

EASTERN INTERNATIONALISTS  
IN RUSSIA  
AND SOME QUESTIONS OF  
THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
(1918-JULY 1920)

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The Great October Socialist Revolution which inspired the oppressed peoples of the East to rise to a determined anti-imperialist struggle for independence, marked the beginning of the communist movement in the countries of Asia and Africa. This was a particularly vivid manifestation of great influence of the ideas of the October Revolution upon the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries.

The young Communists in the Asian countries came up against extremely complicated problems which had to be theoretically understood and practically solved. It was necessary to solve the question of building up communist movement in the backward countries where the working class was either very weak or did not exist at all. It was necessary to ascertain the nature of the forthcoming revolution in these countries and then define the attitude of the working class and its party towards the national liberation movement. It was also necessary to work out questions concerning the correlation between the socialist and national liberation revolutions.

The Comintern began working on these problems under Lenin's guidance at its Second Congress which met in July 1920. But even prior to that, the problems of the national liberation revolutions were examined and solved in the course of the practical activity of the revolutionaries of the East, particularly in countries adjoining Russia and more

than others subject to the influence of the October Revolution.

On their part, Russia's Communists were no less interested in ascertaining "how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions".<sup>1</sup> They played an especially active role in working out diverse problems of the struggle for the liberation of the East and were in the centre of the theoretical activity in this field. This is understandable, for many of them worked in the former tsarist colonies liberated by the October Revolution where it was necessary to introduce a new order guaranteeing the independence and equality of the peoples as socialist construction progressed. Moreover, a large number of Soviet Communists were in daily contact with thousands of people from the Eastern countries who found themselves in Soviet Russia owing to various circumstances.

CITIZENS OF ADJOINING EASTERN COUNTRIES  
IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Russia has long common borders with many Eastern countries and others, India, for example, lie close. This being the case a fairly large part of Russia's population was in constant economic, political and cultural contact with the peoples of China, Korea, Mongolia, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan and India. In many respects this accounted for the powerful influence of the October Revolution upon the nearby Eastern countries. Even more significant in this respect was that there were literally hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants and representatives of other sections of the population from China, Korea, Iran, Turkey and India in the former Russian Empire in the period of the October Revolution and the Civil War. Most of the Turks in Russia were former prisoners of war — 63,000 men and officers of the Turkish Army.<sup>2</sup> They lived in POW

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Russia in the World War of 1914-1918 (in figures)*, Moscow, 1925, p. 41, table 33 (in Russian).



camps scattered across the country. The second group of about 50 or 60 thousand<sup>1</sup> were Russian citizens of Turkish origin who lived in the south of Russia. They had been interned when the First World War began and then resettled in regions far inside Russia.<sup>2</sup> The third group of Turks consisted of migrant workers.<sup>3</sup> There were more or less large groups of Turks in Turkestan (Tashkent, Ashkhabad and Alma-Ata), in many towns of the Volga Area (Kazan, Astrakhan, Saratov, Samara), in Central and Southern Russia (Ryazan, Odessa) and in the Urals and Siberia.

An even greater number of migrant workers came from Iran, mostly to the Central Asian regions bordering on Iran — the Caspian, Syr-Darya and Ferghana regions. Quite a large number of them remained in Tashkent, Ashkhabad, Bukhara, Charjow, Khiva and other towns, very many settled in Baku and other towns in Azerbaijan.<sup>4</sup> The movement of Iranian migrant workers into Russia began at the end of the 19th century and continued on an ever increasing scale so that by 1920 there were up to 100,000 Iranians in Central Asia alone.<sup>5</sup> Most of them were ruined peasants, handicraftsmen and workers, who earned a living as farm labourers, loaders, yard-keepers and unskilled workers. Many got jobs at factories, railways and oil fields. Representatives of the national bourgeoisie also arrived from Iran.

Indian merchants lived for long periods in Bukhara and other Central Asian cities where they sold their wares.

<sup>1</sup> E. Ludushveit, "Conference of Left-Wing Turkish Socialists in Moscow in the Summer of 1918", *Collection of Eastern Studies*, Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1964, Vol. II, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Zhyzn Natsionalnostei. (*The Life of Nationalities*), January 4, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> In the Ryazan river port, for instance, there was a Turkish Water Transport Artel. See the Central Party Archive of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism (CPA IML), Moscow, section 17, register 2, file 65, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> See: A. M. Matveyev, "From the History of Iranian Revolutionary Organisations in Central Asia at the Beginning of the 20th Century", *Relations Between the Peoples of Central Asia and the Adjacent Countries of the East*, Tashkent, 1963, pp. 134, 135, 138 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> See: "First Congress of the Persian Communists of the Adalat Party", *Communist International*, 1920, No. 4, p. 2889 (in Russian).

Among the peoples of the Eastern countries living in Russia between 1917 and 1920, there was a particularly large number of workers from China who were hired during the war for unskilled work to keep up supplies for the front. On top of that tens of thousands of ruined citizens of China came to Russia in search of a living.

Sinkiang Uighurs and other Muslim peoples made up a considerable proportion of the migrant workers from China. At the beginning of the 1920s there were 279,000 Chinese Muslims in various parts of Turkestan. Most of them were unskilled workers in coal mines and at cotton ginneries and many were hired to pick cotton, to work on rice paddies, etc. There were also some traders from Sinkiang and from China proper.<sup>1</sup> In 1918, according to estimates, there were up to 70,000 Chinese workers in Russia's central gubernias and up to 400,000 in Siberia.<sup>2</sup> By the middle of 1922 there were approximately 200,000 Chinese in the Far East<sup>3</sup> and about 150,000 by the beginning of 1923.<sup>4</sup>

Koreans made up a large proportion of the Eastern population in Russia. The immigration of Koreans into Russia increased after 1910, when Japan annexed Korea and turned it into a colony. Towards the end of 1922 the Korean population in the Russian Far East reached approximately 250,000, and 50,000 of them acquired Russian citizenship.<sup>5</sup> The majority of the Korean immigrants were tenant farmers who had fallen into poverty or ruin at home and hoped to improve their position in a foreign country. There was also a large number of unskilled workers who had lost their jobs or had been brutally exploited by Korean and foreign entrepreneurs.

It follows that in the period from 1917 to 1920 there were no less than one million citizens of contiguous coun-

<sup>1</sup> See: I. S. Sologubov, *Foreign Communists in Turkestan (1918-1921)*, Tashkent, 1961, p. 43 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: *Izvestia*, July 18, 1918; evidently not only in Siberia, but in the Russian Far East, too.

<sup>3</sup> See: *The Economy of the Far East, 1922*, Nos. 5-6, p. 177 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> See: *Report of the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B) for the Period October 1, 1922-January 1, 1923*, CPA IML, s. 17, r. 15, f. 205, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



tries of the East in Soviet Russia. They became eyewitnesses of the turbulent events of the October Revolution and the Civil War, and the workers and peasants who comprised an overwhelming majority of them were filled with hatred for domestic and foreign oppressors. Having fallen into ruin in their own countries where they were deprived of all rights, these people found freedom and equality in the Soviet Republic. Working side by side with Russian workers and peasants they assimilated their sentiments and thoughts and became receptive to the liberation ideas of the October Revolution.

The October Revolution and the first decrees of Soviet power, such as the decrees on peace, on land and, particularly, on the right of nations to freedom and independence made a great impression in the colonial countries of the East and proved to be a very important factor in the formation of a mass anti-colonial, anti-imperialist thrust among the oppressed peoples who now more and more closely connected the struggle for the national liberation of their countries with the idea of defending Soviet power. All this manifested itself in the behaviour of tens of thousands of the progressive-minded workers of the East who were in Soviet Russia at the time. They responded to the Civil War and foreign intervention by mass participation in the armed struggle against the Whiteguards and foreign invaders. Persian, Korean, Turkish, Chinese units and even large formations fought in the ranks of the Red Army on the fronts of the Civil War. Many Indian soldiers who were with the British occupying forces in Iran refused to fight against the Red Army when in May 1920 it hammered the Whiteguard and British units entrenched near Enzeli. Hundreds of Indian soldiers went over to the side of the Red Army and some of them took part in its operations against the local counter-revolutionary forces (*basmach*), and the Whiteguards in Turkestan. No less significant, perhaps, was the desire which appeared among working people in China, Korea and Turkey to participate directly in the revolutionary struggle of the Soviet people, which they often carried into reality. All this was a clear indication of their understanding that the battle for Soviet power and against the interventionists and the Whiteguards was the

most effective form of struggle against the imperialist yoke. On many occasions Chinese guerrilla detachments operating against the Japanese imperialists in Manchuria crossed into the Far Eastern Republic and put themselves under command of its military leaders to fight the common enemy on the fronts of the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> A considerable number of Korean guerrilla detachments who fought against the Japanese enslavers in Korea or in Eastern Manchuria (Kando Region) did the same thing.<sup>2</sup>

There is also evidence concerning the mood of the Turkish working people. In January 1920 an interesting document was received in Moscow from representatives of a meeting of delegates of a number of Turkish trade unions and the so-called Organisation of Labour Leaders (evidently they were factory shop-stewards) from an unspecified town. The letter, actually a resolution passed at this meeting, was addressed to the Presidium of the Russian Party of Communists-Bolsheviks. On the left side of the page there was a stamp reading "Organisation of Labour Leaders No 227" and on the right, the letter,<sup>3</sup> which said: "We, Turkish workers, who are more oppressed than the workers of other countries exploited by capitalism and imperialist parties, remain to this day in the terrible paws of our authorities and the European bourgeoisie. *Wishing to choose an intermediary for our participation in the Great Russian Revolution* (my italics—*M. P.*) we convened a conference of representatives of our organisation officially empowered to choose a comrade who would act as an intermediary, and also representatives from other industrial labour unions. On the basis of a resolution passed at the meeting in behalf of independent unions with a membership of approximately 50-60 thousand workers, who had been trained at special technical schools, we delegate the editor of the newspaper *Science and Industry*, a young technical worker and one of our most highly valued comrades Mustafa Nafe,

<sup>1</sup> For details see: M. A. Persits, *The Far Eastern Republic and China*, Moscow, 1962, p. 197 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: S. A. Tsyppin, "Korean Working People in the Struggle Against the Interventionists in the Soviet Far East (1918-1922)", *Questions of History*, 1957, No. II, p. 175 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 203, p. 22.



which is duly certified."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the rather poor translation, the document clearly shows the desire of advanced workers and a part of the Turkish intelligentsia to go to Russia to discuss the participation of the working people of Turkey in the struggle for the consolidation of Soviet power.

The October Revolution and the activity of the Soviet Government elicited not only great interest among the revolutionary circles in the Eastern countries, but also an insistent desire directly to study and emulate Russia's experience in resolving problems involved in securing liberty from imperialism and feudalism. Characteristically enough, even the national revolutionary elements in far-off India began to display a lively interest in the Soviets. As early as in 1918 the prominent revolutionary leader of the national movement Lokamanya Tilak in the newspaper *Kesari* published an article about Lenin in which for the first time he legally wrote about the Russian revolution and its leader.<sup>2</sup> Beginning that year the Bengali humanist Ramanad Chatterji regularly published articles by different authors about the October Revolution and Soviet power in the *Modern Review* journal. In February 1919 the journal formulated its conclusion about the activities of Soviet Communists in the following terms: "The Bolshevik is striv-

<sup>1</sup> The list of signatures that followed was quite interesting: "Chairman of the Organisation of Labour Representatives Nurisia, Chief Secretary Osman Sami, Secretary Agah Urgan, Treasurer Shehabettin Osman, controller Taufik, foreman at a rifle factory Ihsan, worker at the guncarriage department of an ordnance factory (no name—M. P.), Deputy Director of a military technical school engineer Mustafa Nafe, teacher at a regional technical school Djalal, representative of a technical school for orphans Sayfettin, Chairman of union of thread-making factories Muhtar Halit, member of society for workers' progress electrical engineer Kamirran Sirri, members of the Organisation of Labour Representatives Suleyman and Mustafa" and a fingerprint (owing to illiteracy) in behalf of the union of forge and press workers. There are also illegible Russian markings on the letter and signatures which were made either at the CC RCP(B), or in the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. The date 21.I.1920 can be read quite clearly. At the end of the document in red ink are the words "translated by member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee Markizov".

<sup>2</sup> S. G. Sardesai, *India and Russian Revolution*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 21.

ing to make Russia better and nobler than anything she has ever been before."<sup>1</sup> In that period many representatives of the revolutionary forces of the East began to visit Soviet Russia.

National revolutionaries in India began to make trips to Moscow back in 1918, and hundreds of Indians came to Soviet Russia in 1920. Among them were both politically organised and unorganised fighters for India's liberation. The first politically organised group to establish contact with the Russian Federation (RSFSR) was the so-called Provisional Indian Government which was set up in Kabul in 1915. Its head Mahendra Pratap and his deputy Maulvi Barkatullah arrived in the Soviet Republic early in 1918 and at the beginning of 1919 respectively. Two other representatives of the Kabul centre Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Safiq arrived in Tashkent in April 1920. Barkatullah conducted anti-imperialist propaganda among the former Turkish POWs in Soviet Russia and often wrote articles for Soviet newspapers summoning the Muslim peoples to rally round the Soviets and fight the imperialists together.

In July 1920, 28 members of the Indian Revolutionary Association, which was founded and began to operate in Kabul at the end of 1919, arrived in Tashkent.<sup>2</sup> The group was headed by Abdur-Rabb-Barg and P. B. Acharya. The ideological, political and tactical views of these national revolutionary groups were quite interesting. They had very similar national democratic programmes all of which had a tendency towards socialism and envisaged the attainment of full national independence for India and its reorganisation into a federal republic. The Indian revolutionaries were already aware that the achievement of this goal depended on the formation of a lasting alliance between the Indian national liberation movement and Soviet Russia. But the Kabul centre and the Indian Association continued to base their tactics on conspiracies and neglected revolutionary work among the masses, evidently still afraid of mass ac-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup> For details about the Indian emigration movement into Soviet Russia see: M. A. Persits, *India's Revolutionaries in Soviet Russia. The Mainsprings of the Indian Communist Movement*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 28-70 (in Russian).



tions of the working people and wishing to avoid them. Now they believed that India's liberation from the British colonialists chiefly depended on a liberation mission by the Soviet Red Army and not on armed support by German imperialists. It was most important that in the development of their political thinking the Indian national revolutionaries, under the influence of the October Revolution, began to connect the struggle against colonial oppression with the need to carry out democratic transformations designed to further the interests of the urban and rural working masses. Moreover their system of views now included the socialist idea. But its substance consisted of diverse pre-Marxist egalitarian concepts, populist-socialist interpretations of the communal institutions of pre-colonial India, and also included the firm belief that there was a similarity between the basic precepts of the Muslim religion and communism. The non-scientific nature of these concepts was obvious, but they did express the sincere desire of the Indian national revolutionaries to draw closer to the proponents of Marxism-Leninism. Dependent as it was on India's socio-economic development, the political awareness of these revolutionaries so far prevented them from distinguishing between utopian egalitarian ideas of petty-bourgeois, peasant socialism and scientific communism. Although they remained consistent anti-imperialists they were making only the first steps towards Marxism.

