

Rethinking On India-China Relations Are The Revisionists Immune To It ? *

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One would not like to take an 'I told you' - attitude when the line advocated for a long by one is accepted by others who are now prepared to fight for it.

Such a self-righteous attitude would obviously not help the cause for which one has been fighting for long—the cause whose success may alter the whole course of political development in the country.

I would therefore refrain from recalling the various abusive epithets used against us in the columns of *Blitz* and like-minded periodicals—epithets based on the same assessment of our Party as had been made by the Shastri-Nanda Government.

I would, on the other hand, show an appreciation of the fact that some "rethinking" (the word is exactly what has been used by *Blitz*, June 19, in its feature "News Behind News") has started in the ruling circles.

Mood of Give and Take

"The old Attitude," says the author of the above mentioned *Blitz* article, "that there be no talks with Peking until it accepts the Colombo proposals *in toto* has worn out, and there is visible desire to come to an agreement."

"There is a mood of give and take," *Blitz* continues, "a keen desire to settle the border dispute on terms which were unthinkable a few years back :

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"For example, it is being seriously suggested that the recognition of the McMahon Line was far more important than Aksaichin. This is a distinct change from the past because when China had proposed concession in Aksaichin in lieu of accepting the McMahon Line, India had then said 'No'."

More forthright than the writer of the above-mentioned column in *Blitz* (who does not express his own view, but only 'reports' what is happening in the ruling circles) is the editorial comment of the political and cultural weekly *Now*. The author of those comments writes as follows :

"The Colombo proposals are not Ten Commandments and none of the friendly nations who originally drafted them cared to say publicly that our interpretation of the implications of the proposals is the only correct one. If President Nasser now wants us to go beyond the Colombo proposals, that should not make us jittery."

Pointing out how the "three major population groups in Asia" (the Chinese, Pakistanis and the Indonesians) are "arraigned against us"; how it is unlikely that the Japanese "forsake the vast potential of China's market merely to placate India"; and how the other Asian nations have been "reluctant to take sides on the India-China quarrel", the Commentator adds :

"Despite American bombs, bazookas and money, South Vietnam is unlikely to be there for very long. We should perhaps by then still have some residual friends in south Korea, Formosa Malaysia. But is that the consummation we are devoutly looking forward to?"

These, however, are not stray voices. Long before *Blitz* and *Now* started writing such articles, others like Editor Nonporia of *The Times of India*, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Vinoba Bhave, R.K. Khadiolkar, MP, P.N. Saprú, MP and so on in their own different ways gave expression to views which are in content similar to the above. Everyone of them held and expressed the view that the continuing state of cold war between India and China does no good to either country.

Negotiations - Only Way

Anybody who does his or her own thinking of the problem can see that the issue involved between India and China cannot be solved by military means; neither India nor China can take, by military means, what each of them claims to be its territory but is actually in the physical possession of the other; practical common sense therefore demands that the issue should be settled through political means - negotiations in which each side shows willingness to make adjustments with the other's claims, even though one's own national interests are defended to the utmost possible extent.

It is a matter of satisfaction that this approach is receiving greater and greater support, or, in the words of the author of the above-mentioned column in *Blitz*, "It is being increasingly realized that India cannot fight both China and Pakistan and also, at the same time, carry the burden of economic development."

But one cannot but recall that approximately 1,000 members of the Communist Party of India were arrested and detained all over India in 1962-63 for no other "crime" than that they gave expression to views which are now being increasingly accepted by non-party people.

Many of them were released in subsequent months, but their release was later followed by the re-arrest of several of them, while more were arrested for the first time.

Once again, therefore, nearly 1,000 Communists are today in detention for the "crime" of having advocated a line of action in relation to the India-China question which is now being increasingly advocated by several others.

Differences in National Council

Much has been spoken and written about the "pro-China" section of the Indian Communists who, at the October-November meeting of the National Council of the (then united) Communist Party of India, opposed the stand taken by the "pro-

Russia" group. It has been repeated *ad nauseum* that this "pro-China" wing supported the Chinese aggression, that they welcomed the Chinese armies as liberators and so on.

Such canards were spread against us not only by the Government (as, for example, in Nanda's Broadcast and white paper), but also by the Right-wing Communists. But, in view of the 'rethinking' that has now started on the problem of the India-China relations, let us hope that there will be greater objectivity in the assessment of the role played by those who are popularly known as "Leftists" and "Centrists" in the (then united) Communist Party of India. Let us hope that facts will be seen as they are, not as they are being painted by our political opponents.

