

CHAPTER – V

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL OF THE COMMUNISTS IN BARAK VALLEY

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The Communist Party of India, right from its inception faced various intra party conflict and contradiction on the issue of base political line and policy of the party under different political condition of the country. This trend of the party became acute after independence. In spite of strong commitment of the Indian Communists towards Marxism and Socialist revolution, the Communist Party of India failed to achieve its ultimate aim which was laid down by the party at the time of its foundation i.e. the task of accomplishing the Socialist revolution in India and to establish the rule of working class and peasantry due to various reasons. In this chapter we have discussed the activity, strategy, ideological aspect as well as intra party conflict on the issue of base political line which ultimately resulted in the split of the party in 1964. This caused a great setback to the party to be survived as a single and genuine Communist Party.

The Indian Communists after Independence:

During the post colonial period, in the Indian politics the Communist leaders lost too much energy and time in internal disputes on the issue of methodology and strategy of the party. There emerged two groups radical and moderate within the party during that period. The radical group, discarding its faith in the constitutional and parliamentary politics pleaded for militant activities to liberate the masses from the economic exploitation by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat at any cost. On the other hand, the moderate groups, keeping in view the changed circumstances of the national and international political situation, argued that neither the soil nor the

circumstance was favourable to launch violent revolution to achieve the goal. Hence the moderate Communist leaders expressed their faith in the parliamentary politics and collaboration with the left political parties of the country with a view to bringing change in the existing pattern of the society. Thus, the two divergent view points of the CPI's leaders in regard to follow the course of their activities in the post independent era carried heterogeneous character which ultimately resulted in the split of the party into two divisions – the CPI and the CPI (M).⁴⁹⁵

At the time of British departure from India, Indian political situation, moved towards a critical situation causing several political complications. Due to full determination of Muslim League leaders to accept nothing less than an independent Pakistan, the partition politics reached at climax with the result that the communal riots became the only device to solve the problem. The Congress leaders were busy with negotiating the term with British authorities for transfer of power. So far as the Communists were concerned, though, they were yet to recover from the setback caused to them due to their 'People's War' policy and severance of their relations from the Congress, they too, were planning to wage the war against the nationalist bourgeoisie and seize the machine of power for the establishment of the proletariat government. On the other hand, the British left India leaving all these problems to the Indians.⁴⁹⁶

When independence came the CPI at first welcomed it and wanted to strengthen the hands of the leftist against the rightist Patel, but later its views about the Nehru Government became critical. It was only in December 1947, that the Communist Party of India characterized Nehru Government as a whole as a government of the Indian big bourgeoisie, which had entered into an agreement with British imperialism and formed an alliance with the Indian princes and landlords. During this time the radicals within the CPI were getting restive under the moderate leadership of P. C. Joshi, the then General Secretary of the party. Later, the radicals advocated that the democratic and socialist revolution must be intertwined and that, accordingly, the Communist must attack the bourgeoisie as a whole.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁵ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)* Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. P XIII.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. P 101.

⁴⁹⁷ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-320 321.

As per the Marxist formula those who make a compromise with the capitalists are not true Communists but reformists. After independence, the radical communists of India held the view that the country was yet to be liberated. They maintained that the imperialist rule was substituted with the rule of the nationalist bourgeoisie, who were determined to perpetuate the capitalist system in the country. In their opinion, the Congress was a party supported by the top industrialists, businessmen, landlords and the persons of vested interest and commanded by their installed agents. Indian Communist leaders had neither any hope from the Congress leaders nor any faith in the constitutional framework which was in the making. The only way to liberate the country from the catch of the nationalist bourgeoisie was to wage war against them and seize the power.

There was another group of the CPI which under the changed circumstances did not express its faith in the way of militancy. What it wanted was to maintain the policy of United Front. It was in favour of sharing powers with Congress with a view to bringing about economic changes from within. Thus, the two divergent opinions of the CPI in regard to follow the course of their activities in the post independent India witnessed the heterogeneous character of the party. P. C. Joshi was the leader who represented the moderate group of the Communists while Ranadive and Adhikari were the supporters of the militant path and favoured to resort to violent methods and capture the seat of authority by using force.⁴⁹⁸

During post colonial period, groupism became dominant within the CPI on the question of the line of policy and different Communist leaders were advocating different policy to be adopted by the party for its survival. But none of them were able to fix a genuine formulation of Marxist policy to be adopted in the Indian situation. They did so merely by imitating blindly the Russian and Chinese Communist leaders. But in a real communist party, there cannot exist different group. This happened because....they (the Communists) avoided the long and complex struggle to develop oneness in approach, uniformity of thinking, singleness of purpose and concrete conception of collective leadership essential for building up a genuine Communist Party.⁴⁹⁹ Regarding groupism of the Indian communists, Shibdas Ghosh states, “so

⁴⁹⁸ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)* Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-102 103.

⁴⁹⁹ Mukharjee, Nihar(edited), *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol. II)*. Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. P-212.

long as these groups can compromise and adjust with one another the party remains united. When that is no longer possible, the party splits giving birth to a new party.⁵⁰⁰ Due to the existence of groups and absence of democratic centralism, collective leadership and dialectical method of interpretation of any event or phenomenon, the CPI split in 1964 into CPI and CPI (M) and both the parties are struggling to mobilize popular support in winning elections under the name of the Communist party to capture power in the government and politics.

But it would be wrong to say that the CPI was isolated from the peasantry and working class of India during post colonial period. During this period, the Communists were involved with the peasantry and working class to organise various democratic movement on various issues and demands related to the life of the common masses. But due to the lack of proper theoretical orientation of Marxism, the Indian Communists failed to organise those movements as a substitute of anti-capitalist movement. They did all only to gather the common masses around their party for narrow political motive i.e. to win seats in the legislatures.

Attempt to capture power by armed struggle:

In the Second Congress of the CPI held in Calcutta on February 28, 1948, the major issue of discussion was to decide the future course of the Communist activities in India. Both the groups of the party expressed their viewpoints but the faction led by B. T. Ranadive remained victorious. The Stalin's view of two camps – Capitalist and Communist – was accepted whereby it was decided to wage revolution in India in both the agrarian and the industrial sectors. They planned to attack imperialism, feudalism and bourgeoisie. P. C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the party and the leader of the moderate Communists, lost their ideological battle. As a result, Ranadive succeeded him as the General Secretary of the CPI. But, he, too, could not continue to hold the portfolio for a long period because of Russian displeasure which he incurred by criticizing Mao's path to lead revolution. He was succeeded by Rajeshwar Rao.

When the government of Nehru was badly engaged in solving the problems caused by communal riots and the issue of national disintegration arising from the British policy of divide and rule, the CPI waged violent revolution in several states of

⁵⁰⁰ Mukharjee, Nihar(edited), *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol. II)*. Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. P-213.

India in 1948. As per its programmes of strikes in factories, railways, unrest in rural areas, revolt in the police and army and the methods of guerrilla warfare on the line of Mao, the party came ahead and began mass insurrection. The state of West Bengal, Madras, Assam, Bihar, Tripura, Hyderabad and Manipur were the centres of the Communist violent activities. Telengana of Hyderabad remained the worst affected area from the onslaught of the Communists. The Communists made the Nehru's right wing policies as the target of their attack by exposing them among the people. They made all the efforts to stimulate and exploit all form of urban and industrial unrest.

During this period, the communists in Cachar district were also preparing for violent activity on the basis of the decision adopted in the Second Congress of the party. In Cachar district, at a meeting of the district and the local committee which assembled on 09/10/49 it was decided to strictly adopted the strategy and principle formulated by the Second Congress of the communist party and a final programme of work was also decided upon giving priority to the organization of the resistance army in village amongst the following:

(a) to organize resistance army, (b) to prepare for offensive, (c) to keep volunteers alert to resist police raids, (d) to arrange rescue of arrested leaders at the cost of life if necessary, (e) to intensify drive for funds, (f) to intensify propaganda work, (g) to intensify training of red guards.⁵⁰¹

As a result, the government declared the CPI as an illegal party and started to arrest the leaders of the party in large scale. So, the party went underground to carry on its activity. Like other parts of India, the Communists in Assam were also declared unlawful by the government. In this condition of the party, the Communists of Cachar shifted the office of the district committee of the party from Silchar to Kalachera and Bhagerkuna and then to Borshinga Cha Bagan of Udharbond police station area. During the underground activity, some tea garden labour also became committed communist and some also emerged as leaders. At Borshinga Upashak Nunia emerged as the most important local communist leader.⁵⁰² Due to the police raid at Udharbond area, the underground office was shifted to Badripar of Banskandi Ranipur. From

⁵⁰¹ *Review of Communism in Assam for the month of September, 1949*, by Deputy Director General of police (SIB). Dt. Shillong 7th October, 1949.

⁵⁰² *An Interview with Dipak Bhattacharjee, aged 77 years*. Ex- MLA from Hailakandi and formerly member of the the CPI(M) Assam State Committee. Deshbandu Road, Silchar.

underground, the Communists of Cachar continued their organizational activity in different areas of Cachar district.⁵⁰³

On the other hand, the Government of India got alarm of the Communist unlawful and violent activities. The government became stern and applied several repressive methods to nip the Communist activities in the bud. Having got convinced of the Communist's programme of revolt, Nehru brought the Preventive Detention Act in action with the result that a large number of Communists including their leaders were arrested and detained. He asked the people not to be afraid of the Communists violent activities. Nehru made appeals to the people to face the problem boldly and fight with full determination. He assured the poor section of the people that the government was bound to serve the cause of the downtrodden sections of the society through peaceful and constitutional means.

The reign of terror and the chaotic state in the country created by the CPI did not remain in action for more than a couple of years. By 1950, the government was able to control the unlawful and violent activities of the Communists. The sabotagous activities of the Communists to achieve the goal were disliked by the general mass of the country on the one hand and their very aim to overthrow the government through insurrection and uprising was abhorred by the bourgeoisie on the other.

It is also obvious that the Communists were in haste. Their understanding that the situation was ripe for uprising and people were ready to accept Communism suddenly was based on false ground. There is no denying the fact that the feeling of class consciousness and class antagonism had taken place in the political behaviour of the people with the appearance of proletariat class comprising workers and peasants of India. But what they lacked was their political culture and political socialization. The political culture has close relationship with the working of political system. It appears that the leaders of the CPI launched their programmes without preparing the proper ground work. They did not pay much heed to the existing incomplete political culture and socialization of the general mass. Indian Communists had everything, political ideologies, political values and symbol. What they lacked was their efforts for orientation of the general mass towards the values of Communism.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰³ *Souvenir, C.P.I (M) Cachar-Hailakandi 18th. District Conference. Silchar-2005. P-19.*

⁵⁰⁴ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)* Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-104-107.

Communist movements in Cachar during post colonial period:

After the great Tebhaga Movement of Bengal and Assam which was ended in 1950, the Indian Communists failed to launch any organised, powerful and militant peasant or working class movement in the area under study. It does not mean that, there was no favourable objective condition in the country to give birth to any organised, powerful and militant communist movement for the cause of the toiling masses of India. Even after the transfer of power on August 15, 1947, the working class and peasantry of India were not free from the semi-feudal bondage and capitalist exploitation. The transfer of power did not bring any significant economic change in the life of the Indian peasantry and working class. In this situation, the Indian peasantry and working class were ready to face any eventualities to get rid of the exploitative situation. But the political behaviour of the peasantry and working class of India was not upto the mark for revolutionary uprisings and bringing about revolutionary transformation of the Indian society.