The third politically organised group of Indian national revolutionaries in Tashkent was the Indian Section of the Council for International Propaganda consisting mostly of émigrés who had parted company with the group of the Provisional Government, and some other revolutionaries. The Indian Section definitely evolved to the left. It began to assimilate and uphold the idea that India's freedom and independence could be won only in the course of an active struggle of the broad masses of the Indian people and not as a result of an invasion by the Red Army. As regards Soviet Russia, they expected it to furnish moral and material support to the fighting people. The Section was the first group of revolutionary émigrés to announce that propaganda should be conducted first and foremost among the working people and that its main element should be an

account of the new life in the Soviet Republic. Indian national revolutionaries warmly welcomed the October Socialist Revolution and some of them expressed their sincere desire to take part in defending Soviet power against the intervention of British imperialists.

In the latter half of the 1920s scores of unaffiliated Indian revolutionaries began to arrive in Tashkent. Usually they formed groups, but only in order to cope with the enormous difficulties of their trek through Afghanistan, the Himalayas and Hindu Kush and across Soviet territory where *basmach* bands operated and the Civil War was in progress. Most of the Indians who entered the Soviet territory belonged to the Muslim wing of the national revolutionary struggle, who joined the Hegira, a Caliphate movement calling for an exodus from India of all faithful Muslims as a protest against the partition of Turkey by the powers of the Entente and their taking prisoner the Turkish Sultan-Caliph. Essentially an anti-colonial liberation movement, the Caliphate exodus was a convenient means of emigration into the Soviet Republic. It was used by many Indians, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who wished to see for themselves how socialist ideas were translated into reality and to obtain the assistance of Soviet power so as to be able to continue to struggle for the liberation of their country.

Another part of them went to Turkey hoping to join forces with the Kemalists in waging an armed struggle against British imperialism. But these Indians first headed for Soviet Russia which alone could help them in their difficult journey to the Turkish border.

A fairly large number of Indian deserters from the British forces occupying the Middle East countries fled to Baku. At the end of 1920 there were approximately 200 or 250 Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, Baku and some other towns.

If not for the Afghan Government that gave in to British pressure and in every way prevented the transit of Indians to the north, the number of Indian revolutionaries reaching Soviet Russia would have been much greater. On April 27, 1921 there was a report from Charjow that the Afghan authorities had arrested 500 Indians in Mazar who



were on their way to Russia and detained them in Khanabad. On top of that 150 Indian participants in the exodus on their way to Soviet Russia were arrested in Herat. The Soviet Consul tried to obtain their release but his efforts proved futile.<sup>1</sup>

The Indians explained the purpose of their arrival in Soviet Russia in forms which they filled in in Tashkent. One of the questions was: "What is the purpose of your arrival in Russia?" Most of them (45) replied: "to serve the Indian revolution", "to work for the Indian revolution", "to work for the liberation of India", "to fight against Britain", "to serve India", "to serve my homeland", and so forth. Another group of 17 persons replied as follows: "to solicit assistance", "to obtain assistance from Russia", etc. Many émigrés clearly regarded Soviet power as a mighty factor which had revolutionised India's national liberation movement. Seven of them wrote down in the form that they had arrived in Soviet Russia, "in order to join the revolution", or "to conduct revolutionary activity" or, as the 20-year-old Shaukat Usmani replied, "to join the revolutionary movement". Five Indians disclosed an even more definite political aims, they wanted to "study the Bolsheviks", or "learn from the revolution" or, according to Abdas Subkhan, 50, "to draw a lesson from the Russian revolution" while, Sabdar Han, 42, explained that he wanted "to study the Russian revolution and define ways for the Indian revolution". Eight Indians wrote: "to study the art of war and propaganda work". One Indian said that he was a deserter from the British Army and another that he was returning home from Turkey. It follows that almost all Indian émigrés had a fairly high level of national awareness; they were inspired with the idea of liberating their country and believed that they would be able to carry out their patriotic plans best of all with the assistance of Soviet Russia.

Recalling the past Shaukat Usmani wrote: "It will not be an exaggeration to say that a considerable majority of the people who had crossed into Afghanistan (i.e., the emigrants from India—M. P.) had linked their hopes

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML.

with Soviet Russia much earlier than they left their homes."<sup>1</sup>

Muhammed ibn Abduelah Ensari, an Indian who arrived with the Afghan Embassy in Moscow in October 1919, spoke about the need of an alliance between the countries of the East and Soviet Russia and that the oppressed peoples should carry into reality the ideas of Soviet Russia. He described his impressions of Soviet reality in an article under the eloquent title "The Russian Republic — the Guide for the East to Prosperity".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin had several meetings with Indian revolutionaries. In November 1918 he received the Muslim leaders brothers Jabbar and Sattar Kheiri, in May 1919 he received Maulvi Barkatullah and in July 1919 a delegation consisting of Mahendra Pratap, Maulvi Barkatullah, Abdur-Rabb-Barg, P. B. Acharya, Dalip Singh Gilla and Ibraghim, a peasant from Panjab. He corresponded with Indians in 1920 and 1921, too, discussing the ways to fight for India's liberation.<sup>3</sup>

In China the progressive intelligentsia began to display an interest in the situation in Soviet Russia as far back as 1919. To satisfy this interest trips were organised to Moscow which beginning with the mid-1920s became regular<sup>4</sup> and provided Chinese public opinion with reliable information about Soviet power and the events in Russia. At the end of 1920 writer and revolutionary Chu Chiu-po who was a member of a Marxist circle in Peking arrived in Russia as correspondent of the *Chen Pao* newspaper. In January 1921 he visited Moscow to find out for himself what "the first socialist republic of the 20th century was like".<sup>5</sup> Writing in the Comintern press he noted at the time: "Most of us are students ... who have come to Russia to study and thus, upon returning to China, to be in a position to help

<sup>1</sup> Shaukat Usmani, "Russian Revolution and India", *Mainstream*, August 1, 1967, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Izvestia*, November 24, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See: *The Life of Nationalities*, October 19, 1919; October 26, 1919 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> See: Y. Kostin, "Two Interpretations of the October Revolution in China", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1967, No. 5, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> Chu Chiu-po, *Essays and Articles*, Moscow, 1959, p. 46 (in Russian).



the Chinese proletariat."<sup>1</sup> He admired the revolutionary achievements of the Russian workers and pointed out that Chinese working masses expected the Soviet people to help them organise a social and liberation movement. "The proletariat of China," he wrote, "depends only on you, brave Russian workers who are courageously fighting for the happiness of the whole of humanity.... The Chinese proletariat needs your help in order to take its place in the ranks of the fighters."<sup>2</sup> Two other correspondents of Chinese newspapers Yu Suan-hua of the Peking *Chen Pao* and Li Jung-u of the Shanghai *Shihshih hsinpao* arrived with Chu Chiu-po. In March 1921 Chang Tai-lei<sup>3</sup> arrived in Irkutsk. For a long time he conducted communist propaganda among the Chinese and Korean population in the Russian Far East. Liu Shao-chi<sup>4</sup> and many other Chinese revolutionaries also visited Soviet Russia.

Various societies and associations uniting citizens from the contiguous Eastern countries began to appear in Russia on the eve of and particularly after the Great October Socialist Revolution. Some of them were purely workers' organisations whose members wanted to study socialism and participate in the communist movement. There were also revolutionary-democratic and national-bourgeois societies. Unions of Chinese citizens began to appear in Russia at the beginning of 1917 and were transformed into unions of Chinese workers after the October Socialist Revolution. In December 1919 local unions of Chinese workers united into an All-Russia Revolutionary Organisation with a Central Committee in Moscow. The local branches of this union worked in close co-operation with the public organisations of Soviet citizens studying and drawing upon their revolutionary experience. This was precisely what the workers in China expected their compatriots in Russia to do. "When you return home," workers from Southern China wrote to

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of the Comintern Far Eastern Secretariat*, 1921, No. 1, p. 14 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin...*

<sup>3</sup> See: B. Shumyatsky, "From the History of the Komsomol and the Communist Party of China", *The Revolutionary East*, 1928, Nos. 4-5, p. 204 (in Russian); CPA IML.

<sup>4</sup> See: Liu Shao-chi, "Speech at a Meeting of Muscovites at the Sports Palace", December 7, 1960, *Pravda*, December 8, 1960.

Russia, "and begin sowing the seeds of the Russian revolution here, among your brothers, this will raise them for the joint struggle and create a new socialist China."<sup>1</sup>

Soviet Communists searched in earnest for the best forms of working with the population of the Eastern countries. A Union for the Liberation of the Peoples of the East which embraced a part of the revolutionaries from many Eastern countries was set up in Moscow in October 1918.<sup>2</sup> Then the Tashkent Union was formed and its branches appeared in many parts of Turkestan.<sup>3</sup> Judging by its programme, the Union worked for the unification of the national liberation movement in various Asian countries into a single anti-imperialist front. Only the working people were regarded as the real force of national liberation in the East. It was proclaimed that the princes and proprietors were not interested in destroying Western imperialism.<sup>4</sup> A Union of Persian Citizens,<sup>5</sup> a bourgeois organisation, was founded in Tashkent in May 1919. Of a similar nature was the voluntary society for assistance to Persian citizens which evidently was established the same year in Moscow with a branch in Turkestan. In the period from 1918 to 1920 various Korean national revolutionary organisations operated in many Far Eastern towns.

In one way or another all these numerous unions, societies and associations uniting various social groups of citizens of Eastern countries living in Russia, were already involved or were preparing to play a part in the liberation of their respective countries. They regarded the Soviet Republic as a crucial moral and political force which could offer them effective help and support. Soviet Russia was turning into a school of the liberation struggle for the revolutionaries of the East. Here they learned to comprehend the role of

<sup>1</sup> See: V. M. Ustinov, "Chinese Communist Organisations in Soviet Russia (1918-1920)", *Chinese Volunteers in Battles for Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1961, p. 47 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: K. Troyanovsky, *The East and the Revolution*, Moscow, 1918, p. 65 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> See: V. G. Razina, "Iranian Revolutionaries in Turkestan", *Materials on the East*, Tashkent, 1966, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> See: K. Troyanovsky, *Op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>5</sup> See: V. G. Razina, *Op. cit.*, p. 21; also CPA IML, s. 122, r. 11, f. 29, p. 8.



the working class as the key force of the movement for national independence, and came to realise that this movement could not achieve its goal without a close alliance with the victorious proletariat of Russia and the world working-class movement.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY OF THE RCP(B) AMONG THE POPULATION OF THE CONTIGUOUS COUNTRIES OF THE EAST

The situation which took shape in Soviet Russia compelled the Bolsheviks to conduct extensive propaganda, organisational and theoretical work among the masses of working people from nearby Eastern countries. This was done in line with the interests of the young workers' and peasants' state and was the duty of the revolutionaries dedicated to the principles of proletarian internationalism. The Bolsheviks in every way helped to spread the ideas of socialism and the liberation of the oppressed nations among the working people from neighbouring Asian countries who were living in Soviet Russia, and helped to assemble the vanguard revolutionary forces of the East and unite them into communist organisations. The Bolsheviks strove to revolutionise the peoples of the East not only in fulfilment of their direct duty as proletarian internationalists; their efforts were also an inevitable response to the armed operations of the imperialists who used the Eastern border-line countries as bridgeheads for anti-Soviet intervention. The Communist Party countered imperialist conspiracies, provocations and direct aggression with armed defence of the Soviet Republic and political education among the citizens of the Eastern countries. Already in the pre-Comintern period Soviet Communists launched extensive internationalist work among foreign citizens—Turkish POWs, Iranian migrant workers, Chinese and Korean unskilled workers and Indian national revolutionaries. In his report to the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) Lenin said that agitation and propaganda carried on by the Party's Central Committee among foreigners living in Russia played an important part in the formation of many national Com-

munist parties and the Communist International itself.<sup>1</sup> In May 1918 a Federation of Foreign Communists under the Central Committee of the RCP(B) was set up in Moscow. It united numerous communist groups of former POWs from Western and Eastern European countries. As regards the communist movement of the working people from nearby Eastern countries, it was chiefly guided by the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, initially called the Central Bureau of Muslim Organisations of the RCP(B). The Bureau was set up in December 1918. Actually, however, its leading group had emerged in January 1918 and immediately began extensive propaganda work among foreigners from Asian countries.

The Central Bureau functioned under the direct guidance of the RCP(B) Central Committee. In 1918 and in early 1919 it was headed by J. V. Stalin and later by M. Sultan-Galiev.<sup>2</sup> It is possible to judge the scale of political education and cultural work carried out by the Central Bureau by the fact that its Department of International Propaganda had ten sections, including Arab, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, and Bukhara.<sup>3</sup> In ten months, beginning with January 1918, the Central Bureau's leading group put out more than 400,000 copies of newspapers, brochures and leaflets in the Turkish, Tatar and Kirghiz languages, and from December 1918 to March 1919 over 200,000 copies of its publications came out in Moscow alone in these three languages.<sup>4</sup>

Political work among the working people of the neighbouring Eastern countries was conducted not only by the central organisations especially set up for this purpose. In regions where a particularly large number of citizens from

<sup>1</sup> See: V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), March 18-23, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 159-61.

<sup>2</sup> M. Sultan-Galiev held a high post in the People's Commissariat for Nationalities in the period from 1918 to 1922. In July 1919 he was also appointed Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. For a period of time he also headed the Central Muslim Military Commission. In May 1923 he was expelled from the RCP(B) for nationalistic, anti-Soviet and anti-Party activity.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1919, pp. 384-85 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> See: *The Life of Nationalities*, March 9, 1919, p. 41 (in Russian).



neighbouring Asian countries were living, this work was performed by regional and district Party organisations as well as by territorial bureaus of the RCP(B) Central Committee.