The stand taken by Dange and his friends on the one hand and that of those of us who opposed it did not consist in the question of whether or not to participate in the defence efforts organized by the Government. For, as Dange himself stated in his reply to the Chinese, everyone in the National Council was for defence. The real difference between these points of views was as follows :

Hatred towards China

FIRSTLY, the Rightist resolution had a nakedly anti-Chinese tone - a tone whose practical implication was that the Communist Party should base all its political activity on hatred for the Chinese. We of the so-called "Left" and "Centre" thought that taking such an attitude would, apart from being contrary to the proletarian internationalism, be opposed to the national interests of India herself.

It is a matter of satisfaction to us that the senselessness and futility of the attitude of hatred for China are being increasingly realized. There is, for instance, a Commentator in the journal *Now* who deplores the situation (both in relation to India-China as well as to India-Pakistan question) :

"Only course the Government has left open for him (a publicist) in its handling of foreign affairs is to go on whipping

up a sterile hatred and, at the same time, reconcile it with complete inaction."

Referring particularly to the India-China question, he says :

"Since the Chinese announced a cease-fire, which our Government did not condescend to accept formally, nothing has happened on that front, not a cartridge has been fired. On the other hand, no attempt has been made to put an end to this futile hostility. Simultaneously, public opinion remains inflammable, dead against any settlement, scaring off the Government from all conciliatory moves."

It was this task of "inflaming public opinion", "scaring off the Government from all conciliatory moves", that the Rightist resolution laid on the shoulders of Party members. To this we were firmly opposed.

SECONDLY, the Rightist resolution in so many words asked the Government not to settle with China unless she accepts the precondition that the troops of both the countries take up the position occupied by them on September 8, 1962. We of the "Left" and the "Centre" opposed such a rigid stand and advocated the line that every efforts should be made to open talks with China with a view to arriving at an agreement which will be honourable to both sides.

Much has happened since then. Pandit Nehru himself subsequently modified the earlier Government stand with regard to the precondition for opening talks with China - restoration of the line as it stood on September 8, 1962. His successor, it appears, is prepared to relent even on the acceptance of the Colombo Proposals *in toto*.

Imperialist Military Aid

The THIRD question on which we deffered from the Rightists was that of imperialist military "aid". The Rightist resolution welcomed the "aid", provided it was on "commercial terms". We opposed it, pointing out the acceptance of imperialist "aid" would be the beginning of the end of national sovereignty, as has happened in the case of other countries.

Here again, let us note, more and more people have begun to realize the danger which imperialist "aid" constitutes to our nation. The hope entertained in October-November, 1962, that the Chinese armies could be beaten back with arms secured from the United States and the United Kingdom has proved to be entirely baseless.

Refusal to supply us with the arms which our experts consider necessary for India's defence; pressure on us to settle with Pakistan on lines which would help imperialist intrigues both in Pakistan as well as in India, particularly in Kashmir; connivance at Pakistan's use of arms supplied by the United States against us - such have been the implication of imperialist "aid on commercial terms".

One may, at this stage, note that 'rethinking' on the India-China question has been the least on the part of the Right-wing Communists - barring, of course, such frankly chauvinistic elements as the Jan Sangh and other reactionary parties in the country.

It is significant it is not in *New Age*, the Rightist organ, but in such journals as *Blitz* and *Now* that voices have begun to be heard that "a resumption of fighting is ruled out, talks are obviously the only solution".

That section of the Indian Communists which was interested in denouncing us as "pro-China" and "anti-national" seem to be the only ones (barring, of course, the parties of Right reaction) who are interested in the continuance of cold war between India and China.

Why They Are Afraid

This is understandable. For, the entire strategy on which the Right wing based itself when they decided to have their showdown with the militant rank and file, and that section of the leadership which gave expression to the sentiments of the rank and file, was to utilize the anti-China chauvinism of the masses which happened to be very strong in 1962 and continued even later.

To admit now that this chauvinism is against the interest of the nation, to start asking for a settlement with China, would mean the crumbling down of the whole edifice of Right-wing politics. Those rank and file members of the Party who are still with them will naturally ask the Rightist leaders : if it is now necessary to abandon the political line of anti-China hatred, was it not wrong on your part to have broken with the Leftists on the ground that they were not with you in your crusade against China?

One can sympathize with the Rightist leaders who will be unable to give a coherent answer to this question. But how long can they fail to react to actual developments which have shown the utter bankruptcy of the line of anti-China hatred which they have been persuing?