculture.

As far as the railroads were concerned, the USA was far ahead of the Tsarist Russia in the construction. "By 1805, there were over 8500 miles of roads in Russia. Postage stamps were introduced into America in 1847; into Russia a decade later. Between 1855-1880 the length of Russian telegraph network increased from just over 1,300 to nearly 5000 miles, while in America every town of consequence was incorporated into a continental telegraph net-work."14 Moscow, followed by St. Petersburg remained the centre of Russian industry and the Middle Atlantic followed by New England, America's centres. The national debt, war and rail construction in that order, were the three great items of financial interest in Russia. Private banking developed during the reign of Alexander II.

During 1880-1917 the Superpowers entered an important phase in the struggle of empire and denouement of the World War I. In Russia, populism was to the people; in USA it was from the people. In America the anarchy of unrestricted industrialisation rose but national reform impulse came to Nicholas II, the autocracy made a half-hearted attempt to adapt itself to the move towards urban, industrialised life taking place even in backward Russia. Jolted into action by revolution of 1905, the Tsar conceded reforms which would have allowed the monarchy to evolve in a constitutional direction if the lines to the left and right of democratic government had not already been drawn up. Russia's entry into the World War, according to some observers, made an already difficult position, impossible. Heavily committed from the Balkan to the

Far-East, impelled by motives ranging from the economic to the personal, Nicholas was determined to show the flag wherever Russian interests seemed to them to make this necessary.

Although it was remote from the European imbroglio, the USA did not escape involvement in the competition for empire. American imperialists grew more hungry with the onset of The Spanish-American War in 1889, while Boer War helped to discourage USA from colonial acquisition and outlets for the dollars. In Russia, Lenin argued that his country was the most backward of all the imperialist countries, her whole economy being subjugated to foreign capitalism.15

Another Russian economist also confirmed it: "The Socio-political structure of Russia continued to retain elements of medieval despotism dominated by landowning class, and there, in Lenin's view, Russia was ruled not by an outdated capitalistic imperialism but by "military and feudal imperialism."16 While Russia had little room for manoeuvre in 1914, America had rather more, but this had been whittled down by 1917 and her entry into war certainly reflected more than the Messianic pretensions of Woodrow Wilson. In a manner, somewhat different from European powers, America was equally trapped in the vortex of imperialism.

By the turn of the century, America began to exercise a strong and independent influence on international affairs. After the Spanish-American War of 1889, American investments were increasingly made from China to Europe. "There was no end to

American expansionism. Teddy Roosevelt took Panama, intervened in Cuba and Santo Domongo, helped arranged peace between France and Germany over Morocco and between Japan and Russia over Manchuria and sent the American navy round the world to show that USA meant business."

While the War did not seem to be America's in 1914, by 1917 large loans seemed in danger of non-payment. But Russia experienced a great misery; Petrograd starved and war produced a serious social instability.

Thus through war and peace, America and Russia had expanded by the beginning of the 20th century into great powers. America had managed to maintain her stability while Tsarist Russia embarked upon the related process of industrial modernisation too late and from too unstable a base for her to be able to survive the climax of the imperialist era, the First World War.

Between 1880-1917, as a client of European powers, Russia found her development thwarted by them. Foreign investors did not want their monopolies threatened by Russia and, therefore, discouraged the exploitation of some of her oil, coal and metal resources. Developing their own spheres of interests the other imperialists denied Russia unrestricted outlets from the Black Sea and the Baltic and pushed her back from consolidation of her foothold on the Pacific. Turned inward, however, Russia was able to exploit her colonial peoples in Central Asia and elsewhere in relative immunity.

The total population of Russia in 1914 was 175 million while that of America it was 92 million in 1910. American farmers, like Russians, experienced great hardships between 1880-1900 because of the dislocation produced by the industrial revolution. Their another problem was indebtedness. The progressives and Wilson sought to improve the credit system which helped the farmers in the short run. Rural Russian problems were deeper. Soil and climate conspired against the success of Russian agriculture. Alexander III moved to do some improvement. Between 1908-1914, Tsarist Russia certainly took several steps towards industrialisation.

American industrial development during 1880-1917 have not been all that far in advance of Russia's measured point of view, but it was ahead from many and, undoubtedly, much more dynamic. Between 1880-1916 railroad mileage tripled. Several transcontinental routes came into operation. By 1890, the USA had become the world's leading industrial power, by 1914 its second financial power. These circumstances alone made America a leading imperialist nation. The two principal reasons (Nature and distribution of natural resources and the size of area and population) contributed. But the most important reason was the distribution. And distribution is as much history as geography.

"Another reason of industrial expansion was immigration during 1880-1920. Ignorant and poor immigrants took unskilled jobs. With the great economic change in America went a profound rearrangement of society. With the rise of "rugged" industrialist millionaire, a new class of industrial entrepreneurs was created."20

Dependent on it was the middle class composed of managers and professionals. The workers' unions also developed. Similarly, an industrial middle class and a proletariat also developed in Russia during the last days of 1916.

The period of 1917-41 was the age of proletarian revolution which made a tremendous impact on the whole world. Writing about its impact, Lewis S. Feuer said:

"Every century in modern times has had a country to which it looked as "conscience-model". England was to Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists to land of liberties, Isaac Newton. France during the 18th century held Europe's revolutionary beacon. The Soviet Union during the fifteen years after October Revolution became the conscience-model of the world's intellectuals." ²¹

Initially, Lenin had to compromise at home for the conditions were not mature. Similarly, Wilson had a tough time persuading his fellow Americans to share the vision of the world kept safe for democracy and immune from communism.

"Between the Wars the attention of the USSR, like that of America was mainly directed inwards. Wilson's dream of enthusiastic participation in the League of Nations was shattered, as was Lenin's of the peoples of the Soviet Union quickly accompanying those of all other nations through world revolution." ²²

The struggle between the two giants was a reflection of the combat between conflicting issues at all levels of the party. "From the big debate of 1920, the Soviet politics moved into the crushing unanimity of the last 1930s. The cult of the personality

²¹ American Quarterly, 1962,p.21
made its entrance. Stalin was larger than life and struck terror and reverence by turns into Soviet hearts. He, like the other so called great men of history was much more at the mercy of circumstances than a moulder of them.  

