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Soviet Union's Influence on British India's Political Landscape

Jawad ur Rahman

Visiting Faculty IM Sciences, Peshawar.

eurekabks@gmail.com

Abstract

Great Russian Revolution of 1917, which led to the establishment of the Soviet Union, had a profound impact on political movements worldwide, including British India. Indian revolutionaries, inspired by the Bolsheviks' success in establishing a communist state, sought support from the Soviets in their struggle against the British colonial rule. The anti-British government of Soviet Russia provided support including ideological guidance, training, and assistance for Indian political activists. Many Indian revolutionaries were influenced by the official ideology of the Soviet state, i.e., Marxism-Leninism, and adopted the same as a framework for their struggle against British imperialism. During this period, the Communist Party of India (CPI) was formed, that maintained close ties with the Soviet state. The strategies, activities and ideologies of the Left-wing movements in India were influenced by the Soviet Union and this influence has affected India's struggle for independence and the eventual partition in 1947.

Key Words: Left Politics, British India, Communist Party of India, Soviet Union, Progressive Writers' Association

This article examines the influence of Soviet Union on the political landscape of British India from the period of the Russian Revolution in 1917 to India's independence and partitions in August 1947. During this time frame, there were significant shifts in the political dynamics of British India, and the influence of the Soviet Union on Indian political thought and movements was quite profound. The roots of the Left-wing political ideologies in British India can be traced back to the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in 1917, when some of the revolutionaries from India reached Soviet Russia in order to find international support for the liberation of India from the clutches of British imperialism. Due to this reason the Left politics in British India was profoundly shaped by the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party in Russia (Bolshevik) successfully seized power in Russia under the leadership of V. I. Lenin as a consequence of Great Russian Revolution in November 1917. The new government in Russia was rooted in the philosophy of scientific communism, known as Marxism. The principles of Marxism were formulated by the German philosophers, Karl Marx

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(1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Marxism is an international ideology advocating that the communist party in every country should strive to replace bourgeois governments through socialist revolutions in order to achieve world socialism. The communist leaders of Soviet Russia regarded the Russian Revolution as a precursor to a worldwide socialist revolution. The Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik) aimed to spread the ideas of revolution to other countries around the world (Kolarz, 1955).

India, being a significant Asian country and a strong home to British imperialism, garnered substantial interest from the Bolsheviks. These circumstances facilitated the early introduction of communist ideology to Indians following the communist revolution in Russia. A faction of the Indian revolutionaries came across Soviet propagated communist ideology for the first time when they reached Soviet Central Asia as refugees. These exiled revolutionaries subsequently found the Communist Party of India at Tashkent and upon their return to India they reestablished the same party on the Indian soil in 1925. This marked the commencement of Left-wing politics in British India.

The Global Impact of the Russian Revolution and Indian Nationalists

At the eve of the First World War, a number of revolutionary minded Indians left their homeland with the aim of receiving foreign support to liberate and launch a rebellious movement of liberation in India. They were seeking the help of anti-British powers, and during the First World War, many of these revolutionaries gathered first at Berlin and then at Kabul. In the meantime, following the communist revolution in 1917, Russia turned to be an attractive place to all revolutionaries and revolutionary from around the world converged on Russia, as the Bolsheviks believed that the Russian Revolution would inspire a series of such revolutions in other countries as well. Indian revolutionaries, learning of the Bolsheviks' anti-British stance, also made their way to Soviet Central Asia. These revolutionaries were warmly welcomed by the Soviet authorities, because Soviets too wanted to provoke trouble for the Great Britain due to its anti-Soviet stance. Even here at home, the British authorities in India, during the spring of 1920, assessed that Russian Communists 'were concentrating on India' (Baha, 1979).

The President of the Indian Provisional Government based at Kabul, Mahindra Pratap was the first prominent Indian who reached Soviet Russia in February 1918. During his visit, he presented his book titled '*The Religion of Love*' to Lenin. Following, this Khairi brothers (Abdul Jabbar Khairi and Abdus Sattar Khairi) arrived in Moscow in November 1918 with the goal to seek Soviet support for their struggle against the British colonial rule in India. Even more Indians were

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received by Lenin in the last months of 1918. Later, Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Indian Government, visited Moscow in March 1919, as an 'ambassador extraordinary' on behalf of Amir Amanullah Khan. Barkatullah was personally received by V. I. Lenin and a bilateral treaty was signed with the Soviet government. Following this, several Indians visited Soviet Russia to establish political contacts with the Soviets. Soon, the Soviet Central Asian city of Tashkent became a focal point for Indian national revolutionaries. In 1920, at Tashkent, the Bolsheviks established the Eastern University for the Asiatic Toilers of the East, where nationalist revolutionaries were provided training. Manabendra Nath Roy (1887-1954) headed the Indian department at this university. The Eastern University, however, served more as a propaganda center than a conventional educational institution. In 1920, M. N. Roy established an Indian military school (*Induskii Kurs*) at Tashkent (Ansari, 2015, pp. 25-31).