After independence, the Communists of Cachar like other parts of the country lost too much time in internal conflict on the question of the line of policy of the party. But they did not ignore to organize democratic movements for the cause of the toiling masses. After the great Tebhaga Movement, though the Communists in undivided Cachar were not able to give birth to any organized mass movement, but time to time they organized various democratic movements on various issues. We have cited below some democratic movements organised by the communists in Cachar district during post colonial period. The main programmes of those movements were limited to organizing mass meetings rallies, demonstrations, processions and deputation etc.

The Communists organized a public meeting at Katlichara (Kalibari premises) on 06/04/57 under the presidentship of Mohammad Ali Barbhuiya, pleader, Hailakandi.⁵⁰⁵ In this meeting, besides the president, Sri Nani Gopal Dey, Haridas Deb, Achinta Kumar Bhattacharjee, Ranabijoy Sen and Dr. Lal Bihari Nath delivered short speeches in course of which they vehemently criticized the Congress

⁵⁰⁵ *Weekly Confidential Report for the Week ending of 10th. July 1957.* From the Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Cachar to the Dy. Inspector General of Police (C.I.D), Assam. Memo. No. not visible. File No. S.B.I/28/57, Part I of 1957. Sub: Communism: General Activities: Cachar District.

Government for imposing heavy taxes on the poor people and for not acquiring garden waste land and distributing the same to the landless tillers.⁵⁰⁶ The meeting adopted a charter of demand and decided to organize mass movement on those demands. The demands were:

- 1) To locate refinery in Assam in stead of at Barauni in Bihar.
- 2) To construct railway line from Lala Bazar to Jamira via Katlichera.
- 3) To establish sugar and paper mills etc. in the district of Cachar.
- 4) To distribute government reserve land to the landless people and the tribals.
- 5) To provide proper relief and arrange proper rehabilitation for the displaced persons by distributing lands to them from governments reserves.
- 6) To render all possible help to the cultivators by granting agricultural loan and supply of seeds etc.⁵⁰⁷

Even after the end of the Tebhaga Movement, the CPI led Kisan Sabha was very active in different pockets of Cachar district. Many Kisan Sabha leaders emerged from the peasant community in those areas out of the spontaneous activity of the Communists among the peasantry of the district. In Udharbond, Ram Ratan Bhar, Ramdhan Bhar, Kalipada Bhattacharjee, Nripendra Chakraborty, Jagdishwar Sarma, Baldev Nunia, Nayan Chandra Seal, Bari Malakar, Mufiz Ali, Dwarika Das and Abdul Bari emerged as the Kisan Sabha leaders.⁵⁰⁸ On 9th April, 1957 at 7 PM a meeting of the Kisan Sabha workers of Udharbond was held in camera (closed door meeting) in the house Ram Ratan Bhar of Kalachera, P.S Udharbond where Gopendralal Roy was the main speaker. After prolonged discussion, it was decided in the meeting that a proposal should be placed before the Assam Legislative Assembly in its 1st session by the party MLA's for abolition of zamindary system in this state of Assam.⁵⁰⁹

Apart from organizing some democratic movement, the Communists of Cachar also adopted various means to spread the influence of the party ideology among

⁵⁰⁶ *Weekly Confidential Report for the Week ending of 10th. July 1957.* From the Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Cachar to the Dy. Inspector General of Police (C.I.D), Assam. Memo. No. not visible. File No. S.B.I/28/57, Part I of 1957. Sub: Communism: General Activities: Cachar District.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ *Weekly Confidential Report for the Week ending of 10th. April, 1957.* From the Superintendent of Police(D.I.B) Cachar to the Dy. Inspector General of Police (C.I.D), Assam. Memo. No.S.I.B/28/57/41 A of 15.05.57. File No. S.B.I/28/57, Part I of 1957. Sub: Communism: General Activities: Cachar District.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

different section of the people like students, cultural activists etc. and gathered popular support around the party. The I.P.T.A members Dr. Nirode Bhusan Dey, Nishith Ranjan Das, Chinta Haran Das and other I.P.T.A members of Karimganj had opened a reading club at Station Road, Karimganj styled as “*Sanskriti Sangshad*” during the later part of 1956. They have purchased some literatures and also subscribed some news papers viz. “*Swadhinata*”, “*Natun Assam*” and “*Adhikar*” etc. for the purpose. The aims and objects of the *Sangshad* are to induce the students and youths towards I.P.T.A.⁵¹⁰

In the month of June 1957, Motilal Das Jagirdar started a Co-operative Agricultural Farm at Kanakpur part III, P.S Lakhipur with 16 members of whom some were Congress workers.⁵¹¹ Motilal Das Jagirdar was labeled as the political brain of the Kanakpur area by the Intelligence Branch of the Assam Police who exercised paramount influence over the mass people of that area by taking initiative in all matters relating to social work. Although, some local Congress workers have been taken in the said co-operative bank and agricultural farm for removing suspicion from the minds of the people that these were not communist sponsored bodies, his ulterior remains to extend party influence gradually amongst the mass people through the medium of such welfare activities.⁵¹²

The Communists in Cachar district also intensified their work on the student community of the district and they achieved great success in this field. At that time, Kamalendu Bhattacharjee, General Secretary of the Student Federation of Silchar⁵¹³ was the leading organizer of the student Federation of the district. Under the leadership of Kamalendu Bhattacharjee and Abdul Hoque Choudhury, General Secretary of the Student Federation of Cachar,⁵¹⁴ intensive works were carried to organize the student community of the Barak valley under the red banner. At the

⁵¹⁰ *Intelligence Report to the Deputy Inspector General of Police (C.I.D) Assam, Shillong, From Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Cachar. Memo. No. 17981/C/A-3(5) (24)/54, dated the 31st. Oct. 1958. File No. S.B.I/28/57 of part. II, 1957. Sub: Communism: Cachar.*

⁵¹¹ *Intelligence Report to the Deputy Inspector General of Police (C.I.D) Assam, Shillong, From Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Cachar. Memo.No.17669/C/A(3) 111/57, dated the 25th Oct. 1957. File No. S.B.I/28/57, Part III of 1957. Sub: Communism Cachar.*

⁵¹² *Ibid..*

⁵¹³ *Weekly Confidential Report for the Week ending of 3rd. April, 1957. From the Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Cachar to the Dy. Inspector General of Police (C.I.D), Assam. Memo. No. Not visible. File No. S.B.I/28/57, Part I of 1957. Sub: Communism: General Activities: Cachar District.*

⁵¹⁴ *Weekly Confidential Report for the Week ending of the 30th July 1958. From the Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Cachar to the Dy. Inspector General of Police (C.I.D), Assam. Memo. No.S.I.B/37/58, dated 18-08-58. File No. S.B.I/37/58 of 1958, Part I of 1957. Sub: Students' Federation: Cachar.*

Assam State Conference of the Student Federation held at Gauhati on 20th September, Kamalendu Bhattacharjee attended as the delegate from Cachar district.⁵¹⁵ Abdul Hoque Choudhury and Kamalendu Bhattacharjee visited various places of Barak valley and organized various meetings of the students to organize the student community under the Student federation. Both the student leaders organized a big student meeting at Hailakandi on 29th July 1958⁵¹⁶ which inspired a large section of the student community towards Communism.

The Communists in Cachar under the banner of *Cachar Zila Krishak Sabha O Cachar krishi, Ban Shramik Union* organized a mass peasant meeting on 15th November, 1957⁵¹⁷ at Gandhibagh, Silchar to organize movement on the following demands:

- 1) To fix the minimum price for paddy and rice, purchase of paddy from the peasants by the government with adequate price.
- 2) To execute immediately the Adhjar and Ceilling Act.
- 3) To declare eviction as illegal.
- 4) To distribute the surplus and fellow land among the landless peasants.
- 5) Work for unemployed people.
- 6) To stop harassment of peasants by money-lenders.
- 7) To provide agricultural loan to the peasants.
- 8) To form branches of Kisan Sabha in village areas.⁵¹⁸

During the post colonial period, by the activity of the Communists, the Communist Party of India, the All India Kisan Sabha and All India Student Federation became very popular organization in various villages and tea garden areas of undivided Cachar district.

Constitutional line and parliamentary politics of CPI:

After independence, though the CPI labeled the independence as a fake independence and gave a call for countrywide revolution to establish the role of the working class

⁵¹⁵ Ibid. the 15th October 1958. Memo. No.S.I.B/7857/31/10/58. File No. S.B.I/37/58 of 1958, Part I of 1957. Sub: Students' Federation: Cachar.

⁵¹⁶ Op. cit

⁵¹⁷ Ibid. the 18th. November, 1957. Memo. No.S.I.B/54/57/27 B of 18.11.57. File No. S.B.I/28/57, Part I of 1957. Sub: Communism: General Activities: Cachar District.

⁵¹⁸ Leaflet Circulated by Cachar Zila Kisan Sabha Abong Krishi O Bonshramik Union, Silchar. File No.S.B.I/28/57. Part III of 1957. Communism: Cachar.

and peasantry, but they soon drifted from the path of armed revolution against the Nehru Government within a short period of time. Gradually they changed their attitude towards the Nehru Government and decided to enter into the policy of constitutional and peaceful method of accomplishing the task of revolution. In this way, the Communist Party of India completely engaged in the parliamentary politics and was busy in mobilising popular support for their political gain i.e. capturing seats in the state legislature as well as in centre.

The step of the of the Indian Communists regarding armed revolution provided a great set back to the Communists and ultimately they bound to left this strategy and adopted a new one to regain their lost prestige and position. It is for the second time that the CPI admitted that it had taken a wrong step after the people's war policy. When the so-called revolution of the CPI failed to achieve the required goal, the Communist leaders thought revising the policy of the party thoroughly. In this regard, a four men secret commission of Indian Communists consisting of S. A. Dange, Ajoy Ghosh, Rajeshwar Rao and Basvapunniah reached Moscow to contact the Russian leadership. Having come to know the reason of the failure of the Indian Communist revolt, Russian experts soon realized that the revolt was launched without sufficient ground work. Hence, a commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union suggested Indian delegation to switch over the policy of revolution to that of 'Constitutional Communism' and the United Front. In other words, they were advised to adopt the tactics applied by Mao in China during the course of his struggle against Chiang Kai Shek.