The new Constitution of the USSR (1936) recorded the triumph of Socialism. Upto the middle of 1930s, the proletarian revolution had indeed marked a step forward in the political consciousness of the Soviet peoples. While America slept throughout the 1930s, other powers were hardly more alert to the growing menace of Fascism. The Soviet Union, however, became alarmed at somewhat earlier stage than her future allies.

The period 1917-41 marked a watershed in the economic development of both powers. In agriculture, an increased use of the automobile in USSR, increased the production. The Soviet Union lagged behind in mechanization, in electrification, irrigation, fertilisation etc. Russia’s historic backwardness was still taking its toll in many spheres of life. The greatest change, however, was collectivisation. Meanwhile, in America the basic unit of agricultural production remained the single-family farm.

The U.S.A’s crisis of 1929, like that of the USSR, was fundamentally the result of the loss of equilibrium although at a more advanced stage of economic progress. The Great Depression was a clear example of a fault still to be found today in the American capitalist economy. In the development of planning in American economy, a leaf or two were taken out of Soviet book.

23. Ibid., p.376
By 1941, in the USSR, heavy industry developed to a considerable degree. The emergence of Soviet intelligentsia has been cited as the basis of a bureaucratic degenerations inherent in the working out of the revolutions. During 1941-45, the USSR found it difficult to embark upon the development of consumer economy; the USA to avoid being consumed by it. The world's second superpower was in many ways an underdeveloped country at a time when the richest country of the world had a poverty problem involving people who would be quite prosperous in comparision with most other human beings as well as few who would not.

Soviet farming continually faced the problem of underproduction while the American farming of overproduction. This was a reflection of comparative Soviet backwardness, for, while the acre of cultivation and the agriculture labour force were greater in the USSR, the U.S.A.'s production was superior per acre, per man and overall. while Pure collectivism in the Soviet Union produced greater shortages of food, pure laiszez faire liberalism in American agriculture, a quicker end to the small-scale family farms.

Paradoxically, the most efficient farms in the U.S embody the individual approach which is the ideal of Soviet agriculture. The most efficient producers in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the peasants in their plots, embody the individual initiative and self-interest which form the ideal of American agriculture. Each system might learn something from the other. But socialist ideology and agrarian myth have made heroes out of the less productive collective farmer in the Soviet Union and the small scale family farmers in the United States.
The same can be said about the industrial sector. As an American scholar has put it: "We operate under conditions which may best be described as a growing buyer's market with considerable under-employment of our resources then have a perpetual seller's market with over full-employment."^24

In the consumer and service industries, the USSR has a long way to go before it catches up with the USA.

During 1941-1945, neither the USA nor the USSR was ready to exert Superpowers on a world wide scale. But both entered the Second World War in 1941. Both knew that they would do so and were preparing for the eventuality, but neither was completely ready for the attack which brought them into conflict. Compared to the Soviet Union, the U.S. had an easy war. The Russian Fatherland was deeply penetrated, while the Western Hemisphere was barely scratched. About 20 million Soviet citizens died, many of them civilians; under half a million Americans, nearly all combatants. The Russian economy suffered a fearful dislocation, the American moved on from a partial recovery of the New Deal to a great boom.

The two great powers had been too mistrustful of each other before the war to be good allies during it. Although America gave Russia a large amount of aid to keep the Eastern Front going in Europe, Russia complained bitterly that the Western front should have been opened long before it was.

America's use of atom bomb in 1945 gave a terrible warning at the end of the

Second World War of the probable nature of the third. The World War II was a mighty accelerator of the emergence of the Superpowers, just as the World War I had given a tremendous impetus to the proletarian revolution and to American might.

During the post-war years the circumstances making for the cold war were bigger than both of them, and each was at the mercy of its own past and of its own ignorance of the past of the other.

Thus the political and economic factors that contributed to the emergence of the US and USSR as superpowers have a long and fascinating history behind them. But no less important are the cultural and social factors that influenced the development of social institutions and political philosophies of these two countries.

It would, therefore, be logical to review these factors also so that we may get a composite picture of currents and forces that worked in making these two countries 'superpowers'.

(3) SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Culturally, Russia was older than America. The Slavs in Kiev were more barbaric than many other races in Europe and their reception of Christianity meant closer connection with the rest of Europe. On the other hand, American colonial culture was a direct offshoot of the most advanced that the world could provide in the 17th and 18th centuries. This gave it a strong initial advantage over the Russians which struggled to throw off the dead weight of a long and sad past, while colonies experienced at least something of a youthful exuberance.
At the beginning of the 18th century literacy was higher in America than Russia. American culture was allowed to bloom in a much freer atmosphere than Russian. All the same, Russia and America were members of the same cultural world of the age of enlightenment and the democratic revolution. "Voltaire did not cut much of a figure in Asia and Africa as he did at the transoceanic and transcontinental frontier of the European metropolis."25

"Neither American nor Russian culture could be called independent and self-reliant at the dawn of the 19th century. Foreign authors, predominantly British in the case of America, and France and Germany in that of Russia, continued to be more popular than the domestic products."26 However, this was an extremely important period in the formulation of ideologies. The Declaration of Independence and the constitution in America and the Russian attempt to add a secular rationale to its older religious ideologies took them far ahead in their ideological make-up.

In the galaxy of great men, what George Washington was to America, Lenin was to Russia. Washington was to occupy a place in the hearts of Americans in the 19th century no less great than Lenin in the hearts of the Soviet citizens soon after the October Revolution of 1917. In the realm of science, both Benjamin Franklin and Michael Lomonosov used institutional approaches to the problems of atmospheric electricity though their backgrounds and careers were different.

During the reign of Alexander I and Nicholas I, in spite of clumsy censorship,

25. Paul Dukes: "Emergence of Superpowers", London, 1967,
26. Ibid., p.49
Russia produced great writers like Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol; while Emerson, Thoreau and Hawthorn were aspiring to greatness in America.

In 1850, Lincoln's patriotic vision and a superlative political talent brought about an unstable lull to the troubles produced in America by the clash between slaves and free states. In Russia, Alexander II brought about emancipation from serfdom. During 1850-80 both extended and consolidated their frontiers--America in Great Plains and Russia in Asia. Both expanded demographically and economically. The American population doubled to 50 million in 1880 and Russian to 90 million.