Yet another major step was taken, when the Communist Party of India (CPI) was organised at Tashkent under the leadership of M. N. Roy in October 1920. Before, the foundation of the CPI, detailed discussions took place regarding the proletariat movements in the Asian countries. Lenin held the belief that the colonies could either bypass the capitalist phase and transition directly from feudalism to socialism. He also proposed that the revolutionaries in East could temporarily collaborate the native bourgeois nationalist political parties against the imperialist forces. In contrast, M. N. Roy argued for the possibility of communists waging anti-imperialist struggle independently (Persits, 1983, pp. 139-45). After a debate on the issue, the it was recommended that the proletariat movement should lend support to bourgeois nationalist movements while maintaining its independent existence as well. It was also decided to allocate resources to India under the supervision of M. N. Roy (Pipes, 1954, pp. 199-200), (Ansari, 2015, p. 68).

The official announcement of the formation of the Communist Party of India (CPI) was made at Tashkent on October 17, 1920. The Indian communists resolved that the party would adhere to the principles set forth by the Third International and would develop a programme suited to the specific conditions in Indian. In 1921, the party obtained recognition from the Comintern, although initially, it acknowledged the Communist Party of India only as a group.

Soviet Russia's Support to Indian Revolutionaries

The Bolshevik authorities aspired to promote communist ideologies in India and hoped for the successful spread of Communism in British Indian. To achieve this objective, they established the

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Communist University of Toiler People of the East (KUTV) in April 1921. A unique fusion of ideas, which combined Islam, nationalism and Marxism, was preached at the university. By early 1924, the university had an enrollment of 1,015 students, with nearly one-third of these students being revolutionaries from the Asian countries including India (Qureshi, 2015), (Persits, 1983, pp. 36-7). The Indians emigrants who arrived in Soviet Russia represented diverse backgrounds and held different ideological beliefs. This diversity in thinking often led to political disagreements among them (Persits, 1983). Initially, the Indians emigrants in Soviet Russia shared a common objective: seeking military assistance to facilitate a radical liberation movement in British India. However, by the mid-1920s, a growing number of Indian national revolutionaries from different groups began to arrive in Russia. Some of them were already in the process of embracing the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In November 1922, Ubaidullah Sindhi, the Foreign Minister of the Indian Provisional Government, travelled to Moscow and stayed at there for nine months. Sindhi held discussions with several Soviet officials, including the Russian foreign minister, with the goal of formulating a plan to support the liberation movement in India. He succeeded in securing a commitment of financial and munition assistance from the Soviet government. In July 1923, Maulana Sindhi left Moscow and headed to Türkiye in order to further implement his programme (Khan, 2004, pp. 166-210)

The Bolsheviks' strategy regarding India's liberation changed in 1921 as a consequence of the decisions of Comintern. To achieve their goal, the Bolsheviks switched from the idea of armed uprisings to supporting the bourgeois nationalist parties in British India. The Soviet trained revolutionaries started returning to India in the last months of 1921. They were trained for propagating the communist doctrines among the Indian population (Qureshi, 2015). However, these revolutionaries were soon arrested on their arrival at India. They were charged with conspiracy and received prison sentences ranging from one to three years. Thus, the first Indian communists were unable to make a significant impact to the radical politics in India. Nevertheless, they commenced their political activities once some of them were released in 1924. Soon afterward, small communist groups began to emerge in the big cities of India.

Following the release of the convicted communists they formally established the Communist Party of India (CPI) in December 1925 at a meeting held at Kanpur. Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Muzaffar Ahmad and Maulana Azad Subhani were among the notable figures among the participants (Ansari, 2015, pp. 76-80). CPI was recognized by the Comintern and on the instructions of the Comintern, two British communist arrived India in order to organise Marxist

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organisations in India. 'Friends of Russia Week' was celebrated Nawjawan Bharat Sabha in August 1928 (Ansari, 2015, pp. 81-6).