The Indian delegation was asked "to unite all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India against the reactionary big bourgeoisie and feudal princes."⁵¹⁹ On the other hand, the leaders of the British Communist Party including Rajani Palme Dutt also advised the CPI's leaders to renounce the way of violence and adopt the policy of United Front and constitutional path. They also asked Indian Communist leaders to bring change from within by capturing seats in the legislature and prepare for the coming first general elections of the country to be held in January 1952. Thus, a new phase was started in the history of Indian Communism. The special conference of the party was

⁵¹⁹ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. P-108.

called in Calcutta in 1951 to reconstitute its new policies and programmes. Emphasis was laid down to participate in the first general elections of India with a view of sharing power and causing changes through ballots and not bayonets. Rajeshwar Rao who had succeeded Ranadive as the General Secretary of the party was now succeeded by Ajoy Ghosh.⁵²⁰

The success achieved by the CPI in the first general elections was surprising. By scoring all together 26 seats in the Lok Sabha the party succeeded in achieving the position of the largest opposition party of the lower house of the Indian Parliament. Madras, West Bengal and Travancore – Cochin were the main fields of the CPI's electoral battle for the Lok Sabha. In the state assemblies the CPI and its electoral allies secured better position in Madras (62 seats), West Bengal (28 seats), Hyderabad (42 seats) and Travancore – Cochin (32 seats). It also obtained one seat in Assam, seven in Orissa, four in Punjab, two in Manipur and twelve in Tripura.⁵²¹

In the Second General Elections held in 1957 the Communists were able to establish a government in Kerala. Further they secured more than double their popular votes in the centre as compared to the 1952 figures. In the Second General Elections in India in 1957 the Communist Party considerably improved its position in the centre as well as in the states.⁵²² So far as the Lok Sabha is concerned, in the 1957 general elections the Communists secured 9.8 percent of the popular votes.⁵²³

The emergence of internal division within the CPI:

After independence, the Communist Party of India was very confused regarding the national question of the country which was unable to fix its specific stand in the nation building. Just after independence it adopted a hostile attitude towards the Nehru Government and afterwards adopted the policy of United Front on the eve of the first general elections. But after few years, reverse was the case in the policy of the CPI and the Indian Communists regarding the Nehru Government. The hostile attitude of the CPI towards Nehru Government got a sudden check in the fourth

⁵²⁰ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-108-109.

⁵²¹ Suda, J.P., *Main Currents of Social and Political Thought in Modern India (Vol. II.)*, 2nd. edition, Meerut-1980. P 34.

⁵²² Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. P-337.; The details has been set out in table 1.

⁵²³ *Ibid.* P-337.; The result of the 1957 general elections to the Lok Sabha were as set out in Table 2.

Congress of the party held at Palghat in April 1956. In this very Congress the party declared that the steps taken by the Nehru Government for strengthening national freedom and national economy against imperialist, feudal and monopoly interests, will receive our most energetic and unstained support. The basic reasons behind the changed attitude of the CPI were the change in the leadership of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and the changing attitude of Nehru Government towards Indian economy.

With the demise of Stalin in 1953, the world witnessed a major change in the policy of the Communist Party of Soviet Union. At the Twentieth Congress of the party Khrushchev, the successor of Stalin, straightway rejected his predecessor's thesis of 'two camps'. Observing a number of newly emerging states of the Third World in the international political scene, Khrushchev introduced a new theory of brotherhood between the Socialist camp and the states of the Third World. As a result, he did not want to antagonize Nehru who had established his best reputation among the newly emerged states. Khrushchev along with Bulganin visited India in 1956 and succeeded in having a great accord with India. This compelled Indian Communists to change their hitherto maintained attitude towards Nehru and his government.⁵²⁴

But the radical group of the party was not in a position to support this newly adopted stand of the CPI. They had no faith in this policy of the party which was dictated by Moscow. They did not believe that this attitude of the party will bring any good for the Indian masses. The radical elements had no faith in democratic and peaceful methods in bringing effective changes in the basic aspects of the society while the moderates had the patience to bring changes through constitutional means. With a view to redrafting the constitution of the party on the required line, the CPI state unit of Kerala under the leadership of Namboodripad took the initiative to call a special party conference which was held at Amritsar in 1958. It was the Amritsar Conference which decided to transform the party from a 'Cadre Party' to 'Massive Party' and the party cells were to be replaced by the local party branches. Clear indication was given in the preamble of the new constitution of the party that the party had departed from a "front organisation of the working class". The new constitution reaffirmed the CPI's faith in Marxism – Leninism but it kept the right reserved to

⁵²⁴ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. P-112-113.

mould the policy of the party and its programmes keeping in view the existing conditions of the country.⁵²⁵

The preamble of the new party constitution adopted at Amritsar mentioned that the goal of the Communist Party would be to strive “to unite and lead all patriotic and democratic forces in the country in the struggle for defence and consolidation of national freedom.”⁵²⁶ No reference was made to the inevitability of revolution or the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat but it was stated that the party would seek to apply “the theory of Marxism-Leninism to the realities of Indian situation” and to “organise itself in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism.” At this Congress a new clause was added to the party constitution which provided: “The Communist Party of India strives to achieve full democracy and Socialism by peaceful means. It considers that by developing a powerful mass movement, by winning a majority in the parliament and by backing it with mass sections, the working class and its allies can overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and ensures that parliament becomes an instrument of people’s will for effecting fundamental changes in the economic, social and state structure.”⁵²⁷

With the appearance of Khrushchev in Russia as the vanguard of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a marked shift in the policy of Soviet Communist Party had begun to take place on both the domestic and foreign fronts. After 1956 there was a clear indication that the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) had moved towards the theory of ‘Peaceful Co-existence’, renouncing its faith in the theory of ‘class war’. On the other hand, Mao-Tse-Tung took the chanted attitude of the Russian Communist Party as an act of ‘revisionism’ and a compromise with the imperialist forces of the world. Quoting Marx and Lenin, he argued that since Capitalism and Communism were antagonistic by their nature, the place for compromise between these two did not exist. Those who believed in compromise were not Communists but revisionists. So, the adverse opinions of China and Russia in regard to the future course of Communism divided them into two hostile camps with the result that Communists of other countries (including India) who depended on Russia and China for the guidance and direction found themselves in the Whirlpool of

⁵²⁵ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. P-15.

⁵²⁶ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. P-336.

⁵²⁷ Ibid. Pp-336-337.

two cross-currents. One was the attainment of Communism through parliamentary democracy and another was to obtain the goal by using violent methods.

In India the radical Communists preferred the Chinese way while the moderate Communists were inclined towards the Russian new line of policy. As a result, the distance between these two opposite factions began to increase. The obstacle before Indian Communists in the late sixties was the worsening relations between China and India for Sino-Indian border conflict. Especially pro-Chinese group of Indian Communists who expected all kinds of assistance from the People's Republic of China could not suppress their feeling for a long period. There were some more Communists who under the leadership of Ajoy Ghosh blamed both India and China for the border conflict. They were called the centrist group.⁵²⁸

At this very tense and confusing atmosphere, the party's Sixth Congress was held at Vijayawada in April 1961 at the presence of Michael Suslov who was sent to India by the CPSU with a view to bringing the opposite factions of the CPI to the line of unity. The main issue before the Congress of the CPI was whether to support Nehru Government or not especially during the period when China would make an aggression on India. Representing the pro-Russian group, Ajoy Ghosh, the general Secretary of the party, put forward the draft of the political resolution. The right wing was of the opinion that since Indian National Congress was no more a reactionary force, it must be supported. Moreover, there were several progressive leader of the Congress who had faith in revolutionary Socialism and they were committed to bring about basic change in the economic pattern of the society through peaceful means. Therefore, the CPI, keeping in view the interest of Socialism in long run wanted to support Nehru Government.

Ranadive, the leader of the left wing, also produced a draft resolution before the Congress. Since the leftists had no faith in peaceful means to achieve the goal, their draft resolution rejected the argument of Ajoy Ghosh. It was stated that the only way to bring about Socialism in India was to carry on the struggle against the bourgeoisie. It was pleaded that the revolution was the only effective means to achieve the goal. Since the Government of Nehru represented the bourgeoisie class, the question of

⁵²⁸ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-118-119.

supporting this government did not arise. So, the leftists Communists demanded through opposition against the Government of Nehru. There was a third draft also circulated by Namboodripad. He said that the national bourgeoisie of the Congress played double role. Sometimes these forces react against Imperialism and sometimes they favour it. As the left wing of the Indian Communist Party was determined not to be subdued by the right wing, its members of the national council could not support the draft resolution of Ajoy Ghosh when it was put for votes. However, the draft resolution was adopted due to support of the Dange's group.

The left wing members who supported the draft of Ranadive demanded that Ranadive's draft should be laid before the National Party Congress for its considerations. When their demand was not accepted, they walked out of the conference. Hence, it became obvious that the leftists especially from Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Punjab were determined to have their own separate party. However, keeping in view the coming General Elections of 1962, Ajoy Ghosh and other prominent leaders tried to bury their differences. When the intra-party conflict was on increase, the CPI entered into the Third General elections of India held in 1962. This time also the CPI maintained its earlier position as the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha by securing 29 parliamentary seats out of total number of 494 seats.⁵²⁹ In the 1962 elections the Communists secured 10 percent of the popular votes in the elections to the Lok Sabha. □

Split of the Communist Party of India:

The episode of past long intra-party conflict and confusion ultimately led to the split of the Communist Party of India in 1964. The basic issue of their conflict and dissension was to decide the future line of policy of the CPI. For more than a decade there had existed within the Communist Party a rightist section which, while not abandoning its ultimate faith in revolution, did not give up hope of making substantial gains for the communist movement through constitutional methods. Against this was a leftist section which leaned more towards a policy of revolution. Gradually, there

⁵²⁹ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-120-121.; The figures relating to the percentage of votes that the Communists secured in the different states in the 1962 elections are given in the table 3.

□ The detail figure has given in table 4.

developed a split in the field of international Communism as a result of differences between Russia and China on the question of war, nuclear warfare, policy of revolution and other matters. These differences had repercussions on members of the Communist Party of India, and ultimately Chinese aggression on India on October 1962 aggravated and crystallized these differences.

The differences between the extremist militant wing and the moderate rightist section became acute during 1948-50. The crucial differences related to the appraisal of the role of the Indian bourgeoisie and centred round the question whether the bourgeoisie still play an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal role, or whether they had gone over completely to counter-revolution. If the bourgeoisie had a vestigial anti-imperialist and anti-feudal role, then they could be supported, up to a point, but if bourgeoisie and the Congress Government at the centre had become completely counter revolutionary, then a war had to be waged against the bourgeoisie by following the Russian method of country-wide insurrection that Ranadive had preached, or by pursuing guerrilla insurrectionary methods in the Chinese style as Rajeshwar Rao later advocated.⁵³⁰

These differences were temporarily resolved at a special conference of the party held in 1951. In this conference it was decided that Indian Communists need not follow blindly either the Russian method of country-wide insurrection or the Chinese method of partisan war of the peasantry but, bearing on mind both the Russian and Chinese experiences, the Indian Communists should seek to follow the path, consistent with Leninism and Marxism that was best suited for India. The 1951 conference of the CPI, while not abandoning the path of armed revolution altogether, counseled the Communists to follow a pragmatic and more moderate policy. The differences again came to the forefront at the Fourth Congress of the party at Palghat in 1956. Prior to this, the Indian national Congress had at its Avadi session (1955) acknowledges the establishment of a Socialist pattern of society as its goal. The Congress Government had also published the draft of the second five year plan and was generally pursuing a policy of peace and non-alignment in international affairs.

⁵³⁰ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-347-348.