"By 1850 both Russia and America were in the process of developing their own modern secular culture, including the formation of a distinctive national ideology." 27

In the field of literature the similarity between the Russian's great triumvirate--Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky and outstanding American trio--Mark Twain, Herman Melville and Henry James--is well brought out by D.H. Lawrence when he says:

"The two bodies of modern literature seem to me to have come to a real verge: the Russians and the Americans. The masters of the American and Russian manners appear together something of their fierce intensity from the outer darkness, from the decayed matter of folk-lore, melodrama and religious life." 28

The American and Russian novelists fed on Europe. Some like Turgenev accepted it and like Tolstoy rejected it. They considered a visit to the West as a part of

27. American Historical Review, July 1964, p. 27
their education. Gogol discovered Russia in Rome, and Henry James, his America in London. The three Russian novelists were fortunate in that Pushkin and Gogol had prepared the way for them, while the American's predecessors were still uncertainly searching for a style.

In the field of education, by the end of the reign of Alaxender II, Russia had eight universities and 10,000 students. There was one primary school over 4000 inhabitants. Illiteracy was probably over 80% in Russia in 1880 not a lot more than 10% in America. Higher education in America took a great leap forward after the Civil War because of a great demand of specialists, wider availability of funds and progressive legislations. John D. Pierce of Michigan declared:

"The common schools are truly republican. In the public schools all classes are blended together, the rich mingle with the poor and both are educated in company. Let free schools be established and maintained and there can be no such thing as permanent aristocracy in our land; for the monopoly of wealth is powerless when mind is allowed freely to come into contact with minds." 29

America's educational arrangements were in most respects superior to the Russian in 1850-80 but the Russian system produced some great men in a wide range of fields and enjoyed some surprising triumphs. For example, at the great Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, one of the key themes was the relation of education to national progress. This part of show was stolen by displays of tools from Moscow and

29 Ibid., p. 97
St. Petersburg, for these objects were shown to the West for the first time. According to Cremin, "Russian educators had finally scored a breakthrough on the thorny problem of how to organise meaningful, instructive shop training as an essential adjunct of technical education."^{30}

*According to a Polish revolutionary, Count de Gurowski:*  
"On the American common schools, more than any other basis, depends and is fixed the future, the weal and woe of American society, and they are the noblest and most luminous manifestations of the spirit, the will and the temper of the genuine American communities and people."^{31}

During 1880-1917 the Russian Duma debated various questions on primary education. By 1915 there were 1,22,000 schools catering for 8 million students and general literacy exceeded to 50%. Similarly, in USA an engergetic discussion had arisen in 1890s concerning the purposes and aims that should be adopted by schools. Even earlier theorists like Horace Mann and John D. Pierce saw universal education as a basic necessity of a democratic society. A belief in education of the whole of man was encouraged by the philosophical arguments of James and Dewey.

Between 1917-1941, the Soviet education brought a profound change. The fathers of communism believed that the harmonious development of children would best be attained by an education through polytechnical methods. The Soviet Russia also drew upon the progressive elements of the USA's educational system and ideas.

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30. Ibid., p. 232  
31. Ibid., p. 237
Similarly, John Dewey after returning from Russia's Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition remarked: "The main effort is nobly heroic, evincing a faith in human nature, which is democratic beyond the ambitions of the democracies of the past."32

The rise of literacy had strong implications. Literature in America and Russia flourished with themes of industrialisation. Realist groups of writers became active in America while in Russia stories of Chekhov and Gorky became popular. The Russian literature reflected a great change that was coming to the Empire and of which a clear indicator was the virtual demise of populism and the absence of any philosophy to replace it. With the arrival of Marxist socialism, by the end of the 19th century, a new set of beliefs had been widely accepted and formed a new background against which the writers of prose fiction gave themselves to the practice of their art. Chekhov was not indifferent to humanity nor to progress. With the arrival of Maxim Gorky, Russian writers took a further large step from their first status as diversionists of aristocratic society to their later position as engineers of the proletarian soul. His writings reveal a joyful spirit of socialist realism. His pseudonym means "bitter" in Russia and he found no difficulty in complaining not only against the vanity and hypocrisy of bourgeois life, in America as well as in Russia, but also the stubborn ignorance of the peasant and proletarian existence. A.M. Peshkov (Maxim Gorky) and S.L. Clements (Twain) could be called the first writers in their respective societies from the people and for the people, and both were journalists as well as writers of fiction.

Although there were 2000 journals published in 1912 in nearly 250 Russian towns, the Russian reading public could still not compare with the Americans, which

32 Ibid., p. 312
had developed a voracious appetite for all kinds of ephemeral literature. Many
journalists in America portrayed injustices and deprivation of both rural and urban life
in a wave of realist fiction. Garland, Crane, Norris, and Dreiser were many such writers.

In the world of art, Alexei Tolstoy's novel on Peter, Mayakovsky's modernist
movements were influencing people. At the beginning of 1930s the Party called on
writers to subscribe to the theory of "socialist realism". Michael Sholokhov was to
become one of the most celebrated of all Soviet writers.

No writer of any intellectual pretensions, or no writer with human sympathy
could ignore the Soviet Union during the age of the Proletarian Revolution. Even the
lost American generation of 1920s could not completely avoid an attitude towards Marx
and Lenin, although Freud was a strong rival for their attention. In America, John Dos
Passes and John Steinbeck also drew from the realist tradition established before world
War I.

Thus, the political, economic, social and cultural developments of the U.S. and
the USSR contributed a great deal to their emergence as superpowers on the
international scene. But the irony of history was that these two powers, soon after the
World War II, turned into postwar antagonists. And the result was the commencement
of the Cold War between them which enveloped other nations in the mid 20th century.
Hence, it is essential to examine three additional factors to complete the historical
background of the study. These factors are: (1) Pattern and the Influence of the Cold
War between the Superpowers, (2) The Superpowers' policy in Asia and (3) ties with
pre-independence India. These factors would substantially contribute to understanding
of the approach of the Superpowers towards India during 1947-64.
(B) THE PATTERN AND INFLUENCE OF THE COLD WAR

Given the clash of ideologies and national interests, given the dangerous vacuum created by the collapse of the Axis nations, conflict between the two surviving world powers was perhaps unavoidable. Both were operating in an unstable climate of fear and suspicion, and were entrapped by their own inflexible perceptions and simplistic rhetoric. But neither side understood the source of the other's anxieties. All too quickly, the U.S. and the USSR abandoned diplomacy for bombast and confrontation.