In November 1927, the prominent figure in Indian politics, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, along with his father Motilal Nehru, visited Moscow to participate in the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Great October Revolution. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) expressed in his writings that the success of Soviet Union in its war against the poverty and illiteracy would make the job of Indians easier. He further observed that "the Soviet revolution had advanced human society by a great leap" (Gusev & Naumov, 1976, p. 106). Nobel Prize winner in literature, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) also appreciated the Soviet Union's development (Grover, 1993).

Shift in the Soviet Policy towards India

In 1927, Stalin adopted the M. N. Roy's theses as the guiding principles for India. Stalin asserted that Lenin's theses were more suitable for backward countries like Afghanistan, whereas Roy's theses took into consideration the nations that had attained some capitalist development (Persits, 1983, pp. 153-63). Therefore, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928) advised Indian Communists to cease their collaboration with nationalists and instead focus on forming a single centralized party. This shift in policy left Indian communists susceptible to harsh measures by the British colonial masters.

The altered political strategy of CPI coupled with the government's renewed efforts to suppress Left-wing political activities led to the decline of CPI between 1929 and 1934. In March 1929, thirty-one Communist leaders and trade unionists were arrested and charged with conspiracy to 'deprive the King of His Sovereignty of British India'. The resulting four-year-long trial (1929-33) is known as 'the Meerut Conspiracy Case'– the lengthiest in British India's history, severely curtailed communist activities in India, and by the end of 1933, practical communist organisation in India had nearly disappeared. In July 1934, the Communist Party of India, Nawjawan Bharat Sabha, and all affiliated bodies of CPI were banned. To continue Marxist organisations and to fill the Left-vacuum in India, a new organisation within the Congress – the Congress Social Party – was founded. However, the CPI labeled the new party as socialist fascist. Overall, in the first decade of its establishment, the CPI struggled with organisational challenges (Jha, 1987, pp. 145-52).

Second Wave of Communists in British India

From 1935 onward, witnessed a second wave of Soviet influence and a new generation of Indian socialists who were more organised in discipline, envisioned in ideas and effective in their impact.

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This new class of socialist, inspired by the Russian Revolution, was well-educated and had a scholastic approach on global affairs, in contrast to earlier socialists who had roots in the ulama tradition, were less secularly educated, mostly lacked organization, and were driven primarily by anti-British revolutionary fervor. Meanwhile, during this period, Moscow experienced a continuity of leadership with Joseph Stalin remaining in power.

The Meerut Conspiracy case, involving members of the Communist Party of India, extended until August 1933. The first batch of prisoners was released in 1934. Subsequently, after their release, communist leaders reorganised the Communist Party of India, which also received recognition from the Comintern in 1934. However, a little while later, the top leadership was arrested once again, and in July 1934, the CPI was declared illegal and placed under a complete ban. At that time, the party had scarcely a thousand members (R.S. Singh, 1991, p. 12).

The Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow in 1935, directed the Communist Party of India to return to the policy of cooperating with bourgeois parties in the national liberation movement while supporting anti-imperialist efforts and maintain a distinct political identity. This allowed for communist infiltration into Right-wing organisations and other progressive groups. Simultaneously, Indian Communists were looking for support from Russia via Afghanistan, and some communist leaders had already established contacts for this purpose. CPI was acting on the strength of possible Soviet invasion of India that might expedite revolutionary progress. In the meanwhile, CPI workers experience a comparatively greater degree of freedom and expression after the establishment of Indian ministries in the provinces following the 1937 elections, even though the party remained illegal. The official ban on CPI was ultimately lifted in 1942. In 1943 when the first congress of the party was convened, its membership had grown sixteen thousand, and by the end of 1947 on the eve of the second party congress, the total membership of the party had expanded to ninety thousand. (R.S. Singh, 1991, p. 12).