The question therefore, arose as to what approach the Communists should adopt towards the national bourgeoisie which was being split into a monopoly section that sought collaboration with Imperialism and Feudalism. Believing that Nehru wanted to pursue an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal progressive policy, Bhowani Sen presented a draft at the Fourth Congress of the party suggesting that Nehru and his policies should be supported. Bhowani Sen suggested that Nehru's hands in pursuing a policy of liquidating feudalism and semi-colonialism in India and of pursuing a policy of peace in international affairs should be strengthened. P. C. Joshi and certain other rightist leaders were also of the same opinion. In a note submitted in the Fourth Congress, they said, "in our opinion the slogan of a national democratic coalition government will in the present circumstances most effectively enable the party to defeat and isolate the pro-imperialist and pro-feudal reactionaries, forge an alliance with national bourgeois elements and help realize the hegemony of the proletariat over the national movement."⁵³¹

Believing that by supporting Nehru and his progressive policies an alternative government of national unity could be brought into existence, P. C. Joshi, C. Rajeshwar Rao, Bhowani Sen, Somnath Lahiri, Ramesh Chandra and others moved an alternative resolution at this Fourth Congress. This resolution stated, "the CPI believes that as a result of the development of national unity and on the basis of the changed correlation of forces in favour of the progressive forces, an alternative government of national unity can be brought into being."⁵³² But this resolution was defeated.

There may not be denying the fact that the ideological differences (Pro-Moscow and Pro-Beijing) were the root of the CPI's intra-conflict. The leftists believed that the road to Socialism could be opened only through the establishment of a state of People's Democracy led by the working class and replacing the present bourgeois landlord state. To achieve the goal they wanted to depend on mass struggles, not support, on the basis of growing unity and consciousness of the masses. Since the right wing of the CPI on the advice of Russia was determined to support Indian National Congress in the plea that it was a progressive party, it not only irritated leftist

⁵³¹ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-348-349.

⁵³² Ibid. P-349.

Communist leaders but also compelled them to follow their own independent course of line.

The attack of Red China on the sovereignty of India in October, 1962 had already widened the gap between the left and right wings of Indian Communist Party. The aggression of China had not only aroused the national feeling of the people of India but had also created strong unity among the Indians. All the political parties of the country, burying their differences for the time being, joined their hands with Nehru Government to face the Chinese menace. The Soviet Union, too, condemned the Chinese aggression but it did not assure India of any assistance. At this very circumstance the CPI could have not kept silence. Hence the right wing Communists did not like to repeat the mistake as they had done during the 'Quit India Movement' in 1942. Hence they condemned the Chinese aggression. On the other hand, the leftist Communists who were enimical to the Nehru Government and Pro-Beijing in their approach did not give company to the former. It is said that they were expecting Chinese aggression impatiently. It is also believed that they were determined to help the Communist China when they would have reached India by crossing the boundaries.

The radical Pro-Chinese Indian Communists had already established a secret parallel party secretariat in November, 1962, and were ready to 'go underground, if need arose.' In fact, the radical Communists of the CPI who had been waiting for the Chinese aggression wanted to seize the opportunity for waging mass revolution with the help of China. It became crystal clear when they began to support Chinese aggression. Their anti-national activities not only incurred hatred for Indian Communism but also increased party's internal conflicts to the point of no return.

In the meantime, the situation on the Indo-China border was deteriorating and members of the party were faced with the question whether they would support the nationalistic policies of the Government of India or whether they would support the Chinese stand in the name of proletarian internationalism. Meeting at Hyderabad in 1962 the National Council passed a resolution pledging its support to "the policy of the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, of making all efforts to bring

about a peaceful negotiated settlement of the border question even while taking necessary measures for the defence of the borders of the country.”⁵³³

Indo-China relations deteriorated considerable after the Hyderabad session of the National Council of the party. The party was now seriously divided on the question whether it should condemn China and thereby accept the position that a Communist country like China could be guilty of aggression. Eventually in the middle of October 1962 the majority succeeded in inducing the secretariat to issue a settlement supporting India’s stand on the Mc Mohan Line. A few days after this settlement was issued fighting on the Indo-China border was intensified and the Chinese army crossed the Mc Mohan Line. A clear-cut decision on the Indo-China question could no longer be shelved. The majority was in favour of condemning the Chinese outright. The majority within the party believed, firstly, that China was the aggressor, secondly, that there could be no received even from the western powers on a commercial basis. On all these three points the minority view was different. The minority could not believed that a Socialist country could commit aggression, nor was it prepared to support a policy under which India would receive arms from the western powers even though only a commercial basis.

To the left wing of the party, the Indo-China dispute was not a war in true sense and it was only a border dispute between the two countries. The left wing of the party did not support the Chinese aggression on India. They were in favour of resolving the dispute through bi-literal discussion and not by bullet. In this situation, an illusion was created all over the country that the left wing of the CPI was unpatriotic. In this situation, the left wing communist were arrested in large scale indifferent parts of the country. Against this stand of the government, the left wing communist started a movement against the arrest of the Communists and demanded immediate release of the prisoners who were detained without any trial. In Barak valley also, the left wing Communists organized the movement. The main programmes of the movement were meetings, processions, mass signature collection and putting the demand before the government. In this valley, the leading role in the prisoners’ release movement, the

⁵³³ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-353-355.

key role was played by Dharan Chand Patoa and Dipak Bhattacharjee who was elected as an MLA in 1978 from Hailakandi.⁵³⁴

In November 1962 the National Council of the party passed a resolution, sponsored by the majority group, condemning the Chinese aggression. Later, a resolution of the executive committee of the party passed in December 1962. The resolution of the National Council passed in November 1962 had marked the breaking point in the relationship between the majority and minority group inside the party. Three members of the secretariat belonging to the minority group resigned. The split in the party which took place with the passing of the National Council resolution of November 1962 was formalized in 1964 when those opposed to Dange and his policies left the Party.⁵³⁵

In the circumstances, an emergent meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the party took place on 9 April 1964. In the agenda placed before this meeting by the secretariat, the first item was a proposed resolution on the disruptive and anti-party activities of certain leading members of the party. Thereupon, E. M. S. Namboodripad, A. K. Gopalan, P. Ramamurthy, M. R. Venkatraman, P. Sundarayya, M. Basabapunniah, Jyoti Basu, Harekrishna Konar, Promode Dasgupta, Harkrishan Singh Surjeet and Jagit Singh Lyallpuri walked out of the meeting in protest against what they called “end of inner party democracy” and they also issued an appeal calling upon the party members to repudiate Dange and his group and their “reformist political line” The Executive Committee of the party then passed a resolution recommending to the National Council that seven members of the committee, namely Sundarayya, Basavapunniah, A. K. Gopalan, P. Ramamurthy, Promode Dasgupta, Harekrishna Konar and Harkrishan Singh Surjeet be expelled. The National Council of the Party met on 19 April 1964. Some proposals for settlement that were mooted could not bring about a unity, and 32 members of the National Council walked out and issued a statement claiming that the letters in question were genuine. Thereafter, the National Council passed a resolution stating that there was no *Prima facie* case against Dange.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ *An Interview with Dipak Bhattacharjee, aged 77 years.* Ex- MLA from Hailakandi and formerly member of the the CPI(M) Assam State Committee. Deshbandu Road, Silchar.

⁵³⁵ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India.* Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-355-357.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.* Pp-357-358.

When the National Council of the CPI met at Delhi in April, 1964 to consider the issue, 32 of the 117 members of the National Council including Namboodripad and Jyoti Basu who called themselves as the centrist, walked out in protest. As a result, the dissident Communists held a separate Congress at Tenalim in July, 1964 where they claimed that it was their faction which was the real CPI. They called the Dange group as 'revisionist' and simply a 'left party not the communist party'. When they approached the Election Commission to be recognized as the CPI and get the old symbol of the party, their claim was rejected because they were in a minority in the parliament. When the dissident group took the name of CPI (M), the Election Commission granted it the electoral symbol e.g. hammer and sickle. Thus the CPI (M) got independent status as a political party. Some of the stalwarts who gave birth to it were – A. K. Gopalan, P. Dasgupta, P. Sundarayya, B. T. Ranadive and Nripen Chakrabarty including Namboodripad and Jyoti Basu. Thus 40 years old Indian Communism met the fate of first fragmentation in 1964.⁵³⁷

Split of the CPI in Barak Valley:

As a result of the split of the party in all India level, the organisation of the party in every parts of the country was divided on the same line as in all India level. The Communists of Cachar district (Barak valley) were also divided in to two groups which caused a great set back in the Communist movement of the region. In the District of Cachar, all most all the important members of the party were belongs to the left wing and the District Committee of the party was under their control. Achinta Bhattacharjee, Gopen Roy, Moni Roy Dwijendralal Sengupta, Mrinal Kanti Dasgupta, Yogeshar Das of Karimganj and others were the important leaders of leftist element of the party in Cachar district. But in 1970's Mrinal Kanti Dasgupta left the CPI (M) and joined the CPI⁵³⁸ and devoted himself with Mitilal Jagirdar to organize the party. Among the prominent leaders of the Cachar District Committee of the party, only Motilal Jaygirdar was a rightist who remained as the absolute leader of the CPI in Cachar district with a few number of workers at different level. In Karimganj,

⁵³⁷ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-124-126.

⁵³⁸ *An Interview with Dipak Bhattacharjee, aged 77 years*. Ex- MLA from Hailakandi and formerly member of the the CPI(M) Assam State Committee. Deshbandu Road, Silchar.

Communist leader Sadan Das remained actively with the CPI.⁵³⁹ After the split of the party, the CPI(M) remained active in this district and the members of the CPI were very limited.

At the time of the split of the party, it was the CPI (M) which was more organized and strong in Barak valley. But at the Provincial level and Brahmaputra valley, it was the CPI which was stronger than CPI (M). At provincial level, Communist leaders like Phoni Bora, Gourisankar Bhattacharjee, Bireswar Kalita, Promode Gogoi remained with CPI and Uma Sarma, Achinta Kumar Bhattacharjee, Mrinal Kanti Das, Probhat Sarma, Biresw Chandra Mishra, Hridayenda Choudhury, Shah Sayyed, Suren Hazarika, Sukumar Chakraborty and others were the leaders of CPI (M).⁵⁴⁰

After the split of the party, the First District Conference of the CPI (M) Cachar District Committee was held at Bilgoan under Patherkandi Police Station area. In this conference, supporters and members of the party from different areas of Barak valley attended. Gopendralal Roy was elected as the first Secretary of the CPI (M) Cachar District Committee in the Bilgoan Conference.⁵⁴¹ The Assam First State Conference of the CPI (M) was held at Jorhat town in the residence of Shah Sayyed. Harekrishna Konar was present in this conference as the main speaker. In the delegate session of the conference, Achinta Kumar Bhattacharjee was elected as the Secretary of the Assam State Committee of the CPI (M).⁵⁴²

During the Naxalbari Movement, a quit number of the Communists of Cachar district left the CPI (M) on the ideological ground and they joined the CPI (ML). Important CPI (ML) leaders of the Barak valley were- Yogeshwar Das, Karunasindhu Dey, Moni Roy, Girban Ranjan Biswas and others.⁵⁴³

The split of the Indian Communist Party in 1964 was a major incident in the history of the Indian Communism. The consequences which came out due to the split

⁵³⁹ *An Interview with Dipak Bhattacharjee, aged 77 years.* Ex- MLA from Hailakandi and formerly member of the the CPI(M) Assam State Committee. Deshbandu Road, Silchar.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ *Assam Police Abstract of Intelligence*, No. 254, Cachar. Office of the Deputy Inspector General of Police (S.B), Shillong, dated 30th September, 1964.; *Interview with Dipak Bhattacharjee, aged 77 years.* Ex- MLA from Hailakandi and formerly member of the the CPI(M) Assam State Committee. Deshbandu Road, Silchar.