The U.S. administration feared that having "Sovietized" Eastern Europe and having consolidated his personal power within the USSR, the insatiable Soviet dictator (Stalin) now sought westward extension of communist control. By 1947 the America government had concluded that only a "get tough" American policy could stem the rising "Red tide".33

To counter this perceived danger from the East, America adopted a tough posture. Truman fired Henry.

Wallace, Secretary of Commerce, who favoured a relative "free hand" for the Soviets in Eastern Europe. Hardliners hoped to use traditional American goals of democracy and the Open Door everywhere. "To this end America clumsily applied the economic leverage by terminating Soviet lend-lease and conveniently misplaced a Soviet loan request."34 Some wanted to use the US atomic advantage to intimidate the USSR but all failed. In the end the U.S. thought of containment as a logical and practical response.

34 Ibid., p.381
Although the policy of containment was in formation since 1945 but was not formally articulated until the publication of George F. Kennan's "Mr. 'X' Paper" in 1947. In this unsigned article Kennan wrote:

"The main element of any U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long term patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies." ③

Thus the Soviet Union was presented as an ideological and expansionist threat which had to be met with "adroit counterforce"④ In a messianic conclusion, he urged Americans to accept "the responsibility of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear." ⑤

In 1947-49, the U.S. discarded a "century-and-a-half-old tradition of eschewing entangling alliances. Truman advocated the policy of the U.S."to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation". Along with these moves, multinational military alliances (NATO, SEATO etc.) came into being. Supurred by knowledge that the Soviets had developed atomic weapons (America had already dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945) a decision was taken after a prolonged, agonizing debate with the scientific community to develop a hydrogen bomb. All calculations in Washington had to do with the danger of a Soviet attack in Europe.

But soon the policy of containment enveloped the new emerging nation of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Korean conflict and Cuban crisis are the examples of massive increase in American power and globalization of the policy of containment.

③ Foreign Affairs, July 1947,p.23
④ Ibid.,p.24
⑤ Ibid.,p.24
Looking back over the twenty years after World War II "one can see this effort as having come in overlapping stages. First, there was a stage when the U.S. simply opposed the imperial spread of another power. It sought to prevent the Soviet Union from establishing control over neighbouring states. Imperceptibly, this stage merged into a second when it became the American aim to resist the spread of an alien ideology." As these objectives were pursued on a wider and wider scale, the United States became committed by treaties or otherwise to the defense of nearly all non-Communist States. The extent of this commitment was indicated in 1962, when the Chinese transgressed the Indian border, and though India was determinedly not an American ally, Washington warned Peking of the direst consequences of the invasion, if continued.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union embarked upon a new phase of history with the termination of the Second World War. The USSR began to play a decisive part, gave a powerful impetus to revolutionary and national liberation movements, and this led to the fundamental changes on the international scene.

What is ironical is that the governments of both the Superpowers offered remarkably similar explanations for the origin of the Cold War. Each side characterised the conflict as a morality play in which the other is cast as the villain. Both presumed to act in the name of the world's "peace-loving" peoples, and each portrayed the other as an imperialist power bent on global conquest.

Charged with mutual rivalry, the Superpowers started inducing the Third World through economic and military aid, military intervention, propaganda and educational assistance. In this process, the Cold War knocked at the door of Asia.

(C) THE SUPERPOWERS' POLICY IN ASIA

One of the most significant power relation patterns that influenced the international life was the emergence of Asian and African countries to nationhood and their declared objectives of keeping away from the power politics of the Superpowers.

Mr. Carlos Romulo, former Minister of the Phillipines said: "It is a historical misfortune that the renaissance of Asia should coincide with the ruthless struggle among the Great Powers for the mastery of the world."39

The American policy of containment in Russia made its impact by the end of 1949 when the People's Government was formally established in Peking and was immediately recognised by the Soviet Union and its Eastern European, neighbours, Britain, India and others. America's objection of the recognition of the Peoples' Government in China was based on the premises that (i) the permanance of Communist control and its stability was doubtful because of the resistance by the recognised national government through guerrilla activities, (ii) the avowed anti-American policy of the People's Government, (iii) the indication that recognition would not be followed by the establishment of normal relations based upon respect for international law and (iv) the policy of containment of communism.

39 C.Sen': "Against the Cold War", New Delhi,1962,p.8
The rise of the USA as a great power with the victory of the Allied powers, the entire world looked up to it for a new leadership. Although US withdrew from Europe, it kept up its position of supremacy in East Asia and the Pacific. Its Open Door policy for China enabled it to capture a measure of leadership and initiative by its firm opposition to the Japanese efforts to control China. The impact of the US on Asian affairs outside the Pacific was felt soon after the war, when Anglo-Dutch forces attacked the newly-born Indonesian Republic. The U.S. Government immediately intervened with unceaseful sympathy for Asian freedom. This act of far reaching American statesmanship endeared the U.S. to the Asian countries.

The U.S. held that it was essential to peace and security of the free world that the countries in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ceylon and Nepal) remain free and independent. It was only in 1953 that the United States concentrated on building a mosaic of Asian policy. But America's foreign policy in Asia was in doldrums, mainly because of the wrong perceptions of Asian society both by President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Eisenhower's visit to Korea and Dulles' extensive tours to Asian-African countries brought Cold War both in the Far East Asia and South Asia. The stand of the uncommitted nations of the South Asia was called by Dulles as "inherent opportunism", 'fence-sitting' and 'immoral'. This short-sighted approach of America's Secretary of State gave a big jolt to the U.S. policy of containment in Asia. Hence the US began to build defence blocs and alliances (SEATO, Baghdad Pact). Its sympathy for the aspirations of the colonial and newly independent countries in Asia and Africa was conditioned by its over-all priority to the global conflict with communism.
Thus American foreign policy resulted into the support to Portuguese in Goa, supply of military aid to Pakistan and support to pro-Shah military coup in Iran. There was a marked alienation of Asian popular leaders in Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon, India, Egypt, Syria and elsewhere.

Thus the results of the U.S. policy towards Asia were:

1. An isolated China became a major world power.

2. The Asian countries began to realise that the US Asian nationalism has meaning only to the extent that does not alienate its European allies.

3. The US created impression that is in favour of "strong" anti-communist regimes in Asian countries, even if these mean military dictatorships or personal rule by "iron men".