In addition to the Communist Party of India (CPI), there were several other Left organisations and parties in India, but most of them were not affiliated with the Comintern in Moscow. The All-India Congress Socialist Party (CSP), established in 1934 under the patronage of the Indian National Congress, had a programme that didn't entirely align with Congress policy as it reflected the 'cross-fertilisation between Marxist and Gandhist ideas and methods.' M. N. Roy created a group—Radical Democratic Party of India in August 1940—whose members were 'communist for all practical purposes except they owed no allegiance to the Comintern' (Misra, 1976, pp. 263-83,475), (Mookerjee, 1984, p. 249). During the 1930s, the peasantry emerged as a

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significant political force, with the formation of the All-India Kissan Sabha in 1936, primarily influenced by the CPI and CSP. active as a political force. The formation of All-India Kissan Sabha in 1936 was a significant development in this regard. It was mainly a peasant organisation under the political influence of CPI and CSP. All-India Students' Federation—organised by Nehru in 1936 was dominated by Left-leaning elements. In additions to these Leftist parties, there were a few other minor socialist organisations and Trotskyist groups in India, all sharing a common belief in the need for a violent overthrow of the government. However, the CPI's stole a march over others by virtue of its party discipline and organisational skills (Misra, 1976, pp. 448-50,650).

progressive Writers' Association

The Russian Revolution had a profound influence on Eastern nations, including India. This transformation in the Indian political atmosphere also brought about shift in literary trends. A group of writers, influenced by Soviet communism, began to advocate for 'literature for the sack of life' as opposed to the previous concept of 'literature for the sack of literature'. Already by this time, with the waning of imperial patronage for poets, the concept of literature purely for the sake of literature, often intertwined with romantic these, became largely irrelevant.

The establishment of the Progressive Writers Association can be attributed to the 'the World Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture' which took place in Paris in 1935. This Congress was convened to counter the growing influence of fascism following the fascist regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan. Indian intellectuals also participated the conference. In the 1930s, Left-wing ideas gained popularity among Indian educated individuals who sought to employ literature as a means to effect social change. In 1936, a group of Western educated individuals, mostly Oxford university graduates, founded the All-India Progressive Writers Association (PWA). Syed Sajjad Zaheer is considered to be the founder of the Progressive Writers Association. The First All-India Conference of PWA was held at Lucknow in April 1936, with the distinguished literary figure Munshi Prem Chand serving as the presiding authority.

The literature produced during this period was influenced by the Russian Revolution. Poets like, Josh Malihabadi penned works such as *Karl Marx* and *Nizam-e-Nau*. He declared Lenin to be the first apostle on the surface of earth. Allama Muhmmad Iqbal is considered to be the first poet where the echo of revolution can be heard. Iqbal appreciated Marxism and composed a poem dedicated to Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin. Under the influence of PWA, the slogans advocating the transformation of societal standards gained prominence. Additionally, there was a push for

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literature to take a leading role in shaping politics rather than merely following it. (Fatimi, 2011, pp. 24-86).

Soviet Influence on the Indian Politics During World War II

With the commencement of the Second World War (Sep 1, 1939 – Sep 2, 1945), radical organisations in India, including the Forward Bloc, Congress Socialist Party (which operated within the parent body) and notably the Communist Party of India, were firmly against war efforts from the very beginning. During the War, the Leftist groups saw an opportunity to utilise the circumstances to mount a people's struggle aimed at overthrowing British Imperialism (Lal, 1986, pp. 121,137,151,241). However, due to government repression, the activities of such elements were mostly restricted to major cities and industrial centres throughout the country. As the War escalated and the government's crackdown intensified, the CPI was forced to go underground. Its activities were confined to some big cities of India.

On the other hand, the Indian National Congress adopted a relatively moderate stance during the World War II. Instead of launching an anti-British movement, Congress focused on demanding freedom of speech from the British government. Nehru stated on 20 May 1940, "launching a civil disobedience campaign at a time when the Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle would be an act derogatory to India's honour". Gandhi expressed similar views by saying, "we do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence". However, as the influence of Leftist groups grew, Mahatma Gandhi was compelled to introduce his *satyagraha* programme, eventually leading to the Congress's initiation of the Quit India Movement in August 1942. The All-India Muslim League, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, neither favoured nor opposed the war efforts (Lal, 1986, pp. 134-244).

The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), which served as a conduit for directives from the Comintern to India, initially characterized the War as imperialistic in nature. On October 7, 1939, CPGB embraced the theory of 'revolutionary defeatism.' However, the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 prompted a change in CPGB's policy, shifting from 'revolutionary defeatism' to the 'popular front' approach, emphasizing peaceful penetration from within. As a result, CPGB began supporting the war efforts of Great Britain. Stalin also issued an appeal on November 7, 1941, urging communists not only in Europe but also in Asia to support the Allied forces (Misra, 1976, pp. 451-7). It was revealed that Adolf Hitler had devised plans of invading India through Afghanistan. Hitler regarded India as "the magic center of the greatest

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empire ever known to the world". He outlined a plan that in the autumn of 1941 Germany would be able to launch an invasion of Egypt, Iraq, Iran and then India where they expected to join Japanese troops (Grover, 1993, pp. 45-6).

The invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany stirred strong feelings of outrage in India and the Indian press condemned strongly the Nazi aggression. Initially, the entry of the USSR into the War did not result in an immediate change in the Communist Party of India's (CPI) stance. Nonetheless, Indian communists eventually concluded that the character of the War had changed and it was no longer an imperialist war since the Soviet Union had no territorial ambitions. The entry of Japan in the War in December 1941, played a significant role in prompting the CPI to change its policy from the 'imperialist war' to the 'peoples' war'. This shift was due to the perceived threat of war approaching India's borders and the need to extend support to the 'socialist fatherland' during a critical period (Lal, 1986, pp. 153-6).

CPI adopted a new policy which was based on the theory of 'two wars', distinguishing between the war on the Eastern Front fought by Soviet Russia, which they supported, and the war between Britain and Germany in the West, which they resisted. However, the ultimate goal of overthrowing imperialism remained unchanged, and the CPI's stance on the freedom struggle was consistent. To support the Soviet Union, the CPI decided to temporarily suspend all anti-government activities and adopted a negative attitude towards the Quit India Movement launched by Congress in August 1942. In contrast, the CPI began displaying a more favourable attitude towards the Muslim separatist movement led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, advocating for the partition of India and an independent Pakistan.

The pro-government moves led to the lifting of the ban on the Communist Party of India in July 1942 and the release of its imprisoned leaders, including P. G. Joshi and Adhikari. This favourable development enabled the party to convene its first congress in legally in 1943. During this period, the CPI managed to solidify its position by assuming leadership roles in various workers', peasants', students', and traders' organisations. It also played a role in establishing organisations like Indian Peoples' Theatre Association, Friends of the Soviet Union and Bal Sanghs. In a gesture of goodwill, the CPI endorsed the acceptance of the Cripps' Mission proposals in 1942, which suggested that India would be granted independence after the War. This led to the final break between CPI and Congress when the CPI's members voted against the Quit India Movement.

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Communists also extended their support and appreciation to the Muslim League for its decision to boycott the Congress's Quit India campaign. This marked a significant shift from the CPI's earlier opposition to the Muslim League in the late 1930s, now turning into generous support. During this time, several Muslim socialist writers and intellectuals began to enlist in the Indian Army to participate in the fight against the Germans and the Japanese. Notable figures such as Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Chiragh Hassan Hasrat, N. M. Rashid, Dr. M. D. Taseer, Badrudin, Hameed Ahmad Khan, Hafeez Jalindhry and many others joined the British army in the effort to support the Soviet Union (Jameel, 2013, p. 208). For the first time, All-India Radio began including discussions about the Soviet Union and socialism in its broadcasts. (Jameel, 2013, pp. 265-6). This favorable environment enabled the Communist Party to hold its first legal congress in 1943. However, its pro-war policy was revised in 1945 as the Allies emerged victorious in Europe and the threat of Japanese invasion receded.

Freedom Movement and the Indian Left Politics

Since 1942, the Communist Party of India began to recognise Muslim League as a representative political party for Indian Muslims and began to lend its support to the Muslim League's demand for a separate homeland. This support was also grounded in the Bolshevik multinational entity theory and the principle of nations having the right to self-determination. Likewise, during the final years of the struggle for independence, the Communist Party of India also endorsed the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. The CPI won approximately 700,000 votes in 1945-46 elections, which accounted for two and a half percent of the total votes cast. While the party did not secure any seats in the Central Assembly, it did manage to win nine seats in provincial legislatures (R.S. Singh, 1991, pp. 14,62), (Sirkar & Fernandes, 1984, p. 86).

After the partition of India in August 1947, the Communist Party of India followed the directives of Moscow which emphasized that India had not yet achieved genuine political and economic independence. During the Second Congress of the CPI held in February-March 1948 in Calcutta, it was decided to partition the CPI. As a result, the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was established, with top leadership being dispatched from India. The first politburo consisted of figures like Sajjad Zaheer, who served as General Secretary, along with Sibte-Hassan and Ishfaq Beg, all of whom were highly educated and came from the North Indian *Ashraf* [elite] background. East Bengal (later East Pakistan) was represented in this congress by thirty-two

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communists and it was decided that the Communist Party of West Bengal would provide guidance to the leadership of the East Bengal Communist Party.