An important resolution was adopted by the Second Siberian Conference of the RCP(B) which met illegally in late March 1919 while Kolchak was in control of that part of the country. The resolution said that the Conference considered it "most important to provide the proletariat of America, Japan, China and other Far Eastern countries with correct and timely information about the revolutionary struggle in Soviet Russia and Siberia and also about the role played by the Russian and the international bourgeoisie in suppressing the revolution." The Conference agreed to organise an information and agitation bureau under the Siberian Regional Committee in the Far East, and authorised it to contact the Communists of the East and America, organise an exchange of information with them, and also conduct all kinds of agitation.<sup>1</sup> Soviet Communists acted in the belief that it was necessary to expand and strengthen Soviet Russia's international links with the working people in foreign countries to the maximum for the sake of the joint struggle against imperialism, for the sake of consolidating the world's first workers' and peasants' state and liberating the peoples of the East from the colonial yoke.

Communists in Siberia and the Far East did much to improve the work of Party bodies among the working people of the Eastern countries. On June 18, 1919 an official of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee F. Gapon in a special memorandum recommended the establishment under the Siberian Regional Committee of the RCP(B) of an Eastern Bureau which would include representatives of all the peoples of the Far East — Buryats, Mongolians, Chinese, Koreans and Japanese. This would enable the Bureau immediately to launch effective and large-scale work and fulfil successfully its main task, in revolutionising the East, he wrote. He also recommended the establishment of close organisational links with revolutionary groupings in China, Korea, Japan and Mongolia with

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 6, f. 297, p. 28.

the view to influencing them politically and setting up communist organisations. Taking into account that there was a shortage of workers with a good knowledge of Marxism, Gapon proposed that the Party and the Soviets should open schools in Siberia for training personnel from among the Eastern peoples. According to his project the Eastern Bureau would have a general, an organisational and instructional, agitational and publishing, and communications and information departments.<sup>1</sup> Though this project was not fully implemented, its practicable propositions were used in the organisation of the Section of the Eastern Peoples under the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee in Irkutsk in July and August 1920.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, in January 1921, the Comintern used the Section's staff in setting up its Far Eastern Secretariat in Irkutsk.<sup>3</sup> A great deal of work among Koreans and Chinese was conducted by the Communists of the Far Eastern Republic. The Republic's top Party body, the Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(B), established special Korean sections of agitation and propaganda under the *gubernia* and *uyezd* Party committees in areas with a considerable Korean population.<sup>4</sup> Chinese sections were organised in regions with a large Chinese population. In addition to its departments the Far Eastern Bureau also had the Organisational Bureau of Chinese Communists and the Korean Bureau, each consisting of five members.<sup>5</sup> In the European part of the country, the political education of the Turkish and Iranian working people was actively conducted by the Odessa Gubernia Party Committee.

Similar work was carried on in Turkestan primarily among the Iranians, Turks, Indians, Afghans and also Chinese and Uighurs. At first the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee formed an agitation and propaganda sub-division for this purpose. But shortly afterwards, on December 23, 1919, it decided to form a Council for International Propaganda under its guid-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 372, r. 1, f. 322, pp. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> *The Peoples of the Far East*, No. 2, p. 176 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 65, f. 322, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 372, r. 1, f. 1094, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 13, f. 291, p. 31.



ance. On February 6, 1920 the leader of the Turkish Communists Mustafa Subhi was elected Council Chairman and held this post until the middle of May. The Council's central political body was its Political Department which guided the revolutionary activity of its Persian, Turkish, Bukhara, Khiva and Chinese sections and also the Indian section which was formed later, in April 1920.<sup>1</sup>

In a report on its activity covering the period from December 1919 to July 1920, the Council defined its tasks as follows: "To establish links which would connect the revolution in Russia with the movement of the oppressed masses of the East; to make the slogans proclaimed by the proletariat of Russia accessible and comprehensive to the working masses of Persia, India, Bukhara, etc."<sup>2</sup> The Council was an international organisation and its plenum consisted of three representatives from the Party's Territorial Committee, two from the Iranian Communist Party Adalat, one each from other national Party groups and five representatives from the Turkestan Commission of the RCP(B) Central Committee.

The Council carried on effective propaganda among the citizens of the neighbouring Eastern countries living in Turkestan. In its educational activity it widely resorted to meetings, talks and lectures as well as issuing various printed matter.

Within a short period, from December 1919 to July 1920, the Council succeeded in organising the publication of political literature in Persian, Turkish, Uzbek, Urdu and English. It would be interesting to recall some of the brochures which it put out and the number of copies of each edition.

1. *The Novy Mir* newspaper, two issues; 75,000 copies each; in Turkish.

2. *The Ten Commandments of Persian Workers and Peasants*, in Azerbaijanian; 3,000 copies.

<sup>1</sup> The Council for International Propaganda consisted of three main departments: political, organisational, and for agitational literature. In between its plenary meetings the Council conducted its work wholly under the guidance of the Executive Bureau.—CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, pp. 262, 263; s. 544, r. 1, f. 1, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

3. *The Appeal of the Young Bukhara Party in Uzbek*; 5,000 copies.

4. *The Rules and Programme of the Young Bukhara Party*; 10,000 copies.

5. *Address to the Oppressed Peoples of the East*, in Persian, Turkish and Arabic.

6. *Appeal of the Youth League of the East*, in Persian, Uzbek and English.

7. *Appeal of the Persian Adalat Party*, in Uzbek and Persian.

8. *Manifesto of the Communist International*, in English.

9. *Address to the Peoples of India*, in English and Urdu; 5,000 copies.

10. *The World Revolution and the Liberation of the Peoples of the East*, in Russian.

11. *Appeal of the Youth Union*, in Uzbek.

12. *How the British Oppress in Their Own Possessions*.

13. *Appeal to All the Oppressed Peoples of the East*, in Arabic.<sup>1</sup>

The Council trained politically aware and adept agitators and organisers for the Eastern countries, but it coped only partially with this difficult task. Nevertheless, hundreds of trained agitators returned to their own countries where they propagated the truth about the Soviet Republic and its socialist ideals. The organs of Soviet power helped the Council in this work, in spite of the difficulties created by the Civil War and economic dislocation, and helped in arranging a steady, albeit slow, evacuation of Chinese, Turkish and Iranian citizens wishing to return home.

In a letter to the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, Mustafa Subhi said: "We have already sent hundreds of comrades for responsible Party work to all countries, but they have to be sent in thousands, not in hundreds... We urgently request you to dispatch to Tashkent and place at the disposal of the Council for International Propaganda ... all those who know the languages of the contiguous countries, all those who want to work in their native countries, all those who are prepared to sacrifice themselves for the sake of liberating the op-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.



pressed peoples." <sup>1</sup> The home-coming of former POWs, migrant workers and emigrants who had passed through an elementary school of class struggle in Soviet Russia played an important part in revolutionising the oppressed peoples of the East. That was why ruling circles in Iran, Turkey and China and also the imperialist colonialists feared these people and took various measures to prevent them from influencing the population.

Important as it was this process of the revolutionisation and proletarianisation of the working people of the East should not be overestimated. Frequently Chinese or Iranian migrant workers lost their proletarian class awareness upon returning home from Russia. They once again turned into downtrodden peasants or artisans, loaders or boatmen eking out a half-hungry, isolated existence and possessing an individualistic psychology. The way of thinking and acting which they had acquired in a foreign country under different social conditions was to a considerable degree eroded.

As they developed political education among the working people of the Eastern countries living in Russia, Soviet Communists helped revolutionary-minded Turks, Iranians, Koreans, Chinese and Indians to unite into national communist groups. Thus they contributed to the formation of Communist Parties in nearby Eastern countries where the first elements of the communist movement were beginning to appear. In his above memorandum on the organisation of an Eastern Bureau under the Siberian Regional Party Committee F. Gapon envisaged assistance to the revolutionaries of Korea, China and Japan in the formation and unification of Party groups. The Council for International Propaganda noted as it formulated its tasks that it was "necessary to start setting up communist organisations of the working people of different nationalities". <sup>2</sup> And the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee at its meeting on October 12, 1920 where a report on the work of the sections of Eastern peoples was delivered, said that attention had to be paid to the formation of communist organisations in China and Korea. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 2, f. 131, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, p. 261.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 12, f. 499, p. 7.

## THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AMONG THE CITIZENS OF THE EASTERN COUNTRIES IN RUSSIA

Under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution and the building of a workers' and peasants' state free of class and national oppression, a communist movement took shape and began to develop among the citizens of Eastern countries living in Russia. Communist groups were formed and preparations for the organisation of Communist parties were started. The October Revolution tremendously accelerated social development in the countries of the East. Representative of the Communist Party of Indonesia Maring said at the time that Russia's links with the East rendered a great service to communism in terms of its influence on the Asian peoples. <sup>1</sup>

Of course, the development of the communist movement among the citizens of the Eastern countries in Russia was not a result of the influence of the October Revolution alone, but also a result of the concrete activity of the Soviet state and the Bolshevik Party.

Revolutionary-minded Turkish POWs were among the first to respond to the propaganda of the Bolsheviks and begin the organisation of a Communist party. Russian Marxists had conducted extensive work among the POWs already before the October Revolution, the concentration of large masses of working people facilitated propaganda and agitation among them. Quite naturally, the Turks were also influenced by the powerful internationalist movement which embraced the proletarian, frequently Social-Democratic, elements among the POWs from the armies of the European countries. Subjective causes also played their part. The prominent revolutionary Mustafa Subhi, who became a Communist in Soviet Russia, and with him other revolutionary Turkish intellectuals worked among the Turkish POWs. Subhi specially noted the presence of intellectual forces in the communist movement of the Turkish internationalists in Russia. <sup>2</sup> The most important thing, however, was that

<sup>1</sup> See: *Reports at the Third Congress of the Comintern, 1921*, p. 281-82 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: M. Subhi's speech at the Moscow Conference of Turkish Socialists-Communists. CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 6.



a working class and a working-class movement had already appeared in Turkey, and this naturally found its reflection in the class composition of the POWs and their sentiments.

On June 17, 1918, Mustafa Subhi with the help of local Soviet and Party bodies organised in Kazan a conference of Turkish internationalist socialists from among the former POWs. Just over a month later, on July 22-25 a more representative conference with a broader programme was held in Moscow. It was attended by 20 delegates from many groups of Turkish socialists in Russia based in the Moscow, Orel, Ivanovo, Rybinsk, Kostroma, Yuriev, Kazan, Astrakhan, Ufa, Ryazan and Ural gubernias.<sup>1</sup> The participants in the Kazan and Moscow conferences displayed a clear understanding of the fact that the consolidation of Soviet power and participation on its side in the Civil War was the duty of every internationalist who wanted to liberate his own country from imperialism.

The Moscow Conference resolutely protested against the armed anti-Soviet intervention in the Transcaucasus launched at the time by the Sultan's government. It also adopted a resolution which read in part: "Inasmuch as international detachments are being formed in Russia to defend Soviet power... and support the world revolution, the Conference has decided to reinforce them with its own Turkish socialist detachment."<sup>2</sup> This resolution did not remain on paper. Turkish revolutionaries fought at Kazan, took part in quelling the counter-revolutionary mutiny of the Czechoslovak forces (former POWs) in Russia,<sup>3</sup> and in battles on the Turkestan, Crimean and other fronts. "At present," said Mustafa Subhi in March 1919, "thousands of Turkish Red Army men fighting for Soviet power are in action on differ-

<sup>1</sup> More information about Mustafa Subhi and the Kazan and Moscow conferences is to be found in: "Unknown Document of M. Subhi Concerning the Operations of the 12th Army, September 28, 1919" (including an interesting biographical note), *Historical Archive*, 1962, No. 4, p. 222; E. Ludshuveit, "Conference of Left-Wing Turkish Socialists...", pp. 174-92; *Life Devoted to Struggle*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 491-502; M. A. Persits, "Turkish Internationalists in Soviet Russia", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1967, No. 5, pp. 59-67 (all in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 121, p. 16; s. 17, r. 2, f. 1, p. 310.

ent fronts in Russia."<sup>1</sup> The Conference elected a leading group of Turkish Socialists-Communists consisting of Mustafa Subhi, Djevdet Ali, Asim Nedjati, Nihat Murset and Ibrahim Ahmed.<sup>2</sup> They called themselves the Central Committee of the Turkish Party of Socialists-Communists.<sup>3</sup> A committee for agitation and propaganda was also elected. Both groups were to prepare a representative congress (with most of the delegates coming from Turkey) which could form a Turkish Marxist-Leninist party and draw up its programme. "Our goal," said Mustafa Subhi, "is to form a socialist party of Turkish workers and poor peasants in order to be able to withstand the onslaught of capitalism".<sup>4</sup>

The Kazan and Moscow conferences of Turkish socialists inaugurated the unification of Turkish socialists in Russia and created the leading nucleus of the Turkish communist movement. This alone was a very considerable contribution to the formation of a national Communist party a year and a half later. These conferences are very interesting from another point of view. Their decisions about the programme, the nature of the imminent revolution in Turkey and the Party's tactics in this revolution vividly characterised the level of the theoretical views not only of the Turkish, but also of other Communists of the East and even of many Communists in Soviet Russia concerned with the problems of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependencies. A very timid attempt was made at the Kazan Conference to bring to light the distinctive features of semi-colonial society and the specific nature of the proletarian movement in the East. "European capitalism," it was stated in the resolution, "and the developed colonial policy direct their steps to the East in order to subject the people there to plunder and violence. In view of this and also owing to the unpreparedness of the masses in the East, the proletarian movement should be guided in a specific direction and along a definite channel (my italics—M. P.). This direction must be defined by the socialist organisation of workers

<sup>1</sup> *The First Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1933, p. 244 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 121, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 109, p. 3.



and peasants which would see to it that the interests of its classes are observed."<sup>1</sup> The resolution went no further than to point out that the socialist party had to take account of the conditions in the Eastern countries to define the objectives of the proletarian movement. The rather low theoretical level at which the peculiarities of the proletarian movement in the oppressed Eastern countries were examined was by no means heightened in the decisions adopted by the Moscow Conference a month later.

The first Turkish Communists at the Moscow Conference proceeded from the assumption that Turkey was a purely capitalist country and that therefore a socialist revolution was imminent there. "Here, comrades," declared Mustafa Subhi, "are our convictions and our programme: to destroy capital and liberate the people. All land, all the means of production and transport, in a word, all the existing wealth must be nationalised by the people and thus the poor classes of society will be liberated from bourgeois tyranny. This is the basis of socialism."<sup>2</sup> The Conference declared that it was "in agreement and solidarity with the programme of the Communists" but postponed a detailed formulation of a corresponding document until the next conference scheduled to take place in November 1918.<sup>3</sup> In view of the weakness of the proletarian movement in Turkey a resolution passed on Nazmi's report "Turkey's Political Situation and the Eastern Question" stated that only the socialist system could save Turkey and that it "could be established only following a world revolution which would overthrow imperialist governments and the bourgeoisie."<sup>4</sup>

This did not mean, however, that Turkish Communists intended to postpone the revolution in their country indefinitely. They believed that a victorious proletarian revolution in major European countries was a question of the immediate future. Then, in mid-1918, Communists of the colonies and dependencies had not yet advanced the thesis that the East had to ensure the victory of the revolution in the West. They would do this later.