⁵⁴² Ibid.; *Interview with Dipak Bhattacharjee, aged 77 years.* Ex- MLA from Hailakandi and formerly member of the the CPI(M) Assam State Committee. Deshbandu Road, Silchar.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

were disastrous to the future speedy growth of Communism in India. The masses in general and the workers and supporters of Communism in Particular were confused. Most of them were not able to grasp the ideological battle of their party. It was beyond their concept of distinguish between the attributes of 'revisionism' and dogmatism. After the split, the basic issue before the CPI (M) was to frame its ideological plan. As its leaders always resented against the liberal attitude of the moderate Communists towards the National Congress, they wanted to have their own independent path contrary to the path of CPI.

Hence two views appeared before the party Congress held at Calcutta in 1964. The first view was introduced by Basvapunniah and the second one was produced by E.M.S Namboodripad. The former view was in favour of working for the mass revolution and establishment of the People's Democracy under the leadership of working class. Basvapunniah was of the view that the growth of Capitalism in India had gone up to the large extent irritating the socialist forces. In other words, due to sufficiently increased gap between the bourgeoisie and the working class the time was opportune to wage war against the former and move for bringing about Socialism in India. On the other hand Namboodripad's thesis and adherence to the concept of 'National Democracy' and 'Non-Capitalist Path' as propounded by the Soviet Union as new line of policy. Contrary to the view of Basvapunniah, Namboodripad was of the opinion that since the inherent conflict among the world capitalists in the third phase of Capitalism was inevitable. Indian monopolists should be included in the struggle against the foreign capitalists. It was possible only when the big bourgeoisie of India should have included in the 'National Democratic Front.' The party Congress in Calcutta, though accepted the view of Basvapunniah (People's Democracy), as the basic aim of the CPI(M), the view of Namboodripad to join hands with the non-capitalist forces in struggle against the Congress was also accepted. It was this theoretical concept of Namboodripad which paved the way for the CPI (M)'s alliance and coalition politics with anti-Congress parties of India.⁵⁴⁴

But before the split of the Indian Communists, the communist movement had been split first by Tito in Yugoslavia and then by Mao-Tse Tung in China. The split

⁵⁴⁴ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-129-131.

caused by China in the world communist movement was the most serious, and it developed rapidly after the startling disclosures about Stalin made by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956. At this Congress Khrushchev made certain disclosures about Stalin's regime and he attacked the cult of personality. Certain formulations about the world socialist movement which were made at this Congress were later denounced by the Chinese Communists as being revisionistic. The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU pointed attention to the change in the balance of world forces in favour of Socialism. By the time this Congress was held socialistic system had come to be established amongst a third of the world's population. The Congress referred to this as also to the growth of national liberation movements in the colonial countries, and urged the development of cooperation between the Socialist world and the newly liberated countries for ensuring economic growth and safeguarding world peace.

The 20th congress of the CPSU and its impact on the Indian Communists:

The twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union provided a hard blow to the Communist movement of the entire world. After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Communists of all most all the countries of the world regarded the Russian Communists as their guide, inspiration and model. After the demise of Stalin, Khrushchev became the leader of the CPSU and under his leadership, the twentieth Congress of the CPSU was held. This Congress adopted a new line of policy regarding the international relation and politics as well as role of the Communists. This gave birth to a controversy and conflict to the Communists of various countries of the world. The Indian communists were also largely influenced by this new policy adopted by CPSU under the leadership of Khrushchev which divided the communists of the world under the leadership of the Chinese Communists and Russian Communists.

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU created great commotion to the Communists of India as well as other countries. None of the groups of Indian communists (both radical and moderate) analysed the new line of policy of the twentieth Congress of the CPSU in a dispassionate way. It is impossible to know the truth without being free from blind emotion and bias. The matter should be analysed

calmly and in a dispassionate way on the basis of Marxism and Leninism and concrete facts.⁵⁴⁵ The main topics of discussion in the twentieth Congress of the CPSU were:⁵⁴⁶

- (1) Whether the policy of peaceful co-existence is consistent with Marxism-Leninism.
- (2) Whether the law of inevitability of war is still valid or not.
- (3) Different forms of transition to Socialism – the possibility of peaceful transformation of society from capitalism to socialism.
- (4) Present situation in the capitalist world.
- (5) Certain question raised by Mikoyan and others on Economics Problems of Socialism in the USSR by Stalin.
- (6) Cult of individual.

War, peace and peaceful transition to Socialism from Capitalism:

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of replacing the capitalist states by socialist state structure in all the capitalist countries as discussed by Khrushchev in his Report of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. But how can this be achieved – peacefully or through armed uprisings – that is the crux of the problem. At one time, Karl Marx expressed his opinion that socialism could be achieved in some countries through peaceful means. The objective conditions then were very totally different. He pinned much faith on the growing democratic atmosphere in the then capitalist countries. But conditions changed with the change of time. This is why later on Lenin declared unequivocally that without mass uprising, without smashing the bourgeois state machine, socialist revolution could not be accomplished. It is still valid. Discussion of any issue in isolation from concrete condition is incompatible with Marxism. In those days, Lenin's concrete analysis of concrete condition did a tremendous service in crystallizing the idea in the mass-mind about the indispensable necessity of armed uprising of the people for the achievement of socialism. Lenin, however, noted the possibility of peacefully achieving Socialism in the capitalist countries neighbouring the socialist states.

⁵⁴⁵ Ghosh, Shibdas., *On the Report of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU*. Mukharjee, Nihar., (edited) *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol I.)*. P-10.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. P-11.

A lot of confusion and controversy had aroused in the ideological sphere of the Communists throughout the world as well as India on the issue of war and peace, policy of peaceful co-existence of the capitalist and socialist system and the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism from capitalism. While criticizing the policy adopted in the 20th Congress of the CPSU after the demise of Stalin, Shibdas Ghosh, the Marxist theoretician as well as Communist leader of India states, “to be more precise, this applies, in the opinion of the leaders of the CPSU, particularly to the Lenin’s proposition about the inevitability of wars in the era of imperialism and about the prospect of preserving lasting peace in the world. Besides, though these leaders have not all together ruled out the law of violent revolution in the capitalist countries, they are emphasizing more the possibility of peaceful realization of socialist revolution as the general law at present. To show the “fundamental difference” in the characteristic features between imperialism at the time of Lenin and that obtaining at present, they are saying that since the present era is the era of disintegration of imperialism, establishment of socialism and of further advancement and development of the socialist countries, it is not possible to realize the exact significance of this epoch by the thesis of Lenin on ‘Imperialism, War and Proletarian Revolution.’⁵⁴⁷

There is difference again on the question as to how far it is possible now to accomplish socialist revolution in the capitalist countries peacefully. Over and above these differences, there is the further difference on the idea that socialism can be established by “transforming parliament from an organ of bourgeois democracy into a genuine instrument of the people’s will.” Even if it is assumed for arguments sake that peaceful realization of socialist revolution in the capitalist countries is possible in the present ‘changed’ international situation, is it Marxian to conclude that the parliamentary way of achieving socialism is one of the various forms of peaceful socialist revolution? All these matters are of vital interest to the Communist and have

⁵⁴⁷ Ghosh, Shibdas., *War and Peace, Peaceful Co-existence and peaceful Transition to Socialism*. Mukharjee, Nihar., (edited) *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol I.)* Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. P 43.

posed serious problems to them. So it is of utmost importance to analyse and examine the above matters on the anvil of Marxist-Leninist methodology and outlook.⁵⁴⁸

The danger of outbreak of wars in various forms is being underestimated by the leaders of the CPSU in discussing the question of the possibility of preserving peace. The confusions are due to two factors: (1) failure to understand that the law of inevitability of wars between imperialist-capitalist countries in the era of imperialism is still valid, and (2) Khrushchev and other leaders have confused the relative weakness of world imperialism in unleashing a world war against the opposition of the tremendously mighty forces of peace of the power of the bourgeoisie and its state to suppress the revolutionary struggle of the working class and other exploited masses of the peoples in a given country. Even in countries with parliamentary tradition, parliamentary democratic rights and privileges are being gradually curtailed. Even to the bourgeoisie, parliament is fast losing its utility. Fascism is manifesting itself in diverse forms more markedly than before in the state structure and administrative set-up of all capitalist countries, developed or backward. In the face of this stern reality, it is impossible for any Marxist-Leninist to advocate the theory of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, unless he is thoroughly overwhelmed by bourgeois humanist illusions.⁵⁴⁹

In November 1960, 81 Communist parties of the world including that of China attended a conference at Moscow in which the 81 party's document, later denounced as revisionistic by the Chinese, was adopted. The 1960 conference welcomed the resolutions passed at the Twentieth Congress of CPSU and defined the present epoch as one in which the balance of world forces had gone against Imperialism and in which the world Socialist forces were becoming the decisive factor. At this conference the old Marxist-Leninist concept that war was inevitable so long as Imperialism lasted was discarded. The 1960 Moscow conference resolved that war was not fatalistically inevitable. This formulation was later attacked by the Chinese Communists, who asserted that as long as Imperialism existed war could not be eliminated. The 1960 Moscow conference also evolved the concept of peaceful coexistence of countries of different socio-economic system. This concept of peaceful

⁵⁴⁸ Ghosh, Shibdas., *War and Peace, Peaceful Co-existence and peaceful Transition to Socialism*. Mukharjee, Nihar., (edited) *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works. (Vol I.)* Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. Pp 43-44.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid. Pp-53-55.

coexistence was also later criticized by the Chinese communists. The 1960 Moscow Conference also approved of the concept of the peaceful transition to Socialism and stated that in a number of capitalist countries it may be possible for the working class, headed by the communist party, and making a united front with other leftist and democratic forces, to win state power without going through a process of armed civil war. This concept had far reaching consequences for the world communist movement but the Chinese communists rejected this concept together.⁵⁵⁰

The Indian Communists and the formulations of CPSU:

A large section of the Indian Communists entirely accepted the formulations of the concept of 1960 Moscow Conference. Though China was against those formulations of the said conference, the moderate Indian communists were not in a position to accept the Chinese view regarding establishment of Socialism in India. They were the believer of peaceful transition to Socialism as propounded by the 1960 Moscow conference. The Chinese communists cannot contemplate of a revolution except through armed struggle on the Chinese pattern. Considering the pre-revolutionary China and contemporary India, the CPI, therefore, claims that conceive of a peaceful transition to socialism in India does not amount to renunciation of Marxism-Leninism, as the Maoists assert, but involves the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the special conditions prevailing in India where universal franchise has been established and strong mass movement have developed. “It is possible” say the CPI, “that by developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement, by winning a stable majority in parliament, backed by such a movement, the working class and its allies will be able to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and transform parliament from an instrument serving the bourgeoisie into a genuine instrument of people’s will for effecting a fundamental transformation in the social, economic and state structure. It is possible in India to avoid of possibility of going through an armed civil war as the form of the revolutionary transformation.”