4. Asia came into the orbit of military pacts and alliances.

5. The US increased its economic aid to Asian countries and the bulk of it went to the nations militarily aligned to it.

6. The U.S. could not accept non-alignment as a positive force for it did not fit well into its global strategy of containment of communism.

According to Sen:

"Americans could not realise that the Asian and African countries which have won their freedom after long struggles with imperial powers, have a natural sympathy for revolutionary changes... The impact of the American Revolution, it is believed, has widely lost on the present American generation. It is somewhat
ironical, therefore, that many people in Asia and Africa still feel a certain exhuberance for the revolutionary ideas enshrined in American Declaration of Independence. Ideas seldom die; their extension in one country is matched by their rekindling in another." 40

Historically, American supremacy was considerably due to its embarking upon imperialist adventures outside the Western Hemisphere. "Historians generally accept the year 1898, that is to say, the events of the Cuban-Spanish-American War, as marking the emergence of the U.S as a world power." 41

On the other hand, the Russian policy in Asia was marked by the Communist victory in China. "For the first time since the World War II, the USSR had an ally in fact as well as in name". 42 While the Western powers had a great deal of trouble in Malaya, Indo-China and Indonesia, the Soviet Union played a traditional role of encouraging nationalist movements in Asia and Africa. Stalin, initially failed in his Asian policy. He could only realise after the Korean War that Asia's non-alignment could be a positive force in world affairs.

Lenin had visualised that the ultimate victory of communism would come through a revolutionary alliance between the USSR and the "exploited peoples of Asia and Africa". He wrote:

"We cannot say whether Asia will have had time to develop into a system of independent national states, like Europe, before the

40 Chanakya Sen: "Against the Cold War", New Delhi, 1962, p.92
collapse of capitalism, having awakened Asia, has called forth national movements everywhere in that continent too, that the tendency of these movements is towards a creation of national states in Asia." 43

The triumph of October Revolution (1917) in Russia was indeed a great stimulus for the oppressed nations of Asia and Africa. Their struggle against colonialism and imperialism was greatly inspired by the Soviet struggle for the downfall of imperialism. The building of socialist society in the USSR and the subsequent formation of the community of socialist countries, furnished the necessary prerequisites in the collapse of the colonial system in many Asian and African countries.

In the early years, many of the Soviet achievements influenced a large number of Asian leaders who did not necessaricy approve of communist methods. In Asian affairs the role of Comintern culminated in a complete breach, spread over the thirties and early forties. The short-sighted and doctrinaire handling of Asian affairs by Stalin and the Comintern resulted in the failure of Chinese revolution in the twenties and Indian Communists in forties.

The independence of the Asian countries was to Moscow a sham commodity, a betrayal of the masses. "Nehru was a 'running dog of imperialism', Sukarno 'a betrayer of the Indonesian people' and U.Nu 'a stooge of imperialism 'and Nassar 'a reactionary'." 44

But in the last two years of his life, Stalin realised that the newly liberated

43. V.I.Lenin: "Collected Works", Vol,20,p.399
44. C. Sen: "Against the Cold War", New Delhi,1962, p.127
countries of Asia and Africa were not just camp-followers of the West but they were anxious for peace.

Hence we notice a new Soviet approach towards Asia in early 1952. In April Stalin received Indian ambassador, Dr. Radhakrishnan. On Jan. 17, the Soviet Union supported India’s stand on Kashmir. In October, 1952 the Asian conference representing most of the Asian countries in Peking, mentioned Vietnam, Malaya, India, Burma, the Phillipines, Indonesia, Iraq and Egypt, Latin America, Morrocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Kenya and Iran as areas of progress.

The report of the 19th Congress of the CPSU revealed an appreciation of the positive role non-committed countries were playing in world affairs.

The Soviet policy towards the Asian and African countries took a final shape in 1955 after the Bandung Conference. This policy was based on the establishment of personal contacts between the leaders of the USSR and Afro-Asian countries, fruitful exploitation of conflict between Asian-African nationalism and Western imperialism, satisfaction over the refusal of the Asian-African countries to join military alliances and helping the developing countries of Asia and Africa in their economic development.

Politically, the Soviet objective in Asia was to force the Western retreat. This was partially achieved more largely in West Asia. The Soviet aid came for building basic industries with a long term objective of making the recipient countries independent and even competitive with European and American economy.
The Soviet historians rewrote the history of the bourgeois national struggle in Asia with a more comprehensive outlook. They emphasised that "the Asian, African and Latin American countries help to join and unite the three forces of modern world revolutionary movements: the socialist world community, the communist and working class movement of capitalist countries and the national liberation movement. This ultimately creates a solid basis and perspective for strengthening the Soviet Union’s relations with the developing Asian, African and Latin American nations today and in the future."  

(D) TIES WITH PRE-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

1. AMERICAN TIES

Though historians of all nations have, in some measure, incurred the risk of confirming themselves to historical nationalism, but perhaps, the American historians deserve more than the normal share of this type of parochialism. C. Van Woodward, Sterling Professor of American History, admits that:

"They (American historians) are said to lay excessive claims to distinctiveness and uniqueness in their natural experience, to plead immunity from the influence of historical forces that have swept most other nations.. and to seek within their own borders all the significant forces that have shaped their history."  

The quest of the Americans for national identity made them so much

45 Documents and Resolutions: XXV Congress of the CPSU, P.16
preoccupied with their own question of Americanism that they cared little to know about the old and mature nations like India, rich with celebrated achievements and venerable movements.

(A) The Phase of Ignorance

Till the outbreak of the World War II, no significant interest was taken by the Americans in Indian affairs. It was the dramatic success scored by the Japanese that led to Americans to realise that developments in India could have a significant bearing on the military objectives of the U.S. in the Far Eastern Theatre of War. In Feb. 1942, President Roosevelt raised the question of India’s future for the first time in a discussion with Winston Churchill but the latter “reacted so strongly and at such length that roosevelt never raised it verbally again.”47

The historic resolution of the All India Congress Committee on 8th Aug 1942 calling upon the British to "Quit India" was not liked by Roosevelt and he took it as untimely and an "indirect assistance to the armed forces of Japan". In the U.S. Congress too, there was a great resentment against India. Tom Connally of Texas, Chirman of the Foreign Relations Committee said, "This matter (India’s demand for self government) should not be interjected into the pending world problem of the war."48 But if a decision was to be taken on any Indian issue, the role of American administration was extremely irritating, frustrating and unrealistic.