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13. The conference did not take place in November.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The decisions on tactical issues adopted at the Moscow Conference were predetermined by the weak theoretical grounding of the first Turkish Communists and also by their impatience. At the time the feeling that the revolution would be easy to accomplish and that the world revolution was round the corner were running high among all the foreign participants in the Russian revolution. Having underestimated the national liberation character of the revolutionary movement in Turkey, the conference, naturally, rejected the possibility of a temporary agreement between the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle. The Turkish Socialist Party, said Mustafa Subhi, "ought to sever its links with capital and enter into no agreement with it."<sup>1</sup>

We have absolutely no intention to reprehend Subhi and his comrades for adopting this stand. It was determined not only by theoretical weakness but also by the whole situation of bitter class battles which almost everywhere, and not only in Russia, acquired the character of armed struggle. Under such conditions one could have hardly expected the first Turkish Communists to come forward with another course of action. On the other hand it should not be overlooked that very sober views were voiced at the conference concerning one very important question for the Muslim East. Agitator Shefket who told the Conference how he carried on his explanatory work among the former POWs also outlined his views concerning socialist propaganda among the religious who constituted a vast majority of the Turkish workers. He said that agitators had to take the latter's feeling into consideration, for "they have the highest respect for religion" and added that "no one's religious feelings should be tampered with, for they had fought against this sort of thing in the past and are prepared to fight with no less determination against us if we attempt to tamper with these feelings".<sup>2</sup>

The first Turkish Communists endeavoured to analyse the situation in the East more closely and formulate their tactics accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.



After the Moscow Conference Turkish Communist agitators went to different towns in Soviet Russia where there were compact groups of Turkish POWs and other categories of the Turkish population. At the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919, the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, in response to a request from the Central Committee of the Turkish Socialists-Communists, sent Gemal Nedjati to the Crimea, Hafiz Ali to Kazan, Hasan Ali to Ryazan and Djevdet Ali to Samara and Saratov.<sup>1</sup> In 1919 and 1920 the Tashkent Council for International Propaganda sent a group of five Turkish Communists to conduct agitation in Turkish POWs camps in Siberia. Communist organisations were formed and everywhere communist detachments were raised to fight in the Civil War. Propaganda literature in fairly large editions was published in Moscow and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> The activity carried on by Asim Nedjati in Astrakhan produced a noteworthy result. With the help of prominent Caucasian Communists he even managed to organise The First Congress of Civilians and POWs to form a Communist Branch which was held on January 7 and 8, 1919. The 25 delegates of the Congress heard several reports, including a report on the influence of the October Revolution on the proletariat of the East by Nariman Narimanov, on the Red Army by Buniyat-Zade, on the programme and tactics of the RCP(B) by Amirov, on the economic and political situation of the Turkish proletariat by Mamed D-Jamat, on the past and present of the Turkish proletariat by Mamed Harun, and on the influence of the First World War on the Turkish proletariat by Asim Nedjati.<sup>3</sup> In his speech Nariman Narimanov proceeded from the concept of an impending socialist revolution in Turkey, proclaimed by the Moscow Conference of Turkish Socialists-Communists. The minutes specify: "Narimanov shows that a socialist revolution is the only salvation for the proletariat of all the belligerent countries. Addressing himself to the Turkish comrades he said: 'If you want to save the unfortunate Turkish proletariat from destruction or imminent slavery, organise and kindle the fire of a socialist revolu-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 2, f. 12, pp. 1, 13; f. 154, pp. 8, 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, r. 4, f. 109, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, r. 2, f. 12, p. 130.

tion in Turkey."<sup>1</sup> Another speaker, Amirov, also indicated that the "sole level of salvation" for the Turkish proletariat" was the "speediest overthrow... of landlord rule" and abolition of the domination of the class of exploiters.<sup>2</sup>

Meetings of Turkish revolutionaries were also held in Moscow, Saratov<sup>3</sup> and a number of other cities. They resulted in the formation of communist organisations and volunteer detachments. The participants in all these meetings were profoundly aware of the need for an alliance with Soviet Russia as a guarantee of the success of the revolution in Turkey. In his speech at the Astrakhan Congress Mamed Riza said: "If we intend to liberate the Turkish proletariat from talons of the voracious European imperialism we must link our destiny more closely with the revolutionary proletariat of the Soviet Republic of Russia."<sup>4</sup> Subhi and his group managed to establish a direct link with the revolutionary movement in Turkey itself. Turkish Communists began to return home via Odessa,<sup>5</sup> and communist organisations sprang up in Turkey to the anxiety and irritation of the government.

The Iranian workers in Soviet Russia also began to join the communist movement. Much was done towards this end by Adalat, a Social-Democratic organisation set up in Baku back in 1916 by immigrants from Iranian Azerbaijan. In 1918 and 1919 Iranian Communist groups were formed in Astrakhan and Moscow.<sup>6</sup> But the Adalat Party became particularly active in the formation of Iranian communist groups in Turkestan with the entry of the Red Army into the region in the autumn of 1919 and the establishment in December of the same year of the Council for International Propaganda.

The leaders of Adalat's Turkestan branch made a tour of towns and villages of the area to organise local branches among Persian workers.<sup>7</sup> By the middle of 1920 Party com-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 154, pp. 6, 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 134, p. 3; *The Life of Nationalities*, June 29, 1920.

<sup>6</sup> CPA IML, s. 17 r. 2, f. 42, pp. 22, 53, 64.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, p. 8.



mittees were set up in 52 localities in Turkestan.<sup>1</sup> Adalat's total membership in Turkestan was almost six thousand by April 1920. The Party put out its own publications, and Persian language newspapers were published in Samarkand and Poltoratsk (Ashkhabad).<sup>2</sup> As everywhere else, the growth of the communist movement was accompanied by an accelerated formation of national Red Army battalions. This was a clear indication that the revolutionary elements in the East were becoming increasingly aware of the decisive role played by Soviet Russia in determining the outcome of the liberation struggle of the Asian countries. In 1918 and 1919 Iranian volunteers were already fighting together with the Red Army against the British interventionists on the Transcaspian front.<sup>3</sup> And when recruitment into the Persian Red Army was announced in March and April 1920 so many people volunteered that their registration was cut short, for, as Sultan Zade, an organiser of Adalat in Turkestan, said "it was technically impossible for us to supply all the volunteers with everything necessary".<sup>4</sup>

Adalat had organisations also in Azerbaijan and Daghestan.<sup>5</sup> Iranian Communists maintained regular contacts with the revolutionary movement in Iran proper, and as a result of their efforts Iranian communist groups were set up in Zenjan, Resht, Ardebil and elsewhere. According to data supplied by Sultan Zade and which seem to be considerably exaggerated, Adalat had 10,000 members in Iran by the middle of 1920<sup>6</sup>, and party organisations were being set up throughout the country.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 14, p. 2889. According to other sources this party had 35 organisations by the middle of 1920 in Turkestan.—CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See: A. M. Matveyev, "Iranian Migrant Workers in Turkestan After the Victory of the Great October Revolution", *Soviet Oriental Studies*, 1958, No. 5, p. 123 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Sultan Zade, "The Iranian Communist Party", *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 13, pp. 2551-2552.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, see also: V. G. Razina, *Iranian Revolutionaries...*, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> *Herald of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 7, August 8, 1920, p. 1 (in Russian).

The views of the first Iranian Communists were also extremely leftist because they were fostered by a burning desire to emulate the Russian experience of socialist revolution in their native Iran, and were not based on a precise account of the historically concrete socio-economic situation in that country. In his theses on the prospects for a socialist revolution in the East, which were first published in March 1920, the leader of the Iranian Communists Sultan Zade sought to prove that the conditions in tsarist Russia prior to the revolution in 1917 and conditions in Iran at the beginning of the 1920s were almost identical so that already at the time Iran could accomplish a socialist revolution. He wrote that all large-scale industry in Russia belonged to foreign capital, "therefore the entire surplus value was pumped out of the country. It was these conditions that fostered revolutionary sentiments among the working class. In this respect, Persia's situation is no different from Russia's."<sup>1</sup> And since Persia was allegedly "one of those Eastern countries which have an extremely steeled working class it ought to be and will be the first country in the East to hoist the red banner of the social revolution on the ruins of the Shah's throne".<sup>2</sup> At the First Congress of the Iranian Communist Party which took place in Enzeli on July 22-25, 1920, Sultan Zade delivered a report on the current situation in which he produced arguments in support of the above theses, and declared in particular: "The Congress must say that the revolution in Persia should take place under the sign of the social revolution".<sup>3</sup> Representatives of the RCP (B) at the Congress, V. Naneishvili and Obukh<sup>4</sup>, for instance, opposed the adventurist course of accomplishing a socialist revolution and supported the idea of forming a united anti-imperialist and anti-Shah front of Communists and the national revolutionary forces in the Gilan revolution which was gaining momentum at

<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia* (Tashkent), March 25, 1920; October Revolution Central State Archive (ORCSA), Moscow, s. 5402, r. 1, f. 156, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Izvestia* (Tashkent), March 31, 1920; *Kommunist* (Baku) June 5, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> ORCSA, s. 5402, r. 1, f. 156, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Real name Abukov, a representative of the Soviet military units in Iran.



the time. Thus they upheld Lenin's position which he expounded to the Second Congress of the Comintern in the *Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions*.

"We (Communists — *M. P.*) have never been against the national liberation movement and we support it," Naneishvili declared. Referring to Lenin, he said that "above all the Communists have to take advantage... of the national movement. When this is done the class differentiation will become apparent and the moment will arrive when it will be necessary to advance revolutionary social slogans." Some of the speakers criticised the Communists for shortcomings in their practical activity in Iran as a result of which the Iranian national bourgeoisie began to dissociate itself from the anti-British and anti-imperialist movement in the country.

The leftists tried to make the Soviets that were set up in the regions of the national liberation revolution, undertake socialist tasks at a time when these Soviets, the majority of which were peasant, had to fight only for the achievement of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal aims. Obukh said: "We have to rectify this error and try to convince the vacillating forces that Soviet rule (in Iran—*M. P.*) threatens neither the landlords nor the bourgeoisie, and then they will support the national liberation movement.... There is only one slogan at present — Down with the British, Down with the Shah's government!"

Nevertheless, the Congress gave in to pressure from the leftists and adopted a dual stand. The resolution on Sultan Zade's report said that it was the "duty of the Iranian Communist Party to fight against world imperialism together with Soviet Russia and to support all the forces in Persia which would oppose the British and the Shah's government".

At the same time, contrary to this correct premise, it mentioned the allegedly existing need "to paralyse those elements" which were "interested in chasing the British out of Persia" but were "afraid of revolutionary struggle". The Congress approved the party programme which proclaimed the "left" course towards an immediate socialist revolution, and consequently towards a split of the united

anti-imperialist front which was already beginning to take shape in Gilan.<sup>1</sup>

There were also Chinese among the active participants in the communist movement which embraced thousands of foreign workers in revolutionary Russia. It was in Soviet Russia that the first Chinese Communists, members of the RCP(B), and the first Chinese communist groups appeared. Taking into account the very close ties between Chinese Communists in Russia and revolutionaries in China this circumstance clearly played a very great role in the rise of the communist movement in China. When a united Revolutionary Alliance of Chinese Workers was formed in Petrograd at the end of 1918, a communist organisation was also established in it. Shortly, with the help of RCP(B) organs, communist organisations were formed at the local branches of the Union of Chinese Workers. Towards the end of 1920 the Union had its branches in 12 towns of the Republic, mainly in the Far East, Siberia and Central Asia. Communist organisations were set up in military units where there were Chinese and Korean servicemen. In August 1920, there were 30 members and 129 candidate members of the RCP(B)<sup>2</sup> in the International Korean-Chinese Regiment, 3rd Siberian Infantry Division. Evidently there were also territorial associations of Chinese Communists. For instance, a Chinese communist group calling itself the Chinese Communist Party of the Amur Region functioned in Blagoveshensk.<sup>3</sup> The Irkutsk Union of Chinese Workers stipulated in its Immediate Action Programme: "The main and immediate goal of the work among the masses carried on by members of the Union, is to create a solid nucleus of Chinese Communists, the future vanguard of the Chinese revolution, for which purpose it is necessary to establish a communist organisation."<sup>4</sup>

The growth in the number of Chinese Communists in the

<sup>1</sup> ORSCA, s. 5402, r. 1, f. 156, pp. 45, 46; *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 14, pp. 2891, 2892.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML.

<sup>3</sup> See: M. A. Persits, "Revolutionary Chinese Organisations on the Territory of the Far Eastern Republic and Sun Yat-sen", *Sun Yat-sen, 1866-1966, on the Occasion of the Centenary of his Birth*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> CPA IML.



RCP(B) and the specific nature and complexity of the work among them made it necessary to set up a special centre. On July 1, 1920, a Central Organisational Bureau (COB)<sup>1</sup> of Chinese Communists was set up under the Central Committee of the RCP(B) and placed in charge of all the ideological, educational and organisational work among them. The Soviet Government and the Party made certain that the Chinese Communists had all the conditions which could be ensured at the time to put out printed matter and conduct propaganda. The numerous protests of the Peking authorities against the existence of Chinese communist groups in Soviet Russia were an indication of the effectiveness of their activity and of their revolutionary influence on their countrymen in China. Chinese consuls in Blagoveshchensk, Khabarovsk and other towns insisted that the "Chinese Communist Party", as they called the Chinese communist groups, be disbanded, and the US and British governments tried hard to prevent revolutionary-minded Chinese from returning to China from Soviet Russia.<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that one of reasons which enabled the Chinese working class to create its own Communist Party ten years after the bourgeois revolution of 1911 was that the development of the working-class movement in the country was tremendously accelerated by the October Revolution and the assistance of the Bolsheviks. Most certainly an important factor of the development of the communist movement in China and the establishment of the Communist Party was the participation in these processes of hundreds of Chinese worker-Communists who had returned from Russia. As it happens not only Chinese but also some Soviet historians who study the history of the CPC pay too little attention to this circumstance in their accounts of the initial phase

<sup>1</sup> See: V. M. Ustinov, *Chinese Communist Organisations...*, pp. 42, 45 (in Russian). By decision of the RCP(B) Central Committee of September 2, 1920, the Central Organisational Bureau was transferred to the Far East where the bulk of Russia's Chinese population resided. Evidently henceforth COB became the Organisational Bureau of the Chinese Communists under the Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee.