The CPI does not say that it is prepared to give up the path of armed struggle always and under all circumstances. The ruling class will not voluntarily surrender

⁵⁵⁰ Ghose, Sankar. *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-398-400.

power and if they resort to violence. The CPI declares, the working class would also be entitled to resist violence with violence. Though Communists should be prepared for all eventualities including armed civil war, in the conditions prevailing in India an attempt should be made to achieve power through peaceful means. “It is against all the tenets of Marxism-Leninism,” says the CPI, “to equate violence and armed civil war with revolution, to make out that revolutionary power can only be born from the barrel of a gun. Communists do not make fetish of either violence or non-violence. They work for revolution, if possible, in a peaceful form but, if necessary, through armed civil war.” The Chinese view that there can be no peaceful transition to Socialism and no peaceful coexistence of different socio-economic system the CPI characterizes as being the product of an “infantile disorder”⁵⁵¹

The CPI (M) also criticized the Russian concept of peaceful co-existence between the Capitalist and Socialist states and pointed out that this concept was opposed to Lenin’s analysis of war and imperialism. Lenin had said: “international Imperialism...could not under any circumstances, on any conditions live side by side with the Soviet Republic both because of its objective position and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class...In this sphere the conflict is inevitable. Therein lies the greatest historical problem...”⁵⁵² Lenin was convinced that the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time was unthinkable. True, as early as 1916, Lenin had envisaged the possibility of accomplishing the Socialist revolution in one or several countries while for a certain period capitalism existed in other countries, but he did not consider that Socialist and Capitalist states could live together side by side for all times to come. He said: “So long as Capitalism and Socialism remain, they cannot live at peace, in the long run either one or the other will be victorious, the funeral drig will be sounded either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism.

The CPI (M) subjected the theory of peaceful transition to Socialism propounded by Khrushchev and other Russian leaders to a similar criticism and characterized this concept as a deviation from Leninist principles. Though Lenin had rejected the theory that arm uprising as a form of struggle was obligatory under all

⁵⁵¹ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-400-401.

⁵⁵² Ibid. P-423.

circumstances, and had visualized the possibility of some small country, in the neighbourhood of a big Socialist country, being able to effect a peaceful transition to Socialism, he had yet asserted that generally such transition to Socialism could not be achieved peacefully. But the development of the forces of Socialism and the growth of parliamentary institutions in diverse countries of the world had emboldened Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders to cherish the belief that a peaceful transition to Socialism was possible. The CPI (M) did not subscribe to this belief and attacked the concept of peaceful transition to Socialism.⁵⁵³

Ideological differences and similarities between CPI and CPI (M):

There are crucial differences between the CPI and CPI (M) in their analysis of the character of the Indian state. According to the CPI, the Indian state is controlled by the national bourgeoisie as a whole, but in the exercise of governmental power the big bourgeoisie wields considerable influence. The CPI (M) holds that both the state and the government belong to the bourgeois -landlord class, that they are led by the big bourgeoisie and that the big bourgeoisie are increasingly collaborating with Imperialism. According to the CPI (M), the CPI does not wish to destroy the Indian state as it believes that the leadership of the state is mainly in the hands of the anti-imperialist section of the bourgeoisie and that the landlords, in alliance with the bourgeoisie, does not control the state, but only influence it. With this analysis of the class character of the Indian state the CPI (M) does not agree. The CPI (M) asserts that the landlord class share power in the government which is led by the big bourgeoisie and that it would understand the role of the landlord class to say that the big bourgeoisie only yields some influence to that class.

The CPI (M) claims that instead of attacking the Indian government as a whole the CPI seeks to differentiate the progressive section from the reactionary section inside the government. The CPI (M) asserts that instead of realizing that Indian Government was based on the alliance of the bourgeoisie with the landlords under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie, the CPI regarded the Indian Government as a government of the national bourgeoisie. If the government was a government of the national bourgeoisie only and if it excluded the landlords then it was necessary, to

⁵⁵³ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-423-424.

some extent, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist and accordingly, it would not be desirable to oppose such a government altogether. Such an approach, the CPI (M) asserts, leads only to the pursuit of a policy of tailism behind the government.⁵⁵⁴

The CPI (M) claims that the CPI is a revisionist party which was completely deviated from Leninism and has renounced Marxism. The split of the CPI took place on the issue of line of policy regarding internal political condition of the country which was motivated by ideological differences of two Communist countries – USSR and China. The CPI group was in favour of supporting the Nehru Government in the task of nation building and was largely motivated, directed and influenced by Russia. On the other hand The CPI (M) was not in favour of supporting the Nehru Government and was influenced by Chinese Communist Party. This was the difference between these two parties for a particular period of time which gradually lost its significance.

However, there is a little ideological differences between CPI and CPI (M). The ideological framework of the CPI (M) differed from the CPI. The first difference was in their conceptual outlook about the field of their action. The former preferred the agrarian fields as the main centre of activities while the latter had chosen the industrial field. The CPI was basically concerned with the monopoly of capitalism and the role of the working class. Contrary to the CPI (M) believed that like China the serious attention must be paid to the agrarian and peasantry problems because peasant was a class most exploited and suppressed by the landlords. Moreover, they visualized that India was a country where peasantry had to play a great role in bringing revolution.

Secondly, their concept in regard to the institutional framework was also contrary. The CPI (M) virtually stood for ‘People’s Democracy’ but the CPI’s aim was to establish National Democracy. The former did not want to give any place to the bourgeoisie in the framework of the Government. It wanted monopoly of the workers on the people’s democracy because the party’s ultimate aim was to bring about Communism in India. Its aim was to socialize the means of production, and it was possible under the dictatorship of the proletariat only. So, it rejected the CPI’s formula of the ‘Parliamentary road to Socialism.’ It believed that the road to

⁵⁵⁴ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. P-416.

Socialism could be opened only through the people's Democracy. Contrary to this view the CPI maintained that the goal of Socialism could be achieved in India until collaboration with non-capitalist forces and setting up of the National Democratic Front. So, it expressed its faith in the parliamentary democracy with a view to bringing about changes in the basic aspect of the economy through the parliamentary process. That is why the CPI (M) called the CPI as a party of revisionists.

The third major ideological difference between both the parties was in regard to their methods to be applied for the achievement of the goal and their view to assess the existing situation in the country. The CPI (M) was more radical and aggressive while the CPI was a bit liberal as well as moderate. The CPI believed that the rapid growth in the field of industrialization would automatically pave the way for revolution with increased dissatisfaction of the workers. But the CPI (M) had no patience to wait. It wanted transformation in the social structure as early as possible. In regard to the foreign policy also there was no uniformity in the opinion of the CPI and CPI (M). As the role of Nehru in the international field was highly appreciated by Russia, the CPI, too, liked Nehru's policy of non-alignment. To the CPI (M) the Indian policy of non-alignment was not an independent one. Therefore, the CPI (M) favoured an independent foreign policy which could be followed only in alliance with the camp of peace and Socialism and all freedom loving anti-imperialism.⁵⁵⁵

As to the composition and functioning of the National Democratic Front and People's Democratic Front, there are also crucial differences between the CPI and CPI (M). The first basic difference is that the CPI, unlike the CPI (M), does not consider that the working class should have exclusive leadership of these fronts. The second crucial difference concerns the question as to who should be regarded as vacillating allies. Ranadive stated, "for them [the CPI] poor peasants, the agricultural labourers and the rich peasants are all alike, all equally revolutionary. Unlike us, they do not worry about fixing the position of each of these strata, after making a proper class analysis....The rich peasant has a place in this movement. But it will be very wrong to put him on par with the other sections and allow him to seize the leadership....Marxists make a distinction between the vacillating class and the firm class precisely to understand the basic forces and the auxiliary forces. On that basis

⁵⁵⁵ Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-131-132.

they decide which classes are to lead the revolution and which to support it...In their front all sections of the bourgeoisie, including the big bourgeoisie, have a place on an equal basis with working class and peasantry. Since they do not accept the need for a struggle for the establishment of the leadership of the working class, the leadership of the front will remain with the bourgeoisie and that precisely is their line. This front, therefore, is not a front for the democratic revolution, but a front for class collaboration.⁵⁵⁶

According to the CPI (M), there are seven crucial differences between the National Democratic Front of the CPI and the People's Democratic Front of the CPI (M). These differences are, firstly, that the objective of the National Democratic Front, unlike that of the People's Democratic Front, is not the removal of the bourgeois-landlord government but only its cleaning and purification by the removal of the right reactionary forces. Secondly, the leadership of the National Democratic Front would not be exclusively with the working class. Thirdly, all classes including the rich peasants are treated alike in the front and no special importance is attached to the consistently revolutionary classes. Fourthly, not much distinction is made by the CPI between the working class and the bourgeoisie who are all treated alike. Fifthly, all sections of the bourgeoisie except the monopolists are given a place in the front. Sixthly, an illusion is created that all sections of the monopolists other than the bourgeoisie have already taken up an anti-imperialist position. And, finally, the vacillations of the bourgeoisie are not emphasized so that there may be no impediment in the path of the bourgeoisie in obtaining some share in the leadership of the front. The CPI (M) considers that in making appreciative references to some aspects of the policy of the Government of India and in giving the bourgeoisie some places in the National Democratic Front, the CPI departed from Lenin's teachings as also from the principles of proletarian internationalism and that, objectively, it stood for a policy of class collaboration in place of a policy of class struggle.⁵⁵⁷

In spite of the differences between both the parties, there are great similarities between analysis of the CPI and CPI (M) on the question as to which classes should be regarded as the allies and enemies of the revolution. Both the CPI and CPI (M) maintain that the National Democratic Front and the People's Democratic front

⁵⁵⁶ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. Pp-417-418.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid. P-419.

respectively will be created out of people's struggles, but the working class will lead this front, that the mass movements of the peasantry will lend these fronts a broad national character and that the worker-peasant alliance will be the axis of these fronts. The classes that would participate in these fronts are the working class, the peasantry, the middle class, and some sections of the national bourgeoisie. The aim of these fronts would be the completion of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution.⁵⁵⁸

The concept of National Democracy of the CPI:

It is the opinion of the Communist Party of India that the Chinese Communists are not always based on the realities of situation which is existing in the world at present but suffers from left-sectarianism and adventurism. So far as India is concerned, the CPI also differs from the Chinese analysis to the effect that India is a semi-colonial country and that the stage of the Indian revolution is primarily anti-imperialist. The CPI holds that India is not at the stage of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution and the immediate task of the Indian Communists is not the establishment of Socialism but the establishment of transitional stage of National Democracy through a National Democratic Front. The national bourgeoisie would have a place in this National Democratic Front. This is because the national bourgeoisie in India has not yet exhausted its anti-feudal, anti-imperialist role. In completing the unfinished anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution in India the national bourgeoisie has a part to play. This revolution is to be completed by the establishment of a national democratic government at the centre. For this purpose a National Democratic Front has to be formed. Such a front would be based on a broad cooperation of all national and democratic forces, namely, the working class, the peasantry, the progressive section of the national bourgeoisie. In this broad based front the working class would have no exclusive leadership but through this front the exclusive leadership of the bourgeoisie would also be ended. The CPI at its Patna Congress stated its position thus the national democratic state in the hands of the National Democratic Front will be a transitional stage, in which power will be jointly exercised by all those classes which are interested in eradicating imperialist interests, routing the semi-feudal elements and breaking the power of the monopolies. In this class alliance, the exclusive leadership

⁵⁵⁸ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. P-417.

of the bourgeoisie no longer exists. The leadership of this alliance belongs to farm anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, anti-monopoly forces.⁵⁵⁹

Though the working class would be the most consistent fighter for bringing about a national democratic revolution, the CPI attaches great importance to drawing into this front all classes except the imperialists, feudalists and monopolists. The CPI also attaches great importance to drawing not only the masses following the Congress party but the progressive sections of the party itself inside the front. Though the CPI would welcome all democratic forces inside the National Democratic Front, it considers that the working class would be the initiator and prime builder of this front. The pivot of the front would be the alliance of the workers and the peasants, though the urban middle stratum and the intelligentsia would also take active part in the front, and even the non-monopoly section of the bourgeoisie would have a place in the front.⁵⁶⁰

Criticism against the Indian communists: an analysis

In the history of the Communist Party of India there are so many criticism. Following are the some activity of the Indian Communists for which they faced bad criticism and earned bad reputation for Indian Communism.