(B) The Role of American Administration: a Case Study:

In order to get a clear idea of how the American Administration reacted to

48 Congressional Record., 88 (1942), 68887 ff.
Indian issues, it is appropriate to cite a case study --- the study of the Great Famine of India (1943).

When the U.S. and its allies were engaged in a war to make the world safe for democracy, proclaiming "Freedom From Want", India was facing a spectre of great famine in Bengal in which "according to non-official estimates three to four million people died". The magnitude of the tragedy can be gauged when this figure is compared to the casualties suffered by the two major Allied countries. Britain lost 357,116 lives as per the statement of British Prime Minister Clement Attlee in Parliament in June, 1946 and the U.S. loss, according to U.S. War Department was 396,637. The reasons of acute food shortage in India were the stoppage of imports of rice from Thailand, Indo China and Burma owing to the Japanese invasion, staying of large number of British and American troops in India and the Keenness of the British authorities to draw on India's rapidly diminishing food stocks for supplies to strategic areas like Ceylon and West Asia. Disregarding the plight of the Indians, Churchill was ready to ship food even to the Soviet Union. More so, that the British reverses in Burma put Bengal virtually on the front line of the war. And added to this was in Bengal the nature's fury in the form of a cyclone in Oct. 1942 which left "Bengal in the grip of the worst famine in modern history". But the great war lords--- British, American and Russians were least concerned with the starving victims of war in distant Bengal. The tremendous British propaganda apparatus in America maintained all was well with India. The U.S. representatives were busy discussing with their British counterparts to

50 Source: Encyclopedia Americana (New York,1956),XXIX 559 YY-559ZZ
turn India into a grand base for future military operations to oust Japanese forces from South-East Asia.

Fortunately, India was not entirely friendless in America. Many liberals and humane individuals who were the members of the Indian League of America raised their voices in support of assistance to India in its hour of need. The League appealed to the U.S. President for taking immediate step to ameliorate the sufferings of Indians and to win the gratitude of the people of India. But the request felt on deaf ears, for America needed Britain as much as Britain needed America in 1943. And thus, the U.S. lost an excellent opportunity of winning Indian goodwill.

However, India harboured hope that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) launched on 9th Nov. 1943, as an outgrowth of the Inter Allied Committee on Post War Requirements, would come to its rescue. But this too proved a non-starter as Dean Acheson, President of the First Council of UNRRA, rejected India's demand saying that the help was restricted to the population of the area "liberated from the enemy". Mr. J.J. Singh, a prominent member of the India League of America strongly contested Acheson's contention on the grounds that the acute shortage of food in India was generated by the War itself as its import of rice from Burma stopped and the transport facilities were disrupted. But the Indian skeleton was pushed back into the cupboard. The Indian press reacted sharply. The first organisation of world cooperation proved itself as a colossal hoax. Sadness and bitterness were reflected in "India Today", the organ of the India League of America:

"India will survive this famine as she has survived famines in the past. But the memory of the hundreds of thousands of Indians
who died, because of no help came to them from their allies, will be
ghost not quickly laid. India is patient, but there comes a time when
human patience can endure no more." 52

Later the Indian cause was forcefully fought by a Republican Congressman, Karl
Mundt in the House of Foreign Affairs Committee and insisted that the U.S. should
take the lead in revising the UNRRA clause to include India. With the support of
majority of Congressmen the "India Clause" was incorporated in the UNRRA. Said
Mike Mansfield, a democrat:

Imperialist policies are things of the past... a spirit of
nationalism is sweeping the Far East and we cannot ignore it. We
want India's help, in manpower, in the East. If we ignore India and
her legitimate pleas, we are helping to sow a whirlwind which we will
reap someday." 53

But the Indian cause remained dormant. The Indian League of America
mobilised labour federation of America. Another group led by novelist Pearl S. Buck
organised the emergency Committee Aid to India. The Quaker Agency shipped
20,000 cases of evaporated milk to India. With the support of American people the
American Relief of India collected 1,2,000 for relief activities in India.

To conclude, not a word of sympathy for India came from President Roosevelt.
The U.S. Congress did not take any initiative to formulate a programme of assistance
to the victims of the famine. The vision of Roosevelt was limited to the question of
colonialism in the old world. It were only the American people and private groups who

52. India Today, 4 Dec, 1943, p.4
53. Congressional Record, 90, 1944, p.507-8
served as the conscience of their country, who challenged the apathy of the old leaders, and who tried their best to keep alive the tradition of helping those who stood in need of it.

The above case-study reveals that India was given a very low priority in the foreign policy of the U.S. and the U.S. failed to foresee the political make-up of the world after the World War II, particularly in the context of South East Asia.

(C) The role of Missionaries

Beginning with a congregational mission in Bombay in 1813, the missions grew but they never achieved much success in their primary goal of proselytizing. The obstacles to converting were the inclusion of Hinduism, the incompatibility with traditional Indian beliefs of the Christian concept of reward and punishment and the popular identification of Christianity with imperialism. However, Sam Higginbottom cultivated friendship with Gandhi, who shared his concern for rural problems. In 1920 Methodist Bishop Frederick B. Fisher sponsored inter-religious meetings and advocated home-rule. But these missionaries were discouraged by the British and they were required to take 'missionary pledge' promising no political activity.

(D) Indian Immigrants

The Indian immigrants were called Hindus, regardless of religion. They came to America in small numbers during the 19th century, mostly as students and businessmen. After Swami Vivekanand's famous appearance at the Chicago World
Conference of Religions in 1893, some swamis supported by the Ramakrishna Mission had also arrived. Between 1898 and 1914, some 6000 Indian labourers entered the U.S. But the "barred zone" of the 1917 immigration law prohibited further labour immigration. In 1923 the U.S. supreme Court ruled in the appeal of Bhagat Singh that "Hindus" were ineligible for citizenship. Dismissing the Aryan origin of Indian people, the Court based its decision on the assumption that the American public did not consider "Hindus" as "white persons". This "barring of Indians and the denial of citizenship left a scar on U.S. relation with India." 54

(E) The U.S. Approach to India's Freedom Movement

During World War I the Indian nationalist activity in the U.S. was very sketchy on revolutionary and constitutional levels. Hardyal and Chandra Chakravarty organised the plan, using the U.S. as the base for a revolt against the British. Dayal edited a weekly newspaper (Ghadar) in 1913 in San Francisco. The paper attracted the attention of the British government. However, Dayal fled to Germany in 1914. Other revolutionaries were arrested for violating American neutrality laws. The publicity given to the "Hindu conspiracy" cast the Indians in the image of enemy agents.