<sup>2</sup> See: Y. K. Kostin, *Two Interpretations of the October Revolution in China*, p. 77; M. A. Persits, *The Far Eastern Republic and China*, pp. 183-89, 202 (both in Russian).

of the communist movement in China. While never failing to mention that apart from China the first Chinese communist groups appeared also in Japan and France, they overlook the formation and the active work of Chinese communist organisations in Soviet Russia. It is true of course that original sources available for examining this question are very scanty, but there are enough of them to draw the above conclusion.

The first Chinese Communists in Russia were also weakly grounded in Marxism-Leninism and adhered to leftist views concerning the tactics of the national liberation movement. The Central Organisational Bureau, for example, wrote in an appeal to the Chinese Communists in Turkestan in July or August 1920: "The foreign bourgeoisie — the Entente — is sucking the blood of our fathers, brothers, and sons and ingurgitating our country's wealth.... And our leaders condone the plunder of the fatherland. Comrades, we have to unite our forces... rise arms in hand against all bourgeois... ours and others [there is no difference—*M. P.*] and drive them out of our beloved fatherland."<sup>1</sup> The Organisational Bureau of the Chinese Communists under the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B) formulated its tasks in terms that were even more definite. The Constitution of the Organisational Bureau said in part: "The Chinese Communists consider it their direct duty to the proletarians of all countries to accomplish a social revolution in China and organise the working class of China." No less significant in this respect was the *Manifesto on the Occasion of the Third Anniversary of the Russian Social Revolution* published in behalf of the so-called Chinese Communist Party of the Amur Region.<sup>2</sup> This very interesting document summons the Chinese people to accomplish a social revolution, because "in order to do away with economic inequality and implement the principles of justice socialism is necessary. Com-

<sup>1</sup> See: I. S. Sologubov, *Foreign Communists in Turkestan*, pp. 94-95. The appeal could have been written in 1920, between July 1 (the day of the formation of the Central Organisational Bureau) and September 2 (the date of the decision to transfer it to the Far East), because the Bureau calls itself the Moscow Organisational Bureau in the text.

<sup>2</sup> See: M. A. Persits, *Revolutionary Chinese Organisations on the Territory of the Far Eastern Republic...*, p. 362.



munism is the core of socialism. The whole of humanity is moving towards communism. In China, in view of its inherent national and historical features and traditions, this path is the easiest and most suitable".

Korean working people were also active in the communist movement of foreign workers and peasants in Soviet Russia. Korean communist groups began to appear in the Far East in 1919 during the bitter Civil War, and their number increased particularly rapidly in 1920 and 1921. At the end of 1920 there were no less than 16 Korean Party organisations with 2,305 members and candidate members in Soviet Russia (including in Moscow, but chiefly in the Far East and Siberia).<sup>1</sup> The activity of the Korean Communists in the Far East was guided by corresponding sections of the RCP(B) regional committees and headed by the Korean Section of the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B).<sup>2</sup> Later, not only territorial Korean committees appeared there, but even a Central Committee of Korean Communist Organisations was set up in July 1920.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the fact that they were underground organisations and functioned at the time of the Civil War all of which made things very difficult for them, the Korean Communists conducted extensive propaganda and military organisational work wherever their fellow-countrymen were to be found. Leaflets, pamphlets and a number of newspapers were put out in Korean; Korean units of the Red Army fought heroically against the Japanese interventionists and the Whiteguards who occupied part of the Soviet Far East.

The Korean Communists strove to set up their own national Communist Party. This desire was stimulated by their membership in the RCP(B) and active participation in the armed class struggle. The Vladivostok Congress of two Korean organisations, the Union of Korean Socialists and the Union of New Citizens, which took place in April 1919 was a step in this direction. The Congress founded the

<sup>1</sup> Calculated on the basis of very incomplete data published in the journal *The Peoples of the Far East*, Irkutsk, 1921, No. 2, pp. 212-17 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: S. A. Tsytkin, *Participation of Korean Working People...* p. 179 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18; see also CPA IML, s. 372, r. 1, f. 434, p. 17.

Korean Socialist Party which announced its accession to the Comintern.<sup>1</sup>

Pak Din Shun, one of the leaders of the Korean Socialist Party who subsequently attended the Second Congress of the Comintern, wrote an article about the Vladivostok Congress and described its tactics in the national-colonial revolution. The Congress acknowledged that the powerful national liberation movement which had developed in March 1919 in Korea was headed by the bourgeoisie. The conclusion was drawn on this basis that the struggle of the masses was directed along "the false road of national antagonism" and that, naturally, "it could not attain the desired results under such conditions". Nevertheless, the Congress believed it "inexpedient to counteract the developing movement whatever form it might take". At the same time it was decided to develop a propaganda campaign to direct the movement into the channel of class struggle. Pak Din Shun further wrote that the Korean socialists were against the unification of the working people with the national bourgeoisie for a joint fight against the Japanese imperialists. The Korean Socialist Party decided "not to succumb to the hypocritical and false assertions of bourgeois politicians, because the working people would suffer just as much under the oppression of the Korean bourgeoisie as it is suffering at present from the arbitrary rule of the predatory Japanese imperialism". After its last congress (April 1919), concluded Pak Din Shun, the Korean Socialist Party completely dissociated itself from the Korean bourgeoisie and gentry, went over to the platform of class struggle and proclaimed "Free Korean Republic" as its slogan.<sup>2</sup> Pak Din Shun comprehensively formulated and thoroughly substantiated the position which was upheld by many of the first Communists of the East concerning the nature of the national liberation movement in the Asian countries and the attitude of the proletarian party to it.

As regards the Indians, they arrived in the Soviet Republic later and in much smaller numbers than represen-

<sup>1</sup> Jeeshun Pak (Pak Din Shun), "The Socialist Movement in Korea", *The Communist International*, 1919, No. 7-8, p. 1173 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1174.



tatives of the neighbouring Eastern countries, and naturally began to join the communist movement also at a later date. On top of that most of the Indian emigrants were revolutionaries only in the national and not the communist sense at first. This being the case the shift to Marxist position of the more progressive elements among them was a natural development, but not an instantaneous one. In Tashkent fairly rapid progress towards communism was made by a part of the Indian Section of the Council for International Propaganda which embraced only some 8 people.<sup>1</sup> Its nucleus consisted of representatives of the so-called Provisional Émigré Government of India in Kabul. As early as in April 1920 some members of the section proclaimed themselves Communists (Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Safiq, Abdul Majid),<sup>2</sup> and tried to set up an Indian communist organisation.<sup>3</sup> But on April 15, 1920 the Executive Committee of the Comintern informed the CC RCP(B) that the "Indian communist organisation under the International has not yet been formed". Neither was it established after the arrival of the Indian Revolutionary Association consisting of 28 members in Tashkent in early July 1920.

The number of proponents of communist ideals, however, continued to grow as émigrés, participants in the Caliphate exodus from India (October-November 1920), kept arriving in Tashkent. Three or four of the people who filled in the 84 forms which we mentioned above definitely entertained communist sympathies.

The first group of Indian Communists was formed only in October 1920 following the arrival in Tashkent of Indians who had attended the Second Congress of the Comintern. On October 17, on the initiative of M. N. Roy and H. Mukherjee this group of seven people proclaimed itself the Communist Party of India. It was a premature step and fully mirrored the left-sectarian impatience of its organisers. Evidently it was not accidental that its membership increased very slowly and by December counted only 13

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, s. 544, r. 1, f. 1, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> See: M. A. Persits, *Revolutionaries of India in the Soviet Land*, pp. 56, 89, 91 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> See: *Izvestia* (Tashkent), May 7, 1920.

people.<sup>1</sup> The reason was M. N. Roy's left-sectarian stand.<sup>2</sup> Having launched what in effect was necessary agitation for the creation of a communist organisation among the Indian émigrés, he directed it against the political aspirations of the national revolutionaries, discredited them and outraged their ideals, all of which was absolutely impermissible. He and his group tried to persuade the Indians that a national revolution was strictly speaking not a revolution, for it could not emancipate the working people from the local exploiters who were no better than the British. M. N. Roy sought to impress upon his listeners that in order to be worthy of the efforts which would be expended to accomplish it, a real revolution could be only a communist one.<sup>3</sup> Propaganda of this sort evoked protest from the majority of the émigrés, for in effect it was an attempt to convince them that the cause for which they fought and were ready to take up arms, for the sake of which they sacrificed themselves to privations and undertook an arduous journey, was a meaningless, or, in any case, an unnecessary undertaking for the Indian people.

In a word it was wrong in essence and tactically harmful to debunk the ideas of the struggle for national independence and to set communist principles against them among the national revolutionaries.

Clearly the efforts which were channelled into the formation of the Communist Party produced much smaller results than Roy had expected. Nevertheless the first Indian communist group was eventually set up and after work among

<sup>1</sup> The Party Archive of the Uzbek Republic, s. 60, r. 1, f. 194, p. 2; CPA IML.

<sup>2</sup> It was precisely the Indian revolutionary M. N. Roy who most vividly expressed the idea that the immediate task facing the East and India in particular was the accomplishment of a socialist revolution. At the Second Congress of the Comintern he presented numerous arguments in support of his leftist tactical line in the national liberation revolution. See: A. B. Reznikov, "V. I. Lenin on the National Liberation Movement", *Kommunist*, 1967, No. 7, pp. 97-102, and "V. I. Lenin's Struggle Against Sectarian Perversities in the National and Colonial Question", *Ibid.*, 1968, No. 5, pp. 36-47; M. A. Persits, *Revolutionaries of India in the Soviet Land...*, pp. 94-120 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, p. 464.



the Indians was transferred to Moscow its membership increased more than twofold.

The communist movement of Eastern nationals in Russia in 1918-20 adhered to revolutionary positions envisaging the defence of the Soviet Russia against foreign intervention and a relentless struggle against imperialism. At the same time the communist groups which then came into being did not comprehend, and this was typical of them, the important distinctions which existed between the socio-economic conditions in the independent developed and semi-developed capitalist countries and the pre-capitalist conditions in the majority of the oppressed Asian and African countries. During their formation these communist organisations shaped a very pronounced leftist course: they denied the bourgeois-democratic nature of the revolution in the Asian countries and proclaimed a course towards a socialist revolution, and by refusing to recognise the revolutionary potential of the national bourgeoisie they rejected the possibility of forming an anti-imperialist bloc with it. On the other hand, this initial communist movement which arose among the citizens of the oppressed countries of the East was of great historical significance because it was the first and essential element in the process of the formation of national Communist parties which developed almost simultaneously in China, India, Iran, Turkey and Korea.

Two-way links were established and vigorously developed between the Eastern communist groups in Soviet Russia and the revolutionary forces in Asian countries. This was largely due to the gradual return of the Eastern working people to their home-countries and the all-round assistance of the Soviets to the Eastern revolutionaries who came to Russia.

This increased the revolutionising influence of the October Revolution on the oppressed Asian countries and accelerated the development of the communist movement in them. This meant that Soviet power and the Bolshevik Party helped to create and develop the initial elements of the communist movement among the working people of the nearby Eastern countries.

Otto Kuusinen expressed this thought when he told the First Congress of the Comintern in March 1919 that for

over a year following its establishment revolutionary Russia was virtually a new International.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time by their revolutionary and internationalist activity the communist and socialist groups formed among the working people of the Eastern countries in Soviet Russia laid the foundations of the Comintern. These groups fought in defence of Soviet power and spread progressive socialist ideas ensuring the consistent nature of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Comintern was founded in March 1919 at a congress in Moscow. But the prerequisites for its formation began to take shape when Communist parties and groups in the West and East emerged and united round the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russia.

The *Manifesto of the First Congress of the Comintern* ripped the mask off the colonial policy of imperialism, and moved to the fore of the revolutionary struggle the goal of liberating the oppressed peoples of the East. This document expressed the concept that it would be possible for the Eastern countries to follow the non-capitalist road provided they had the ideological and material support of European socialist countries. The liberation of the colonies and semi-colonies, it stated, was linked with the victory of proletarian revolutions in the metropolitan countries. In its decisions the First Congress voiced the Comintern's determination to support the national liberation movement and build up a broad anti-imperialist front of oppressed peoples in order to put an end to colonialism.

During the discussion of the text of the *Manifesto* Sebald Rutgers of the Dutch Communist Party said: "It would be desirable to speak in greater detail about the colonial policy in order to couch this point in terms which would make it absolutely clear to the population of the colonies that we wish to act together with them whether or not these peoples have their own ideology and religion. We are prepared to act together with them on the basis of resistance to imperialism."

<sup>1</sup> *The First Congress of the Communist International, 1921, p. 93 (in Russian).*



In a political programme adopted on March 4, 1919, the First Congress unequivocally stipulated that it would "support the exploited peoples of the colonies in their struggle against imperialism".<sup>1</sup>

The Congress for the first time proclaimed the slogan: "Long live the revolutionary alliance of the oppressed peoples of the East with the socialist workers of Russia and Europe".<sup>2</sup> These premises on the colonial issue adopted by the Comintern First Congress were developed and theoretically substantiated in connection with the rise of the communist movement in the Eastern countries, so that by mid-1920 the "old" national-colonial question acquired new and very important aspects. A new problem arose, that of the correlation of the two movements in the East, the communist and the national liberation. It was Lenin who undertook theoretically to elaborate it, even though the complex and extremely difficult situation in Russia at the time compelled the Soviet Communists to concentrate on fighting the Civil War in order to save the revolution. The Second Congress of the Comintern a year later was to hear Lenin and endorse his principles of communist strategy and tactics in the national liberation movement.