The Communist Party of India in the name of the right to self-determination supported the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan by which the party earned bad reputation. In 1939, they supported the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan putting forth the argument that the Muslims by religion constituted a nation and deserved the right of self determination, which in fact was a total distortion and utter vulgarization of the well-known Marxist theory of 'the right of nations to self determination'! Afterwards, in continuation of their unique revolutionary line, they raised the slogan of the Congress-League unity. They started arguing as if the attainment of freedom was never possible unless the Congress, representing the capito-feudalist leadership and the Muslim League representing the feudo-capitalist leadership (the party in which the influence of religion was more pronounced) joined hands.....that this party had been rendering the sky then with the meetings and processions organised by it and

⁵⁵⁹ Ghose, Sankar., *Socialism and Communism in India*. Allied Publishers, Bombay – 1971. P-403.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. Ppp-405-409-410.

hoisting the red flag with the flag of the Congress and of the League flanking it on either side.⁵⁶¹

The freedom struggle of India had reached its zenith with the beginning of the Quit India Movement during the Second World War. During this movement, the Indians were ready to face any eventualities to attain freedom of the country at any cost. The Indian Communists, by opposing this mass movement, totally isolated itself from the mainstream of the freedom movement and for which they were badly treated by the Indians. Whatever might have been their theory and analysis of the war, when, in 1942, during the Second World War, the people at large throughout the country burst forth in revolt against British imperialism, they not only opposed it by branding the whole patriotic struggle as a pro-Japanese and pro-fascist movement, but also objectively acted as stooges of imperialism by joining hands with them, in the name of fighting fascism, through what is known as the 'Joshi-Maxwell Pact'* By this act they not only isolated themselves from the entire current of the patriotic movement, but also belittled and even maligned the noble ideology of Communism in the eyes of the patriotic people.⁵⁶²

Mistakes and the Communists:

In 1948, the so-called revolutionary group of Ranadive came to the leadership with the aim to make the party free from opportunistic politics and practice which was the trend of the party so long. Ranadive presented a long list acknowledging the mistakes committed by the party in the past. Among all his admissions two were really unique. There was no democratic centralism inside the party so long was one such admission. And to the question as to how the party could remain a communist party at all without democratic centralism operating for all these long twenty years, he did not care to provide any explanation. However, according to Ranadive the party was not working on the principle of democratic centralism because its constitution did not provide any right to the members of the lower bodies to make representation to the central

⁵⁶¹ Mukharjee, Nihar(edited), *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol.II.)* Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. P-220.

* Understanding reached between P. C. Joshi of CPI and Reginald Maxwell, the then home secretary of imperial British government, to work together for war.

⁵⁶² Op. cit. P-221.

committee directly. And so, by inserting such a clause in the constitution of the party, he made a readymade introduction of democratic centralism inside the party.⁵⁶³

Though, the leaders of the CPI were advocating for establishing democratic centralism within the party, they failed to grasp the real meaning of democratic centralism. Namboodripad has reduced this concept of democratic centralism, the living soul of a communist party organisation, to a concept of mere ‘majority-minority’. While expounding democratic centralism, Namboodripad has said that since their party acts as per majority decision and follows the principle of submission of the lower party bodies to the higher ones, so it is abiding by the principle of democratic centralism and for this reason he says their party is a real communist party. Namboodripad said, “the three-fold submission – the individual to the organisation, the minority to the majority and the lower unit to the higher – such is the law of organisation....⁵⁶⁴ So, Namboodripad, by democratic centralism meant to work on the principle of the majority decision is to practice democratic centralism and to establish collective leadership within the party.

In the light of Marxism, Shibdas Ghosh, the prominent Marxist theoretician of India had explained the concept of democratic centralism in a lucid way. He states, “the struggle to develop collective leadership is the principal struggle for a working class party in order to develop its internal party structure on the foundation of democratic centralism. And as long as this scientific concept of collective leadership has not developed in the party, it means that the internal structure of the party is yet to develop on the principle of democratic centralism. The principle of democratic centralism is the living soul of a communist party organisation. While the struggle to develop democratic centralism is the real struggle to build a genuine communist party, so also the struggle to protect it as the apple of one’s eye is the actual struggle to save the party from the danger of revisionism. Now, what do we actually mean by democratic centralism? If we can dissect democratic centralism, as is done in anatomy, we shall have two parts – ideological centralism and organizational centralism. This ideological centralism grows out of the struggle to develop one process of thinking, uniformity of thinking, oneness in approach and singleness of purpose on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism not only on the

⁵⁶³ Mukharjee, Nihar(edited), *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol.II.)* Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. P-223.

⁵⁶⁴ New Age, Organ of CPI. Vol. XI, No. 5, May-1962.

economic and political questions but on all questions covering all aspects of life. When a party through such an all-out struggle has been able to develop this ideological centralism, then and then only can it be said that the principle of proletarian democracy is operative inside the party.

In a class divided society the concept of democracy can not be the one and same – it is a class concept. It is either bourgeois democracy reflecting private ownership, private control over production and bourgeois way of life, i.e. individualism, or it is proletarian democracy reflecting collective ownership, collective control over production and distribution and proletarian way of life, i.e. collective way of life. When organizational centralism is built up on the basis of this ideological centralism which makes the principle of proletarian democracy effective, it gives the real structural shape to the principle of democratic centralism inside the party. And that is why Lenin said that democratic centralism could be established in a party only through the process of fusion of proletarian democracy and centralism.⁵⁶⁵

Regarding the question of mistakes by the Communist Party of India, it would be wrong to think that a communist party can never commit any mistakes. According to Shibdas Ghosh, a Marxist should know that a party conducting a most complex, tortuous and protracted struggle for the emancipation of the working class may, of course, and sometimes does commit mistakes. At the same time he should also know that a party can commit two types of mistakes. One type stem from an utter failure to grasp the correct Marxist outlook, method of analysis and method of application, which results in failure to correctly apply the fundamental principles of Marxism not only in the economic and political fields but in every sphere of life and consequently in failure to determine the stage of a particular revolution, its strategy and tactics. It should be understood that this kind of mistake is inseparable related with the class character of a party.

The second type of mistake occurs when a party, in spite of having acquired an essentially correct Marxist outlook, method of analysis and method of application, fails to correctly analyse a particular situation and to apply correctly the fundamental principles of Marxism in a given condition owing to lack of adequate knowledge,

⁵⁶⁵ Mukharjee, Nihar(edited), *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol.II.)*. Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. Pp-203-204.

experience and wisdom. This type of mistake of a party does not once and *ipso facto* indicate a change in its class character. Of course, if a party continues to commit such mistakes one after another and fails eventually to rectify itself by drawing appropriate lessons from these mistakes, then slowly but surely the class character of the party is bound to degenerate eventually. But then the question of class character of a party is directly and inseparably linked with the first type of mistake, that is, failure to acquire the correct Marxist outlook, method of analysis and method of application.

A party calling itself Marxist-Leninist and using the Marxist-Leninist vocabulary but which has failed to acquire the correct Marxist outlook, method of analysis and method of application in different spheres reflects in reality, knowingly or unknowingly, some other class outlook, method of analysis and method of application even as it waves the red banner of Marxism-Leninism and Communism. Mere admission to mistakes is therefore not enough for a Marxist.⁵⁶⁶ The leaders of the Communist Party of India only admitted their mistakes but did not attempt to rectify them on the basis of the principle of Marxism-Leninism. So, their mistakes come under the second category of mistake as explained by Shibdas Ghosh.

Right from the inception of the Communist Party of India, the Indian communist leaders blindly followed the Russian communist leaders without establishing any dialectical relation with the Russian communists. Due to their imitation of the Russian and later on Chinese communist leaders, the early Indian communists failed to formulate a genuine revolutionary line considering the Indian situation. Their blind imitation of the foreign communist leaders had pushed the party towards the line of revisionism and ultimately the party derailed from the line of Marxism-Leninism. If we analyse, in the first place, the nature of the relationship of this party with the international communist leadership and the party's conduct in this respect, it should be noted that since inception, this party has failed to play its due role in the international communist movement as the vanguard of the Indian proletariat in discharging correctly and consciously its responsibility from the Marxist standpoint. Rather, it has mechanically copied the international communist leadership all through.

⁵⁶⁶ Mukharjee, Nihar(edited), *Shibdas Ghosh: Selected Works.(Vol.II.)* Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Kolkata – 2004. Pp-186-187.

Base of formation of the Communist Party of India:

At the time of the formation of the CPI, the early Indian Communists were not theoretically competent enough to follow all the norms regarding the formation of a communist party. For their weak theoretical back bone, the prevailing Indian situation was largely responsible because at that time it was very difficult to spread the idea of Communism in India as it was crime before eyes of the British imperial rulers. That is why; the Communist Party of India was not formed as a genuine communist party in spite of the dedication and strong commitment of the early Indian communists towards the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Most of the early communist leaders admitted this very historical fact.

The Communist Party of India, at the time of its formation, avoided the essential prerequisites to be fulfilled before giving final shape to the organizational structure of the party. Shibdas Gosh suggested three primary conditions essential for the formation of a communist party. First, those who have taken the lead in forming the party would have to lay the foundation of ideological centralism first among themselves through a socialist movement based on dialectical materialism covering all aspects, including the minutest details, of their personal lives. Secondly, it is always to be borne in mind that the struggle for developing a concrete concept of collective leadership is, in essence, the primary struggle to build up a communist party. For this, unless ideological centralism, that is to say, one process of thinking, oneness in approach, and singleness in purpose has been developed the concrete conception and personified expression of collective leadership within the party cannot be made possible at all. And unless this condition is fulfilled, it is to understood, the time has not yet come to give a final organizational shape to the party.

For, if finalization of the formal structure of the party is attempted before that, the party will invariably be mechanically centralized instead of being democratically centralized and, in course of its development; will surely give birth to formal and bureaucratic leadership in place of collective leadership. Thirdly, through a relentless and painstaking struggle a band of professional revolutionaries is to be developed from among the leaders and cadres who have taken up the cause of formation of a revolutionary working class party. If the leadership of the party, at different levels, is constituted from among such professional revolutionaries, then only can a party acquire the character of a real communist party. Only when all these three conditions

are fulfilled, can the formal constitutional shape be given to a real communist party through a congress. And without fulfilling these three primary conditions, a formal constitutional shape to a real working class party should never be given. The leaders of the CPI avoided this hard and painstaking struggle to fulfill the preliminary conditions during the process of formation of that party and, precisely because of this, they failed to build up a genuine revolutionary party of the proletariat.