The peaceful constitutional reform advocated by Lala Lajpat Rai offset much of this unfavourable image of Indian nationalism. In 1914 he visited America and founded India Home Rule League of America. His early supporter was J.T. Sunderland who was a critic of British rule and wrote "India in Bondage". The Home Rule League

succeeded in winning many American liberals like Oswald Garrison Villard, George Kirchwey, Norman Thomas and Roger Baldwin.

Indian nationalists were encouraged by President Woodrow Wilson's peace programme and particularly by the ideals of self-determination of peoples. Most nationalists believed that U.S. would support their position. Madan Mohan Malviya, President of the congress, spoke glowingly of Wilson as the architect of a new world order. In Aug. 1919 Rai and Dudley Field Malone, Chairman of the League of Oppressed Peoples appeared before the Senate foreign Relations Committee but failed to secure any support.

The introduction of Rowlatt Act touched off a wave of hartals. The jalianwala incident (April, 13, 1919) numbered the days of the imperial order. The American public knew very little of the event of 1919. In the Senate, George Norris of Nebraska condemned the policy of repression, but his speech was followed by several senators defending the British as guardians against chaos.

The Non-cooperation Movement received a favourable coverage in America. The Chauri Chaura incident of 1921 was virtually ignored but Gandhi's fast attracted much attention. Between 1920-23 many articles and books on India were published.

Nationalist activities continued in America, but they lacked the leadership and direction that Rai had provided. In 1921, thirty one Americans sent a Christmas message of sympathy to the Indian National Congress. In 1920, Sayyad Hossain, a
former sub-editor of the "Bombay Chronicle" wrote extensively. Haridas T. Majumdar, a student of Columbia University founded the Young India Association. John Haynes Holmes, Minister of Community Church in New York City professed unbounded admiration for Gandhi.

The developments like arrival of Simon commission, Gandhi's declaration of "purna swaraj", Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, coincided with increasing contact with the U.S. but four events between 1927 and 1929 caused some Indian leaders to doubt American appreciation of nationalist feelings. First, Jawaharlal Nehru's experience as the Congress delegate to the Brussels Congress of Oppressed Nationalities awakened him to the political threat of U.S. imperialism. Second, the popularity of "Mother India" underscored the appeal of anti-Indian propaganda in America. Gandhi replied to Mayo's work in an article entitled: "The Drain Inspector's Report". Lala Lajpat Rai wrote "Unhappy India". Third, inspite of the lectures of Sarojni Naidu and Charles F. Andrews in 1929 in America, Mrs. Naidu failed to gain senatorial backing for the National Congress's objections to the anti-war treaty; Fourth, in 1929, Tagore, America's most renowned visitor from India, cancelled a lecture tour of the U.S. because of insulting treatment by an immigration official. Tagore's widely publicised comments that the official reflected a prevalent anti-oriental bias again brought American prejudice to India's attention.

Despite limitations of American understanding of Indians and their culture, Gandhi's Dandi March was compared to the Boston Tea Party. More than twenty books on India were published. William James Durant's "The Case for India" and Gertrude
Emerson's "Voiceless India" presented the nationalist viewpoint persuasively.

American newspapers brought India back on front pages and covered more the peculiarities of Gandhi's behaviour rather than the political significance of the Second round Table Conference. Commenting on the report of "Washington Post", the 'Hindu' wrote: "If at the extremely critical moment, Washington Post, for instance, wrote that 'The Indian nationalists choose to pursue a course which gives aid and comfort to the enemies of mankind they will for ever bar themselves from all communion with decent men. They will brand themselves as traitors to civilisation and by helping the enemies of freedom they professedly seek." 55

Prior to World War II, Americans knew little of Indian civilisation, history and politics...India had been viewed as a distant land of mystery... Mayo's criticism of India in 1927 influenced American attitudes towards India for at least a generation... Motion pictures glorified Britain's accomplishments in India and ignored Indian nationalism. In American textbooks, India received a limited and distorted treatment... The British were seen as civilising and unifying influence. Hinduism was described as a fanatical religion with a multitude of gods. The only notable work was that in Sanskrit studies at the University of Pennsylvania under the leadership of W. Norman Brown." 56

2. SOVIET TIES

The history of relations between India and the people that lived in what is the territory of the USSR goes back to ancient times. Early Russian knowledge of India was, however, too, scanty and fragmentary. While the old Russian folklore abound in

55 The Hindu, Madras, 6 Aug. 1942, p.5.
popular characters connected with India, a fact indicative of the strong attraction felt towards it, until the 15th century educated Russians derived their knowledge about India from works coming through the Byzantine and the Balkans. Among the writings of this time India has been referred in several works of the Russian writers. Kosma Indikoplov's 'Christian Topography of the Star' and 'Alexandria' contained remarks about India. A Salvanic translation of a Latin tale, described India as a rich country "not on fire" but "all shining gold". Afanasy Nikitin, a Russian merchant, visited India in the 15th Century and wrote a lucid account of India in his "Across Three Seas". This visit added to the Russian knowledge of India and created further interest in mutual relations.

Settlements of Indian traders, sprang up in Astrakhan, Moscow and St. Petersburg, was readily granted during the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725). In 1696, Semyon Malenki was received by Aurangzeb. But, Russian attempt to forge diplomatic relations with India could not materialise because of the interruption of the Western Powers which turned India into an object of colonial plunder. However, the Russian interest in India continued. In 1774 Philip Yeferemov's work threw vulnerable light on India's geography, ethnography and Philology of Kashmir and northern India.

Another talented musician and dramatist, Gerasim Lebedev in his "An Objective Account of the system of East Indian Brahmins, their Sacred Rites and Social Customs" is highly appreciative of Indian culture.

57. P.M. Kemp: "Bharat Rus", Delhi, 1948 p.4.
Increasing Russian interest in Indian literature was, manifested in the translations of Bhagwat Gita and Kalidas's "Shakuntala" in 1785 and 1795 by Karamzin. In 1877 the translation of five Vedic Hymns was published in the 'Russian journal of the history of World Literature'. In 1902, the 'Ramayana's' translation was completed.