#### THE MILITARY FACTOR IN THE LIBERATION OF THE EASTERN COUNTRIES

The infantile disorder of "leftism" which was peculiar to many first generation Eastern Communists, manifested itself primarily in the premature course towards a socialist revolution in Asian countries and in the tactics of ignoring the anti-imperialist role of the national bourgeoisie. This malady had other symptoms, too. Some of the novice Communists in the Asian countries and even a fairly large number of Soviet Communists overestimated the significance of the military factor for the national and social emancipation of the colonies. The "leftists" suggested that the stage of

<sup>1</sup> *The First Congress of the Communist International*, p. 94; *Communist International. Documents (1919-1932)*, Moscow, 1933, p. 66 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: *The Communist International*, 1918, No. 4, p. 563 (in Russian).

the democratic struggle for national independence should be bypassed, or to be precise, that the national liberation revolution should be transformed into a socialist revolution and thus make it possible to attain national liberation and social emancipation at one and the same time. Yet there is no reason to assert that the "leftists" were blind to the fact that the proletariat in the Eastern countries was either extremely weak and numerically small, or did not exist altogether, although in words they exaggerated the maturity of the working class and its movement. Neither were they unaware that the bulk of the working people were the peasants who were ignorant, illiterate, fanatically religious and for the most part subject to the influence of the reactionary classes. Pondering how best to surmount these inhibiting factors they decided that only a military campaign of revolutionary armies from Soviet Russia would ensure a simultaneous victory of the national and socialist revolutions in the adjacent Eastern countries.

They were active participants in the armed struggle for Soviet power and believed that the path of painstaking preparation of the internal forces for a successful national liberation and, all the more so, for a socialist revolution was either much too long at the best or absolutely impossible at the worst.

It would seem that the Red Army's successes in the Civil War justified the views of "Left" Communists. They saw and registered only the victories of the Soviet troops, but tended to forget that behind these victories were years and years of hard work which the Party conducted to educate the masses, to get the working-class movement to assimilate the ideas of scientific communism, and to strengthen the proletarian vanguard organisationally, ideologically and theoretically. Furthermore, the "leftists" wrongly estimated the significance of the anti-imperialist upsurge which gripped many Eastern countries at the time. It seemed to them that the truly powerful liberation movement in these countries could be more or less easily turned against their own exploiters, and not only against the feudal lords, but also against the national bourgeoisie although the latter was usually at the head of this movement. Some of them believed that as soon as a revolutionary army would enter



an oppressed country, a revolutionary situation would develop and a national uprising would hit foreign and national oppressors.

Obviously, the views of the first Communists of the East and some of the "left" members of the RCP(B) lacked theoretical maturity. Their tactic of revolutionary war as a means of stimulating the growth of the national liberation revolution into a socialist one was unjustified. But their active participation in the Civil War against the Whiteguards and the interventionists in Russia was absolutely justified, and not only because it strengthened socialist Russia, the mainstay of world revolution, but also because it weakened international imperialism, the chief enemy of the oppressed peoples of the East.

The inadequate Marxist-Leninist grounding, so natural for the young Communists of Asia, was by no means the only reason underlying their tactic of revolutionary war. It was rooted in the first place in the fact that international imperialism organised an armed intervention of fourteen powers against Soviet Russia which was launched from the territories of neighbouring Eastern countries, namely Turkey, Iran, China and Mongolia. Japanese militarists and Russian Whiteguards who operated with US, British and French support organised an armed attack on Soviet Russia from Northeast China and Mongolia. Under Japan's pressure the militarist Peking government also took part in the anti-Soviet intervention. In the intervention against the Soviets the German imperialists used the troops of the Turkish Sultan's government to invade the Transcaucasus. After that the Entente powers, which had occupied Turkey and Iran, invaded Soviet Russia in the south. Under these circumstances the young Communists of the East had more than enough reason to believe that the armed rebuff delivered to the imperialists was bound to develop into a military liberation mission into the colonies and semi-colonies adjoining Russia. Consequently, the tactic of revolutionary war was not altogether historically unfounded.

The thesis about a military liberation mission was first propounded at the First All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East held from November 4 to 12, 1918 in Moscow. In its report the Cen-

tral Commissariat for Muslim Affairs informed the Congress that in its activities it proceeded from the need to liberate Muslim countries from imperialist domination. With this end in view it spread "the ideas of social revolution among Turkish POWs and took practical steps to prepare them for it by forming a Red Army unit consisting of Turkish workers and peasants, which, at a convenient moment, could be used as a nucleus for organising a proletarian uprising in Turkey".<sup>1</sup> On the last day of the Congress the Turkish delegation which included the Socialists-Communists Mustafa Subhi, Djevdet Ali, Magomet Nazmi and Ismail Lutfi<sup>2</sup> issued a statement to the effect that it considered it necessary to "bring about a revolution in Turkey, for which purpose it is necessary to mobilise forces, and therefore the faction calls upon all its members to pool their efforts and fight directly for the revolution". In this connection it proposed a range of practical measures including "the concentration of all Turkish communist detachments on the Southern Front, replenishing them with Turkish POWs in Russia".<sup>3</sup>

The Congress decided to submit this proposal to the Central Bureau of Muslim Organisations of the RCP(B).<sup>4</sup> At the same time in its general resolution on the current situation the Congress recommended "taking urgent measures for concentrating Turkish worker and peasant POWs, organising them into Red Army units and dispatching them to the Southern Front" (Point 6) and "immediate and effective steps to prepare the ground for a revolutionary movement in the East" (Point 7).<sup>5</sup>

In the spring of 1919 Turkish internationalists began to concentrate in the Crimea and form military units.<sup>6</sup> Reports

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 1, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 3, pp. 9, 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 1, p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> *The Life of Nationalities*, November 24, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 1, p. 165.

<sup>6</sup> There are numerous records in the register of outgoing papers of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East of the issuance of mandates to "comrades prisoners of war" who were going to the Crimea "to form the first Red Army detachment consisting of Turks". It was also indicated that Fegli Yusupov would be its commander. (CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 212, p. 26.)



said that there were "ten thousand Turkish proletarians in the Crimea"<sup>1</sup> at the time.

The idea to use the army as the main force of the national and social emancipation of the colonies and semi-colonies won many supporters. Their numbers increased as the Red Army continued to advance eastward and liberate Soviet territories in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Siberia and the Far East.

In 1920 members of the Central Organisational Bureau of Chinese Communists drafted a plan for an armed drive on the Chinese capital with the view to overthrowing the reactionary Peking government. Evidently their intention was to deliver a concerted blow by Chinese revolutionary detachments along three directions: from Central Asia (Sinkiang), from Manchuria, and from South China.

Member of the Organisational Bureau Liu Chiang (Fedorov) went to Shanghai to co-ordinate this military plan with Sun Yat-sen who headed the revolutionary movement in the South of China at the time.

In a written report about his trip Liu Chiang gave a fairly detailed account of the purpose of the planned operation. It envisaged "the immediate unification of Chinese revolutionary forces stationed in South China, Central Russia,<sup>2</sup> and the Far East<sup>3</sup> so as jointly and in full contact with each other to lay the groundwork for a campaign against the reactionary government in the North". It was contemplated that Chinese shock units "in Soviet Russia and the South of China will be concentrated in Sinkiang Province on the border of the Semipalatinsk and Semirechiye regions near Chinese Turkestan where partial recruitment of volunteers is currently in progress".<sup>4</sup> The leading centre of the revolutionary drive was to have been sited in Blagoveshchensk.

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Nationalities*, May 25, 1919, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently these were Chinese volunteer units which were in action with the Red Army on the fronts of the Civil War.

<sup>3</sup> Clearly this refers to units of Chinese volunteers of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic and Chinese partisan detachments which fought against the Japanese occupying forces in Manchuria.

<sup>4</sup> The Central State Archive of the Far East, s. 1006, r. 2, f. 44, p. 158.

The idea that the army would help the socialist revolution to score a swift victory was quite popular among Chinese Communists. They were even prepared if necessary to raise an army out of the déclassé elements and the numerous groups of bandits active in China at the time. In the middle of 1921 in a report which was to be delivered at the Third Congress of the Comintern, Chang Tai-lei, a representative of the Chinese Communist Party, described Chinese lumpen proletarians who were united into bandit gangs as "militant revolutionary material", albeit "raw", which should be used "to promote broad guerrilla warfare in the country" directed against the foreign oppressors and local militarists.<sup>1</sup>

Some Chinese Communists worked on plans for organising an armed campaign of revolutionary armies into China in 1922 as well. In June that year the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B) met specially to examine one such plan. It was put forward by two partisan commanders Liu Hsiang-hu and Li Chang-li whose detachment operated in Tsitsihar Province and near the Ussuri border of the Far Eastern Republic.

They requested assistance either in shifting partisan detachments (up to 30,000 men) to Sinkiang for the purpose of capturing this province, or in supporting the organisation of an immediate drive into the Hsingchuang and Sangching provinces.<sup>2</sup> On June 20 the Far Eastern Bureau on motion of the Commander-in-Chief of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic V. K. Blukher decisively turned down this plan and noted that "there was almost no communist influence" in these detachments. The Bureau, therefore, agreed "to organise a political education department for the Chinese comrades under the military-political school of the People's Revolutionary Army" and assist the partisan liberation movement in Manchuria with food, ammunition and weapons.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Chinese Communist Party at the Third Congress of Comintern (Report of the Chinese Delegation)", *The Peoples of the Far East*, 1921, No. 3, p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 14, f. 203, p. 75. Evidently the provinces were Szechwan and Shansi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



At the First Congress of the Persian Adalat Party in June 1920 the opinion was voiced that the Persian working people could be liberated only by armed force and that liberation of Persia from imperialist oppression could come about only as a result of an armed struggle.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian Communists, too, tried to organise a liberation campaign into India through Afghanistan.

M. N. Roy planned this campaign in very great detail. He proposed that a liberation army which would drive the British colonialists out of India should include Afghan frontier tribes and also those Indians who, in protest against British oppression, joined the Caliphate exodus, left their homeland and were living either in Afghanistan or in Soviet Central Asia. Indian revolutionaries requested Soviet Russia for assistance and received it. By granting this assistance the Soviet government acted in line with its consistent policy of supporting the anti-imperialist liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples although it was fully aware that since India lacked the necessary subjective and objective revolutionary factors, this plan had very slim chances of succeeding. At the end of 1920, military training course for Indian revolutionaries was organised in Turkestan where they were also issued uniforms and training weapons.<sup>2</sup> But the Kabul government gave in to British pressure and made it extremely difficult for the Indians to cross into Soviet Russia.

In 1920 official permission to cross the northern frontier was granted only to three groups (about 200 people) of Indians. Many others, however, who were making the passage on their own, crossed it illegally. Lenin foresaw that the Emir would take a negative stand. He told Roy prior to the latter's departure for Tashkent after the Second Congress of the Comintern, that his plans were adventurist and argued that other methods of struggle which could expedite the appearance of a revolutionary situation in the country had to be devised. This transpires even from Roy's

<sup>1</sup> See: *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 14, p. 2889.

<sup>2</sup> See: *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, pp. 417-21; I. S. Sologubov, *Foreign Communists in Turkestan*, p. 56.

own account, for his obvious attempt to belittle the importance of Lenin's position.<sup>1</sup>

Especially energetic efforts to promote the idea of the military campaign in the East were made by the newspaper *Zhyzn natsionalnosti* (*The Life of Nationalities*), and by a considerable portion of the staff of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. At the time the national liberation movement in the East was spreading under the impact of the October Revolution and the Red Army's successes in the Civil War. The proletariat and the peasantry were playing a perceptibly more prominent role in this movement and in some countries (Persia, China, Korea) armed guerrillas launched operations against the imperialist troops. All these factors created a natural urge to spur on the revolution in the neighbouring Asian countries. In a letter to the RCP(B) Central Committee the Central Bureau frankly declared that the development and the deepening of the revolutionary movement in the East was turning the Central Bureau into a military organisation.<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Nationalities* published articles substantiating the thesis that it was necessary to organise a revolutionary drive to the East. In one of its editorials the paper sought to prove that "all that is necessary is to give Turkestan a powerful army and the cause of the revolution in Asia will begin to make giant strides forward".<sup>3</sup> Although the East had awakened, another editorial asserted, "without active assistance from the outside by the fresh untapped forces of Russia's Muslims it can once again fall into a lethargic sleep of spineless inertness and apathy. Let Britain, which has always been afraid of the spectre of a Cossack lance on the peaks of the Himalayas, now see this historical lance in the hands of Russia's Muslim-proletarian coming to the aid of his brothers in Persia, India and Afghanistan".<sup>4</sup>

Some anti-Party elements in the RCP(B) itself supported

<sup>1</sup> See: *M. A. Roy's Memoirs*, p. 417; M. I. Andronov, "From the History of the Awakening of the East", *New Times*, 1967, No. 14.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 29, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *The Life of Nationalities*, June 15, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> Palyukaitis, "Turkestan and the Revolution in the East", *The Life of Nationalities*, May 25, 1919.



and even fanned these leftist, adventurist tendencies. In August 1919, for example, Trotsky submitted a proposal to the CC RCP(B) to organise a military campaign against India and thus expedite the revolution in Europe. He motivated his project by writing that the "road to Paris and London lies via the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab and Bengal".<sup>1</sup> Naturally, the Central Committee with Lenin's active participation, turned down this adventurist scheme.

With amazing and at times naive faith in the omnipotence of the ideas of the revolution some of the "leftists" among the Soviet Communists asserted that since the ideology of socialism expressed the interests of the working people, it would, as soon as it appeared in the Eastern countries be immediately accepted by their peoples who would promptly turn their backs on bourgeois leaders with their ideological delusions. "The colonial enslavers in the East," wrote Efendiev, "have heaped such untold sufferings on the heads of the natives, that their Bolshevik movement simply has to get the best of all other movements, including the national-clerical.... All these political teachings are in fact the result of a misunderstanding which arose because owing to backward and obsolete economic relations there was no working-class movement and no knowledge of the findings of sociology, i.e. international socialism.... Now that the struggle of an international proletarian detachment in the Soviet Republic has been placed on a practical footing, the old ideologists of the liberation of the East should surrender." Carried away beyond all reasonable limits Efendiev went on to say: "If in the hope of capturing great booty decrepit tsarism could, with some degree of reality, plan an invasion and the seizure of India via several hostile countries, then why cannot workers' and peasants' Russia, which evokes such great hopes in the hearts of the peoples of the East, do something along the same lines in order to give the Indians the Bolshevik ideology."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Trotsky Papers 1917-1922*, Vol. I, London, The Hague, Paris, 1964, p. 625.

<sup>2</sup> Efendiev, "The Problems of the East", *The Life of Nationalities*, October 26, 1919.

Sultan-Galiev went even farther. He wrote an article criticising the Soviet Government's Eastern policy and accused it of lacking a firm and confident course. He claimed that the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia, where the tsarist government had sent them, was "a reflection and acknowledgement of our own impotence".<sup>1</sup> In effect Sultan-Galiev repudiated the very essence of the Leninist policy of friendship of the peoples and support for the national liberation movement of the oppressed Eastern countries.