Contribution and failure of the CPI in the freedom struggle:

Though, the communist movement played vital role in awakening the poor and suffering masses of India to their rights and making them bold enough to fight for their rights, but the Communist Party failed to bring about communist revolution in the country. The active participation of Indian communist party in the in the parliamentary politics, their interest in the left united front and coalition governments of states and monopoly of rules in some of the Indian states indicate that Indian Communism has shifted from its earlier policy of militant democracy. The inclination of the Indian revolutionaries towards Communism was neither due to their vocation for their class consciousness nor their commitment to liberate the poor masses from exploitation. It was a mere circumstance which brought them under the communist umbrella. For the actual growth of Communism the feeling of class consciousness and class-antagonism is indispensable factor which India lacked from the very beginning of the arrival of Communism.

The early Communists of India were not in a position to execute the theory of Marxism in the Indian reality mainly due to their weak theoretical understanding of the principles of Marxism. At the initial stage, they viewed Marxism as a political theory only rather examining it as a total theory related to the man and his society. In this regard P. C. Joshi states, "let it be recalled that in India Marxism first spread as political programme and tactics of the communist groups than as a new world view or as a cultural movement. In this context it may be noted that in India, Marxist thought was reversed. In many advanced countries Marxism emerged and grew stronger first as an intellectual force before it spread and gathered strength as a political force. In

ex-colonial and semi-feudal countries like India, on the other hand, its emergence as a political force preceded its emergence as an intellectual force.⁵⁶⁷

P. C. Joshi further states, “Indian Marxism had a significant growth during the pre-independence period. But it did not fully develop as an intellectual force and movement in spite of its potentialities. Thinking people have asked why Marxism did not take deep roots in India in spite of a favourable objective situation. The causes of this phenomenon can partly be traced to the failure to build up an independent theoretical base of Indian Marxism. The internal disunity and fragmentation of the political forces of Marxism in India since independence can also be traced mainly to the same factor. In other words, the repeated setbacks to Indian Marxism in spite of a favourable social situation have their roots in the failure to combine, as Engels prescribed, the economic and political struggle with theoretical struggle.”⁵⁶⁸

The Communist in India showed a better awareness of the anti-feudal demands of the peasantry. To a certain extent the left did not place sufficient emphasis on political work among the peasants. They failed to raise anti-feudal consciousness and create and promote the awareness of their own class position among the peasants. Though they showed a certain awareness of the emerging class differentiation and divisions within the peasantry; they failed to make a serious study of the phenomenon or to create its awareness among the peasants, especially among the dwarf holders and agricultural labourers. Though they succeeded in creating a certain peasant ‘class’ cohesion against the landlords wherever the peasant movement was under their guidance, they failed to guard the peasant movement against the rich peasant or even small landlord domination. As Swami Sahajanand Saraswati recognized in 1944 in his most radical phase, it was “really the middle and big cultivators (who were) ...for the most part with the Kisan Sabha for their benefit and gain....” The Swami now pleaded for basing the Kisan Sabha exclusively on the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Quite often just as the Congress leadership sacrificed the interests of the peasants to those of the landlords in the name of national unity, the left tended to sacrifice the interests of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to those of the rural bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in the name of peasant unity.

⁵⁶⁷ Joshi, P.C, *Marxism And Social Revolution in India And Other Essays*. Patriot Publishers, New Delhi – 1986. P-3.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. P-5.

A very important failure of the left lay in the fact that, while emphasizing the independent class mobilisation of the peasants as peasants outside the frame work of the national movement, it failed to establish a strong link between the anti-feudal and ‘economic’ consciousness of the peasants and anti-imperialism. Its tendency to place much greater emphasis on purely economic demand resulted in the lesser political role of the peasantry as well as in the lower level development of the peasant movement in extent and depth. The historical task was to simultaneously take up the peasants’ class demands and to make them more militant anti-imperialists.⁵⁶⁹

An important point of difference with the pre-independence period needs to be noted in this respect. During that period, the entire peasantry was objectively anti-imperialist, even though different peasant strata had different interests. But after 1947 the different agrarian classes and strata have hardly anything in common. The powerful position of the rich peasants in the countryside, in the state legislatures and governments and even at the centre, aided by the notion of peasantry, explains both the slow pace of agrarian reform and the failure of the left-wing parties to organise the agricultural labourers and dwarf holders except in Kerala and a few other small pockets. This ideology of their being a peasantry – even if formally divided into rich, middle and poor peasantry – formed the basis of much of left-wing peasant activity. This was the basis of their view, held in common, whatever their other differences, that the chief political task in rural India (or even in India as a whole) was the making and completion of the anti-feudal revolution.⁵⁷⁰

In spite of understanding of this historical fact, the Communists of India were not able to formulate a scientific principle of revolution in India in later stage by developing dialectical method of forming a communist party by integrating Marxist principles in the Indian situation. Rather they were involved in conflicts regarding policy and principles to be adopted by ignoring the dialectical process. That is why it brought about only split and further split in the party. The version of Marxism learned by Marxist activists from political pamphlets often involved a departure from the original Marxist positions. Such revision has implied that political practice is detached from the task of development of theoretical consciousness. The erroneous theoretical orientations of this pamphlet Marxism have seldom been identified by Marxist

⁵⁶⁹ Chandra, Bipan. *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*. Orient Longman, New Delhi-2006. Pp-362-363.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. P-367.

activists is one of the sources of their failure to intervene in process of social change in India with greater effectiveness. Seldom do they recognize that of a correct theoretical orientation releases social energy and transforms it into a revolutionary force, a wrong orientation paralyses social initiative and thus undermines the active role of the people in the historical movement.⁵⁷¹

Contribution of the Indian Communists:

Before independence, the services done to the poor by the communists, their contribution to the growth of Indian political activities, inflating mass consciousness of the poor masses cannot be denied. They played vital roles in organising the peasants and workers, and in making them aware of their legitimate rights. Though they adopted terroristic methods to achieve the end, their efforts and activities emboldened the courage of the workers and peasants with the result that firstly, they boldly faced the imperialist government and then courageously appeared before the Government of India (after independence) with their demands. The methods and the tactics applied by the Communists during the freedom movement, no doubt, were violent but the very intension behind their activities was to serve the cause of the poor and down-trodden sections of the society and protect them from the bourgeoisie exploitation. It is notable that though the CPI failed in capturing the machine of power after independence, it succeeded in strengthening the root of Communism in India and expanding its base on the national level.⁵⁷²

In spite of the weak theoretical orientation of the early Indian Communists, it should be remembered that they were the blind and ardent believer of Marxism and sacrificed their lives for the cause of the nation building. They did wonderful service to the nation by uniting the working class and peasantry against British imperialism and Indian feudal elements. According to B. T. Ranadive- the role played by the Communists in the freedom struggle of our country generally not only goes unrecognized but the Communists are periodically maligned and slandered as

⁵⁷¹ Joshi, P.C, *Marxism And Social Revolution in India And Other Essays*. Patriot Publishers, New Delhi – 1986. P-8.

⁵⁷² Singh, Chandrika. *Communist and Socialist Movement in India (A Critical Account)*. Mittal Publications, Delhi-1987. Pp-96- 97.

opponents of the freedom struggle by hired hacks and interested bourgeois historians.⁵⁷³

The Communists inherit a contribution to the freedom struggle in spite of the fact that the Communist Party did not play a decisive role in the freedom struggle. In every corner of the country, Communists played an important role in galvanizing peoples' struggles against British Colonialism. Such was the impact of the activities of the Communists that the British launched three conspiracy cases against them. The first was the Peshwar conspiracy case in 1922-24. Then came the Kanpur conspiracy case in 1924 and the Meerut conspiracy case in 1929. The Communist party, which was formed in Tashkent in 1920, was not even properly organised when the British unleashed unprecedented repression. Such repression by the colonial masters was unleashed precisely because they saw the potential of the Communists in organising and mobilising the Indian people in the struggle for freedom.⁵⁷⁴

Through the decades of 1920s and 1930s especially during the banned condition the Communists were very active within the Indian National Congress and devoted them for the strengthening of the freedom movement and the Congress received certain popularity among the common masses of India as a result of the activity of the Communists. The Surma-Barak valley of Assam was also no exception in this regard which has been already discussed. In fact, the resolution for complete independence was moved for the first time by two communist leaders – Moulana Hazrat Mohani and Swami Kumarananda at the Ahmedabad Congress session in 1921. The Congress finally accepted the resolution for '*Poorna Swaraj*' (Complete Independence) only at its Lahore session in 1929.

Though the Indian communists adopted the 'People's War' policy and assured the government to support its war efforts during the Quit India Movement, it was not possible for them to forget the interest of the party organisation. The party activists very tactfully took advantage of the situation created due to the withdrawal of ban from the party and intensified to develop the party organisation in their apparent anti-fascist propaganda by organising meetings and conferences. The communists of

⁵⁷³ Ranadive, B.T. and Basu, Jyoti. *Role of Communists in the Struggle for Independence*. C.P.I. (M) Publication. P-1.

⁵⁷⁴ Yechuri, Sitaram. *Memoirs: 25 Communist Freedom Fighters*. A People's Democracy Publication, New Delhi-2005. P-VI.

Surma valley were not lagging behind in this respect. The intelligence report⁵⁷⁵ of D.I.B, Sylhet have endorsed this fact which stated:

“The communist workers of the district of Sylhet are making intense propaganda to spread communistic ideas among the people in the garb of anti-fascism. Though, they are posing to anti-fascist and are speaking in favour of war support, they do not seem to be sincere. It will appear from the publication of their organ “*Sanghati*” dated the 23rd. March 1942 and 6th April, 1942 that their object is to excite hatred and contempt towards to government established by law in British India and also to drive the mass people towards chaos and disorder. Their hidden object is to seize power by force, when there will be an opportunity, by attacking the thanas and other government institutions. In consideration of their apparent anti-fascist propaganda, are probably giving them undesirable scope in organising meetings and conferences to enable them to organise their party all over this district.”

The communists in Surma valley, in their apparent anti-fascist propaganda, were able to lay down the strong base of their mass organisation such as student, labour and Kisan fronts which is confirmed by an intelligence report of D.I.B, Sylhet. The report⁵⁷⁶ stated that:

“The Communist Party has got a good footing in the Kisan, Labour and students fronts and it had made much progress in the organisation in this district. Though at present they are showing sympathy with the Soviet Union in the Nazi attack and want co-operate with the British in the war effort, the underlying principles of the party to overthrow the present government and to replace it by the Soviet form of government has gained ground, and the party is making much headway.”

It is the living fact that there were two trend existed in the freedom struggle of India. one was the compromising trend under the banner of Indian National Congress influenced by Gandhian nationalism and the other was uncompromising revolutionary trend i.e. there was a whole range of protest politics that operated outside the institutional ambit of the Congress – the revolutionary nationalism, working class and militant peasant and tribal revolt, student and youth movement which continuously strengthened and sustained Congress nationalism. The Communist Party of India played significant role in keeping alive these protest politics and linking it to the main nationalist stream.

⁵⁷⁵ Intelligence Report to the Dy. Inspector General of Police, from Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Sylhet, D.O. No.3760/24-41, dated the 2nd May, 1942. File No. A-3(6) 42, Part. II, Sub: Communism: General Activities.

⁵⁷⁶ Intelligence Report to the Dy. Inspector General of Police, from Superintendent of Police (D.I.B) Sylhet, D.O. No. 1341/5-42, dated the 16th. Feb.,1942. File No. A-3(6) 42, Part. II, Sub: Communism: General Activities.