Some Russian revolutionaries like Belinsky, Chernishevsky and Dobrolyubov took great interest in India's development. Dobrolyubov attributed the 1857 uprising in India to the enslavement of the people by the British colonialism and called it historically necessary and justified. An Oriental Language Chair was created at Moscow University in 1851 and a Sanskrit Chair at St. Petersburg University in 1855. 58

The Russian paintings done by Saltykov were cited by Marx and Vareshchagin drew the attention of the world to the bloody colonial repression in India. A famous Russian art critic V.V. Stasov (1825-1926) closely studied Indian Art and contributed several articles to renowned art journals of Russia.

Prominent Russian literary figures like Leo Tolstoy and Maxim Gorky deeply sympathised with the cause of Indian freedom. Tolstoy's "Letter to a Hindu" was translated by Gandhi himself. The Yasnaya Polyana Archives of Tolstoy's home estate contain rich materials showing Tolstoy's contacts with Gandhi and other important Indians. Gorky was in touch with Indian revolutionary journalism in Europe before the World War-I.

The Central Asia provided a vital link with India. Bukhara continued to serve as an important centre of trade and communication with India in the second half of the

19th century. Trade with India suffered a set back in 1885 when the Tsarist administration imposed restrictions on Indian goods. But the cultural contacts continued to develop. In 1901, a branch of Russian Society for Oriental Studies was established in Tashkent on the initiative of two Russian orientalists, A.G. Serebrenikov and A.E. Snesarev. Considerable interest in Indian affairs was also evinced by two important papers of Tashkent - ‘Turkistanskie Vedomostic’ and ‘Turkistan Vilayatining Gazeti.’

In the second half of the 19th century some Indian missions contacted Russia for help against the British. But they did not meet with success as the Tsarist Government was not interested in promoting the cause of the national liberation of India. The disinclination of Tsarist Russia to render aid to the Indian people exploded the myth of the "Russian menace" to India. This clearly shows it was an invitation of the British to cover up their own intended aggression in Central Asia. The Russian bogey was also used by the British rulers in India to prevent the development of friendly contacts with the Russian people.

But the Indian people never accepted the British canard about the danger to the security of India from Russia. A perusal of the proceedings of the Indian National Congress sessions in its early Years show "how strongly it opposed British proposals for increased military expenditure on the pretext of counteracting the Russian threat to India’s security." 59 Criticising the British bogey of Russian advance Nehru wrote after 1917: "In the days of Tsars we were told that the imperialism of Russia was for ever driving south, coveting an outlet to the sea, or may be India itself. The Tsar has gone

but the rivalry between England and Russia continues and we are told that India is threatened by the Soviet Government" 60

After the Great October Revolution (1917) Russia espoused the cause of all oppressed peoples of the East including India. In fact Indian revolutionaries looked to the Bolsheviks for help. Just on the eve of the Revolution, the Berlin Committee for Indian independence sent a telegraphic appeal to the Petergrad Soviet which read as follows:"... In the name of fidelity to the ideas of the Russian Revolution and in consideration of the tremendous significance of emancipated India to Russia and to the whole world, we request the workers' and soldiers' Soviet to put up a dauntless fight against the shameless and cruel imperialism of England both at the Paris Conference and in the course of peace negotiations" 61

The October Revolution influenced the Indian freedom struggle in many important ways despite the wide ideological gap which seperated these two movements. It contributed to the quickening of the pace of the national struggle in India and helped broaden the base of that struggle by drawing into it industrial workers and organised peasantry and youth. Even the official Indian Constitutional Reform Report published in 1918 was forced to admit that "It (the October Revolution) has given an impetus to Indian political aspirations" 62

Lenin was not only a leader of victorious socialism but also the most ardent champion of natural freedom. As a deep theoretical analyst of Marxism, his works

60 J. Nehru: "Soviet Russia", 1928,p.191
62 Report on India's Constitutional Reform, HMSO cmd 9109,p.14
contain references to India from 1900 to 1923. He continued to follow with interest Gandhi's activities as leader of the movement for Indian freedom. In his article, "Better Fewer, But Better" (2, March, 1923) Lenin wrote:

"In the past analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China etc. account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense a complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured". 63

No historical event of the world during the first three decades of the twentieth century exercised so much influence on the prominent Indian national leaders, statesmen and veteran fighters for national freedom as did the Great October Revolution of 1917. Right in 1917, Annie Besant said in her speech at the Annual Session of of the Indian National Congress that "the Russian revolution and the probable rise of a Russian republic in Europe and Asia were among the factors which have entirely changed the conditions which existed in India." 64 Tilak strongly hoped of the liberation of India by Bolsheviks "as was stated in a police report in 1919". 65 In 1924 Gandhi noted with satisfaction that the "Soviet constitution stipulated the only electoral qualification---" honest labour." 66 In 1928, underlying, as he always did, his rejection of

64. Congress Presidential Speech (A Section) ed. by Sankar Ghose, New Delhi, 1975, p. 83
66. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol XXV, p. 303
revolutionary violence, Gandhi, nevertheless stated: "There is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifices of countless men and women, who have given up their all for its sake; an ideal, that is sanctified by sacrifices of such master spirit as Lenin, cannot go in vain." Rabindranath Tagore, thrilled by his Soviet visit in 1930, said: "(What he saw in Russia) was a stupendous effort by man to prick out of his system the age-old death-bolt called greed," and Nehru affirmed that the Soviet revolution "had it a bright flame that could not be smothered and had laid the foundations of a new civilisation towards which the world would advance." 

The above statements of Indian leaders are representative of the hopes and aspirations of countless others who spearheaded the Indian freedom struggle. A number of exhaustive studies on this aspect have already been taken up by the researchers. Hence it does not necessitate repetition. Hence the purpose is only to impress that the Soviet revolution was different from other revolutions in the sense that it acted as a Lighthouse for the Indian leadership which was struggling hard for coming out in light from the abysmal darkness of colonialism and imperialism of the West.

To sum up, the approach of the Soviet Union towards India before she gained independence, was very constructive, sympathetic and supportive to the cause which was so dear to India and her teeming millions in their struggle for freedom.

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67. Young India, (Nov.15) 1928