On January 20, 1920, shortly after the publication of this article, a group of members of the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East headed by Sultan-Galiev sent a memorandum to the Central Committee of the RCP(B). In it they enlarged on the ideas expounded in the article, called for "turning from words and dreams to deeds", and tried to prove that a correct, i.e., a "determined and bold" policy of revolutionising the East would have made it possible "to prompt the colonial East to rise against international imperialism in the person of the Entente and thus solve the problem of a world social revolution if not by two-thirds then at least by one half. The ground has been prepared for this in the East and it now waits its tiller". With this end in view they proposed that J. V. Stalin be appointed to the post of Foreign Commissar for Eastern Affairs and "placed in charge of the entire domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Government in the East".<sup>2</sup>

The Party rejected this course, for it held, as Lenin did, that "not speedier revolution, but speedier preparations for revolution" were needed.<sup>3</sup> This was the basic distinction between the Party and the "leftist" revolutionaries. Lenin firmly rejected the method of introducing revolution by external military methods and advocated the formation of a vanguard revolutionary party which would educate and organise the masses.

<sup>1</sup> Sultan-Galiev, "The Socialist Revolution and the East", *The Life of Nationalities*, October 5, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 29, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 455 (in Russian).



Lenin pointed out time and again that revolution should not be exported, that a social revolution could take place only when it had fully matured and the proletariat had dissociated itself from its bourgeoisie and would be ready to assume the leadership of the struggle. Opposing Bukharin who attempted to prove that it would be wrong to recognise the right of nations to self-determination, Lenin told the Eighth Congress of the Party: "Let us even assume that the Bashkirs have overthrown the exploiters and we have helped them to do so. This is possible only when a revolution has fully matured, and it must be done cautiously, so as not to retard by one's interference that very process of the differentiation of the proletariat which we ought to expedite. What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? Here, in Russia, the population, having had a long experience of the priests, helped us to overthrow them. But you know how badly the decree on civil marriage is still being put into effect. Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place."<sup>1</sup>

The proponents of a revolution in Asia promoted with the help of a military campaign refused to take into account the level of social development of the nation concerned and to engage in prolonged work to expedite this development and pave the way for the revolution. Their stand mirrored their lack of confidence in the revolutionary potentialities of the popular masses and the national bourgeoisie in the Asian countries. It was equivalent to the export of revolution which the Party opposed and Marxism-Leninism rejected.

The role of the military factor in the national-colonial revolutions once again came up for discussion at the Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East (November 22 to December 3,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) March 18-23, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 172.

1919). The main speaker on this question was Sultan-Galiev. He dwelt upon the idea that the Red Army's victories over the Whiteguard General Denikin and Admiral Kolchak, and also the end of the Civil War would merely provide a breathing spell that would be followed by an international revolution and an international civil war in which the peoples of Persia, Turkey, India, Afghanistan and other oppressed countries of the East would be inevitably involved. "We should prepare for this struggle," he said. "For this purpose we ought to form an Eastern Red Army out of the already revolutionised peoples of the East—Tatars, Bashkirs, Turkestanians, and Kirghizes—which would operate in the East ... against international imperialism or against the East itself if the East would be used by imperialism."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that Sultan-Galiev said that the idea of raising a Muslim, or Eastern, Red Army, emanated from the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East and had Trotsky's backing.<sup>2</sup>

Sultan-Galiev's proposal to raise a Muslim army and prepare it for a drive to the East received a strong rebuff from the representative of the Republic's Military Revolutionary Council R. P. Katanyan.<sup>3</sup> He said on November 27: "When comrade Sultan-Galiev declared that Muslim units had to be concentrated in designated areas so that they would be at the disposal of Muslims, I wanted to ask him: have you forgotten that when the army of Whiteguard General Udenich was moving on Petrograd, the Bashkir Brigade performed a great service to the Revolution by fighting on the banks of the Neva? Denikin is advancing.

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, pp. 206-07.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> Ruben Pavlovich Katanyan (1881-1967) joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903, and was active in the revolutionary movement in Russia. During the Revolution of 1917 he was on the staff of the newspaper *Izvestia of the Military Revolutionary Committee*. In 1919 he was editor of the *Krasny Voin* newspaper of the 11th Army and then Chief of the Political Department of the Republican Military Revolutionary Committee. In 1920 and 1921 he was in charge of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the CC RCP(B). From 1923 to 1937 he held leading judicial posts.



Now we need every available person ... but we are told: withdraw these soldiers. And I should like to ask—where do we stand? Is Denikin smashed? And are the Muslim units<sup>1</sup> performing a job that is alien to them? By driving Denikin back are they not liberating Daghestan and Azerbaijan and helping the revolution to spread to Persia and then further and further so that it would embrace the whole of Asia... Muslim units must remain where the revolution needs them." Katanyan explained how revolutionisation of the East should be understood, and said that it had to be carried out by spreading ideas and not with the help of bayonets. "The Communists who go to the East," he said, "should be able to offer the people certain social slogans. In the first place the demand 'all land to the people', and when this demand is fulfilled a great Red Army will be raised on the spot it will unite with our army, mount an offensive and will ultimately achieve victory."<sup>2</sup>

V. L. Lukashov who supported Katanyan declared his opposition to alleged need to "concentrate military forces in the East".<sup>3</sup> A strong statement was made by Said-Galiev, who said: "We cannot send an army of bayonets to the East now. A revolution cannot be introduced from the outside. A revolution has to be introduced from the inside."<sup>4</sup> Evidently there were other statements of a similar nature.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless the Congress supported Sultan-Galiev's nationalistic-leftist thesis and passed a resolution on his report on the Eastern question recommending "to begin the organisation of an Eastern internationalist class Red Army as part of the international Red Army".<sup>6</sup> However, the Soviet Government, with Lenin's approval, turned down the idea

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to Bashkir, Tatar, Persian, Turkish and other ethnic military units which were raised at the time. They were incorporated into the Red Army and fought under its command during the Civil War.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, pp. 231-32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235-36.

<sup>5</sup> Impossible to say exactly how many because of the extremely bad condition of the verbatim report.

<sup>6</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 65, f. 9, p. 56.

of forming a Muslim army. In this connection an interesting conversation took place over a direct line between the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkestan Front Mikhail Frunze who was in Samara at the time, and Shalva Eliava, member of the Turkestan Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee, who was in Tashkent. Here is an excerpt from a record of their conversation.

*Eliava*: "My first question is about the formation of Muslim units. Muslim Communists insist on their immediate formation. In their opinion this should result in the formation of a Muslim Red Army. They also insist on the organisation of training courses for the command personnel with instruction in the Uzbek language. In both cases they are urged by Turkish POW officers who offer their services as instructors. I consider that the question of the formation and mobilisation of Muslims in the form of separate units and not in the form of a separate Muslim army is decided in principle...<sup>1</sup> In my opinion the Muslim Army HQ which was set up here prior to our arrival should be abolished."

*Frunze*: "First, as regards the Muslim HQ and units.... There should be no separate HQ and no Muslim army. I've discussed the matter once again with Lenin ... and it should not be taken up again. Native units, of course, can be formed though not along religious lines, but as you have very justly noted along national lines."<sup>2</sup>

Quite clearly leftist-nationalist views on the role of the military factor in the liberation of the eastern countries were fairly widespread both among the foreign Eastern Communists and some Soviet Communists. These erroneous views could be overcome not only by administrative action of the central authority, and in this case it was absolutely essential, but also by very considerable political work which was conducted by the Communist Party, Lenin and the Comintern.

<sup>1</sup> Further in the conversation Eliava explained that he had in view separate ethnic units—Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen and Kirghis—as elements of the Red Army.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 44, p. 21.



THE ROLE AND NATURE  
OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
IN THE EAST

The Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East also examined other aspects of the national liberation and working-class movement in the Asian countries.

In his famous speech on the first day of the Congress, Lenin, among other things, substantiated the need for the Communists to support the bourgeois national liberation movement in the East.<sup>1</sup> It would have seemed that after his speech the discussion at the Congress could have been conducted at a higher theoretical level. But evidently the delegates, many of whom were afflicted with extreme left ideas and lacked adequate Marxist grounding, needed a great deal of time thoroughly to grasp Lenin's propositions and make them their political platform.

The delegates heatedly debated on the subject of the role the liberation struggle in the East played in the world revolutionary process. Sultan-Galiev in his keynote report intended to prove that the East was not only a great but also the essential force of this process, and that the basic levers of a world social revolution were concentrated precisely in that part of the world. Other delegates expressed the same opinion. Evidently *The Life of Nationalities* in its report on the results of Congress on December 7, 1919, had reason to observe: "One gathered the impression that in the comrades' opinion the virgin soil of the East was more receptive to the ideas of communism, than the corrupt West." "The East," declared Sultan-Galiev, "is a revolutionary cauldron which can flood the whole of Western Europe in revolution."<sup>2</sup> He proceeded from the assumption that the East was the principal economic source of the existence of Western capitalism, and that without it the imperialism bourgeoisie would be unable to restrain the advancing proletariat of the West with handouts. "When Western workers begin to confront their bourgeoisie with diverse economic

<sup>1</sup> More about Lenin's speech below.

<sup>2</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, p. 203.

demands," he said, "this bourgeoisie almost always satisfies them, for this bourgeoisie has resources, limitless sources, from which it pumps out everything it needs."<sup>1</sup> He expressed the same thought in more precise terms in an article entitled "The Social Revolution and the East" published prior to the Congress. "So long as international imperialism ... holds the East as a colony in its hands, it is guaranteed a successful outcome in all its separate clashes with the working masses in the metropolitan countries over economic issues, because in these circumstances it has every opportunity to 'gag' them by agreeing to meet their demands."<sup>2</sup> But even if the revolution would win in the West without the support of the East, he went on to say, the East would all the same eventually become the decisive factor for the future of the Western revolution. In that case the bourgeoisie expelled from home would settle down in the East and would without any scruples "organise a drive of black-skinned people on Europe".<sup>3</sup>

The one-sided, narrowly nationalistic concept of the East's decisive role in the world revolutionary process completely misrepresented reality and offered a wrong orientation, and that alone was enough to make it politically harmful. As regards the economic aspect of the matter, which was presented primitively or simply unscientifically, Sultan-Galiev's concept doomed the more conscious and revolutionary proletariat of the developed capitalist countries to inactivity in anticipation of a revolution in the East. This theory was particularly dangerous because it did not rally the forces of the proletarian revolutionary movement in the West and the national liberation struggle in the East around Soviet Russia, but disunited them and oriented Soviet power towards organising a revolutionary campaign of liberation into the countries of Asia.

Having arrived at the conclusion that all revolutionary, military and other forces should be concentrated on the East, for only the East had revolutionary prospects, the proponents of this theory had to decide what slogans should be adopted for the drive into the East. Actually it was a ques-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Nationalities*, October 5, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, p. 203.



tion of the nature of the forthcoming revolution in Asia. And although many of the speakers agreed that it would be a socialist revolution, which, like the one in Russia, would at the same time manage to solve bourgeois-democratic tasks, a fairly large number of them simply had to take account of the realities which did not fit into their artificial conceptions. Sultan-Galiev said that since a socialist revolution in Asian countries was imminent, the Communists should offer purely communist slogans to their peoples.

Objections were raised by V. L. Lukashov. He pointed out that owing to the low level of its socio-economic development the East was in no position immediately to assimilate communist ideology. "If we come to the East with communism," he said, "the East will push us out. There is no place in the East for communism in form in which we studied it." Accordingly he proposed to "go along with nationalism", and through nationalism which was understandable to the masses, to bring them "socialist beginnings". In his opinion the formation of independent national states in the East should be a transitional stage to social reorganisation. Although, he said, the East already had "all conditions, economic and agrarian, which make it possible to build this (socialist—*M. P.*) system, they are not yet realised" by the people, and that was the only reason why an immediate socialist revolution was impossible. It is our duty, he said, in the first place to help the people realise that these conditions actually exist. And when these national states are created "they will promptly embark upon internal reorganisation on a social basis".<sup>1</sup> The thought is vaguely expressed, and evidently the poor stenographic record is also to blame. Still it is clear that Lukashov drew the necessary conclusions from Lenin's speech on the first day of the Congress in which he proved that the countries of the East were heading towards a national revolution whose development would pave the way for a socialist revolution.

An interesting position was adopted by Nariman Nari-manov who disagreed that there were no objective condi-

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, pp. 210, 253, 258.

tions in the East for a socialist revolution. "I say that there are," he declared. "There is the peasantry whose position makes it capable of accomplishing a socialist revolution and thus compensating for the lack of 'truly united workers' masses' in the East." He believed that "Communists should go to the East with the slogan: he who does not work neither shall he eat. The East needs nothing else and thus we'll be able to persecute all parasites, traders, profiteers and khans. In this form Soviet power will, I'm sure, find receptive soil in Persia, and in Turkey, and in Bukhara and in Khiva."<sup>1</sup>

The discussion at the Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East disclosed that both Soviet and Eastern Communists earnestly searched for answers to many questions posed by the upsurge of the national liberation movement in Asian countries. But the theoretical level of their views was inadequate and they formulated many erroneous conclusions, because talking about the East they lacked detailed knowledge of the correlation of class forces and the socio-economic position of the countries concerned. It was still necessary to develop the Marxist theory about the national liberation movement under the conditions created by the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia and the emergence of the communist movement in Asia. One of the delegates, S. Said-Galiev, dwelt on the circumstances in which the Communists who worked among the peoples of the East found themselves at the time. "Not only are there no theoretical data concerning the Eastern question, but even the number of published brochures on this question is very small." Before embarking on one or another policy in Asia, he said, "it is necessary to study the East. Without a foundation we cannot look Eastward.... We are running in circles because of lack of knowledge and no one is able to say anything definite.... We are groping about".<sup>2</sup>

The resolution on the Eastern question which the Congress adopted on November 27, included several important and correct propositions whose theoretical level was consid-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 234-35.



erably higher than that of the debates at the Congress. In the first place this applied to the points defining the Communists' attitude towards the national movement in the East and stipulating the need for the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces. Paragraph 3 of the Resolution states, for instance, that the revolutionary activity of the Communists in the East should follow two directions "determined, on the one hand, by the class and revolutionary programme ... dictating the need for the gradual formation of Communist parties in the countries of the East, and on the other, by the situation in the East, which demands that up to a certain time support should be given to the national movement in the East aimed at overthrowing the domination of West European imperialism there, insofar as this movement does not run counter to the class and revolutionary aspiration of the international proletariat, to bring about the downfall of international imperialism." This thesis was further elaborated in Paragraph 9. Adopted on the initiative of the Turkestan delegation, it said that it was necessary "to co-ordinate the activities of the oppressed nationalities of the East with the activities of the revolutionary proletariat of the West", and that for this purpose "the Third International should announce that the national liberation movement in the East and the social revolution are at present working towards a common goal—the overthrow of the yoke of capitalist-imperialists".<sup>1</sup>

These decisions reflected the beneficial impact of Lenin's address at the Congress.<sup>2</sup> The premises which he advanced were subsequently developed in his other works and became key elements of the Comintern's strategy and tactics in the national-colonial revolutions.

Lenin's report contained a profound analysis of concrete socio-economic conditions peculiar to the Eastern countries.

It was not the workers who had gone through the school of class struggle against capital who comprised the bulk of the population of the East, but typical representatives

<sup>1</sup> CPA IML, r. 65, f. 9, pp. 55-56.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 151-62.

of the peasantry suffering from medieval oppression. Consequently, Lenin said, it was necessary "to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism".<sup>1</sup> This being the case it was not a socialist revolution that should be placed on the agenda, but a national, bourgeois-democratic revolution directed against international imperialists and the local feudal lords. "You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification."<sup>2</sup> Hence the inevitable conclusion that it was necessary to support the national liberation movement which had retained its revolutionary potential, to co-operate with the anti-imperialist bourgeoisie and support its struggle against foreign imperialism and local feudalism. Lenin said that it was vital to learn to apply the general communist theory to the specific conditions in the backward countries and to search for forms of an alliance of progressive proletarians of the West with the working masses in Asia in a joint struggle against imperialism.<sup>3</sup>

Many Communists found it difficult to shift from the long-accepted concept of a socialist revolution as a direct task of the Communist parties in the Eastern countries and delusions associated with that concept, to the tactic of a broad, united anti-imperialist front and to well-conceived revolutionary organisational and educational work designed to cover many long years. The struggle against leftist distortions in the national liberation movement continued. Lenin's address raised the theoretical thinking of the Communists working on the problems of the East to a qualitatively higher level. In the fight against leftist distortions the positions of Marxists-Leninists became much more convincing and firm.

Characteristic in this connection was the dispute among the Turkestan Communists which lasted from June to

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



August 1920, on the eve of the people's revolution in Bukhara. They could not decide whether to support the Party of Young Bukhara Revolutionaries headed by Faizula Hojajev. Basing itself on Islam, this party proclaimed in its programme that it "champions the poorest masses and protects their interests against the rule of the exploiters and world imperialism" and that "in keeping with the basic laws of religion" it would "carry into life all propositions benefitting the poorest proletarian masses,<sup>1</sup> not only in Bukhara, but throughout the world". The programme also said that the Party "opposes the rule of the *bais* and *beks* and has set itself the task of ridding the State of Bukhara of the rule of capitalists and world imperialism with all their worst features". Thus the Party announced its intention to prevent Bukhara from developing along the capitalist road after the victory of the people's revolution. As distinct from the Bukhara Communist Party which consisted primarily of working people, the Young Bukhara Party united a fairly large proportion of the lower clergy, the oppositional bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals.<sup>2</sup>

Since Bukhara was on the verge of a democratic revolution Turkestan Communists had no reason to vacillate in defining their stand towards the Young Bukhara Party. Their task was to form a united front of struggle for a democratic Bukhara with it.

On June 30, 1920, however, the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee adopted the following resolution: "Taking into account that after the revolution this party (Young Bukhara—*M. P.*) may develop a tendency to act as a bourgeois party it is necessary to sever all links with the Young Bukhara democrats denying them material and moral support."<sup>3</sup> This decision was passed by three votes to one dissenting vote cast by Valerian Kuibyshev, who was Deputy Chairman of the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee

<sup>1</sup> Bukhara had practically no proletariat at the time.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum dispatched most probably in July 1920 by the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Turkestan Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee to the CC RCP(B).—CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, pp. 213-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

and the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR at the time. The Council for International Propaganda supported Kuibyshev and opposed the Turkestan Commission in this question. On July 21, 1920 the Council's Executive Committee expounded its standpoint in a special memorandum which said that it was incorrect to portray the Young Bukhara revolutionaries as a bourgeois-clerical party, and that, in effect, it was a vividly revolutionary party imbued with hatred for the Emir's despotic regime and having a clearly defined Soviet orientation. This document also stated that it was "illogical to destroy with your own hands an existing and functioning party ... simply because after the revolution, in a new political and social situation part of it may end up in the ranks of the counter-revolution. Then, in the new situation there will be enough time to modify our tactic with regard to these elements. Now, however, what with the shortage of revolutionary forces in Bukhara, it is uneconomical, premature and therefore harmful to push the whole party to the side of the counter-revolution."<sup>1</sup>

This was consistent with Lenin's address at the Second Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East and his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" intended for the Second Congress of the Comintern and published in early July 1920. The Organisational Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee examined the question of the Young Bukhara Party on July 29 and agreed that it was "necessary to provide every assistance to this organisation in its revolutionary struggle against the Emir's despotic rule."<sup>2</sup> The Communists and the Young Bukharans joined forces, thus substantially contributing to the success of the people's revolution in Bukhara.

Leftist views were overcome very slowly and with great difficulty. By mid-1920 the stand of Korean socialists in Russia had changed somewhat and became more complicated. A year earlier Pak Din Shun fully rejected the possibility of supporting national-revolutionary forces, but in an article published in July 1920 he wrote: "We use their

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 1, f. 29, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *The History of the Central Asian Communist Organisations*, Tashkent, 1967, p. 434 (in Russian).



revolutionary spirit in the struggle against world capital and for the triumph of social revolution in the whole world ... we are struggling side by side with the above elements." But then followed a reservation: "We cannot regard them as comrades with whom we can go to the end without any misgivings."<sup>1</sup> In 1919 he asserted that the East was on the threshold of a socialist revolution, but in mid-1920 he expressed a new thought. The East, he said, would pass through two stages of the revolution, first, the bourgeois-democratic, and second, the agrarian-socialist. The first stage would be expressed in the victory of the liberal bourgeoisie and the nationalist intelligentsia, and ought to result in national independence and the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic order. The second, agrarian-socialist stage, would be accomplished by the peasant masses enslaved by feudal lords,<sup>2</sup> and would finally lead to the establishment of socialist society. How did he imagine a socialist revolution could be accomplished without a proletariat or with a very weak working class? Here Pak Din Shun elaborated the idea about the decisive role of the assistance which the socialist working class of the Western countries would be able to offer. He believed that the victory of the first stage of the revolution in Asia would coincide with the victory of the socialist revolution in the West. Once they cast off imperialist and feudal oppression, the working masses of the East would find themselves "subject to the yoke of bourgeois democracy" and then the European working class "filled with a feeling of international solidarity would come to their help". And, Pak Din Shun continued, "it will receive a cordial and fraternal welcome from the proletariat and the working peasantry of Asia, for ... interference of the socialist proletariat of the West would be a great and even essential assistance to the working masses of Asia in their struggle against all and any exploitation".<sup>3</sup> Thus, an agrarian-socialist revolution in the East would be carried out by the peasants under the guidance and with the participa-

<sup>1</sup> See: Pak Din Shun, "The Revolutionary East and the Immediate Task of the Communist International", *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 12, p. 2159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2158.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2160.

tion of the proletariat of the Western countries. After that the country where such a revolution took place, would, with the support of the victorious proletariat of the West, begin gradually to move towards socialism, bypassing capitalism. The Comintern, Pak Din Shun maintained, would have to work out revolutionary methods of building socialist society, i. e., it would have to "begin drafting an economic plan for a possibly less painful transition from the agrarian to the socialist system, avoiding the excruciating period of development of private capitalism in the East".<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, under the influence of Lenin's and Comintern's ideas the views of the Korean socialists about the national liberation movement definitely evolved in the correct direction. Yet all of them asserted that a revolution in the West was inconceivable without the victory of the liberation revolution in the East. It was a vicious circle: the peoples of the East could not defeat the imperialist colonialists without the assistance of the Western proletariat, and the latter could not win without the overthrow of imperialism in the East. Only ideal conditions could break it: namely, simultaneous revolutionary explosions in the industrialised and dependent countries. "It is necessary," wrote Pak Din Shun, "to co-ordinate action in such a way that the European proletariat would strike a blow at the head of its bourgeoisie just when the revolutionary East deals a death-dealing blow at the heart of capital."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, judging by the stand of the Koreans it was clear that the Communists from neighbouring Eastern countries in Soviet Russia had undoubtedly raised the level of their political and theoretical work on problems connected with the national liberation movement. It is an interesting fact that Pak Din Shun referred to the problem of non-capitalist development of the backward countries, which Marx had raised in his time, and endeavoured to solve it in keeping with the new conditions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2162.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2159.

<sup>3</sup> In Soviet Russia the question of the possibility of non-capitalist development for economically backward countries was raised as far back as 1918 by K. Troyanovsky in a programme which he drew up for the Union for the Liberation of the East. He proceeded from the assumption that following the overthrow of foreign domination



Leftist views continued to prevail among the Iranian Communists, including Abukov and Javad Zade, leading members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran who worked in Iran proper, and Sultan Zade, its representative in the Comintern. The latter made an attempt to prove, and not only at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Iran but also at the Second Congress of the Comintern, that Iran faced a socialist revolution and that it had already passed through the bourgeois-democratic stage.<sup>1</sup> Abukov, Javad Zade and others conducted clearly leftist activities in revolutionary Gilan. A detailed account of their work was presented on August 19, 1920 by Sh. Israfilov, an eyewitness of the Gilan Revolution. The leftist activities of these members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran designed to "bridle the bourgeoisie and merchants", not to mention the landowners and khans, caused the national bourgeoisie to quit the revolutionary camp, thus making it easier for the reaction to crush the revolution in Gilan.

Evidently the newspaper *The Life of Nationalities* and, particularly, the first Indian Communists headed by Roy had not discarded their leftist views.

On July 25, 1920, when the Second Congress of the Comintern was already in session, *The Life of Nationalities* published "The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Party of India. An Appeal to the British Proletariat" written and signed by M. N. Roy alone. The Manifesto listed the following basic principles of Roy's leftist concept of the national-colonial question: the struggle of the Indian people was

in Asian countries, owing to the weakness of the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie there would be no other serious social and political force capable of taking power and reorganising economic activity than the class of working people, the village and urban proletariat. He believed that the assistance of the victorious working class of the Western countries and the nature of the agrarian system based on primitive communism would make it possible for the liberated countries of the East to bypass the capitalist stage of development. [K. Troyanovsky, *The East and Revolution*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 67-68 (in Russian)].

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 2, July 29, 1920, p. 1 (in Russian). Later, too, Sultan Zade continued to advocate his "leftist" views.

"rapidly acquiring the nature of a struggle for economic and social emancipation and for the elimination of all class domination". Thus India faced a social revolution and the overwhelming majority of its population did not support the movement for national independence. Proceeding from these two premises Roy, as he subsequently wrote, "disagreed with his (Lenin's—*M. P.*) view that the national bourgeoisie played a historically revolutionary role and therefore should be supported by the Communists".<sup>1</sup>

"The British proletariat," the Manifesto stated, "cannot attain a final and lasting victory if its comrades in the colonies do not join its fight against the common enemy"; the circumstance that India was ruled by the most powerful imperialism "makes it almost impossible to organise the revolutionary proletariat".

By a strange coincidence the Manifesto was published on the Sunday when the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions of the Second Congress of the Comintern held a day-long session and at which Lenin disputed Roy's above-mentioned assertions.<sup>2</sup> Lenin produced convincing arguments proving that his opponent's orientation towards a socialist revolution in Asian countries was both unfounded and premature. He also emphasised that there was nothing to substantiate Roy's claim that "the future of the West depends exclusively on the level of development and the strength of the revolutionary movement in the Eastern countries".<sup>3</sup> Speaking about India to which Roy referred in

<sup>1</sup> *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 1, July 27, 1920, p. 2; *The Life of Nationalities*, July 25, 1920; A. B. Reznikov, Op. cit., *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 5.

<sup>3</sup> In connection with this quotation there may be a question as to the meaning of an assertion contained in Lenin's speech at the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East: "It is self-evident that final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the British, French or German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 161-62.) At the time Lenin spoke about the ultimate victory over imperialism which could come about only as a result of the interaction and unity of the



the first place, Lenin noted that it was unrealistic to think that a social revolution there was imminent, and that "Roy's views were largely unfounded" if even because so far a Communist party had not been set up in that country. This argument was all the more convincing because the Indian Marxists, as we have learned above, failed to set up a Communist party, and not only in India proper but also among the revolutionary émigrés in Soviet Russia.<sup>1</sup>

By the middle of 1920 the international communist movement in the East still had to cope with the serious task of overcoming erroneous views about the national liberation movement. The lingering infantile disorder of "leftism" was all the more dangerous, the more obvious it became that the preparation and organisation of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism in the Eastern countries required an all-out effort by Marxist-Leninist parties whose formation was a matter of the utmost urgency.

Leftist deviations could have caused the young and still unsolid communist movement in the East to break away from the masses and thus become sectarian, i.e., to sustain a defeat even prior to decisive clashes with imperialism. The very possibility of the development of the communist movement in the East, and, consequently, the success of the struggle of the proletarian vanguard for leadership of the national liberation movement depended on whether this malady could be cured. Lenin was the first to grasp the great danger of the infantile disorder of "leftism" in the communist movement both in the West and in the East and was the first to begin a resolute struggle against it.

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revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle of the proletariat of the West and the oppressed peoples of the East, inasmuch as "the vanguard alone cannot secure the transition to communism". (*Ibid.*)

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless *The Life of Nationalities* which published the Manifesto mentioned that it was "drawn up by a member of the Communist Party of India Comrade Roy". The same issue carried an article by Torchinsky "The Revolution in India and Its Conditions" in which the author produced rather strange arguments in support of the thesis about the existence of a Communist Party in India. He wrote: "At present we have absolutely no knowledge either about the material or the intellectual forces of the Communist Party of India, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that it exists because the natural basis of the Communist Party of India is much too extensive." (*The Life of Nationalities*, July 25, 1920.)

His speech at the Eighth Congress of the Party at the beginning of 1919, his report at the Second All-Russia Congress of the Peoples of the East at the end of the same year, his famous book "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, An Infantile Disorder* written in April and May 1920, and, finally, his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" and speeches at the Second Congress of the Comintern in July 1920 were all milestones in this direction. At the same time they were also stages of the formation and the further development of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the national-colonial revolutions.