Soviet Union's Cultural Influence on India

During his visit to Soviet Union in 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru drew parallels between the conditions in Russia and India. He noted that both vast agricultural countries were in the early stages of industrialization, grappling with issues of poverty and illiteracy. He expressed the belief that "if Russia is able to overcome the issue, the model may be applied in India as well" (Nehru, 1949, p. 3). Later in 1936, while presiding over the session of Congress in Lucknow, Nehru expressed his optimism about India's future "largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done". He held hope that the new Soviet civilisation will "spread to the other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds" (Mukerjee, 1993, pp. 2-7).

In mid-September 1941, a Society of Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) was set up in Bombay. Distinguished figures like Tagore, Nehru and Sarojiny Naido volunteered their patronage to this organisation. Within the following year, FSU extended its presence to various cities across India. The major centres of the FSU established direct contacts with the Soviet Union. The first nationwide congress of Friends of Soviet Union was convened in Bombay in June 1944. This All-India Congress of FSU denounced the Nazi aggression against the Soviet Union. India also supplied some raw materials and goods to the Soviet Union during the War. Some Indian servicemen were subsequently honoured with Soviet orders and medals. In the post-Russian Revolution period, the tsarist initiatives of studying Urdu language were once again resumed, and by 1940s, Urdu was being taught once again in the institute for Oriental Studies in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and Moscow. Additionally, in 1947, the teaching of Urdu was commenced at the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent as well (Khalid, 2008).

Soviet Union and India's Diplomatic Relations

Nehru regarded Russia as a giant neighbour and believed that 'there can be either amity or enmity, indifference is out of the question' (Nehru, 1949, p. 126). The interim government in India announced the formation of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union on 13 April 1947. Just six days after taking office on September 7, 1946, Nehru extended his greetings to both the people of the United States and the Soviet Union. Initially, there was some skepticism from the Soviet Union towards the Indian Interim Government, and they did not support India in the Paris Peace Conference. Nonetheless, on August 11, 1947, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru's sister

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assumed the charge of the office of ambassador in Moscow, and in response, the Soviet ambassador, K. V. Novikov arrived in New Delhi in January 1948.

During the last year of British rule, India and Soviet Union shared some common approaches to global issues at international forums, even though the Russians believed Indian delegations to be a 'loyal vassal of British imperialism'. Together, they voted against South Africa's discriminatory actions towards Indians during the October 1946 session of the United Nations General Assembly. In the following year, a Soviet delegation participated in the Indian Science Congress in Delhi in January 1947. Two months later another Soviet delegation arrived in Delhi at the First Inter-Asian Conference held in Delhi. On the other hand, leaders of the Muslim League had a less friendly stance towards the Soviet Union (Buheraj, 1973, pp. 27-29).

Conclusion

Examining the influence of the Soviet Union on the politics in India and the role of the Soviet Union in shaping Indian Left-wing politics is a significant and complex aspect of Indian history, and studying it provides insights into the broader context of Indian politics and the movements against colonialism in that era. The first contact of the Indians with Soviet Russia stemmed from the Caliphate Movement. When about two hundred caliphates crossed over to the Soviet Central Asia from Afghanistan. Those who preferred to stay in Tashkent and then moved to Moscow gradually embraced Marxist-Leninists ideology. Instead of advocating for the restoration of the caliphate and pursuing the cause of pan-Islamism, they became dedicated to another international cause: the proletarian revolution and communism. The Bolsheviks extended their support to Indian emigrants because they believed that by fomenting revolutions in their wealthy Asian colonies, they could undermine their capitalist adversaries in Europe. In the words of Leon Trotsky, he articulated that "the road to Paris and London lies through the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab and Bengal" (Hammond, 1984, p. 7). Under the leadership of M. N. Roy, Indian revolutionaries established the Communist Party of India (CPI) in Tashkent and affiliated it with the Comintern. The CPI was reorganised at India in the last month of 1925, which maintained close ties with the Comintern (the Communist International), which was based at Moscow and aimed to promote communist revolutions worldwide. The subsequent wave of Indian Marxists predominantly came from the Indian elite class, where they had acquired their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism during their stay in Great Britain. These Indian communists drew strong inspiration from the Great October Revolution. Concerned about the spread of communist ideas

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in India, the British government initiated a series of legal cases against Indian communists from 1921 to 1931.

The CPI initially held a hostile stance towards the All-India Muslim League until World War II, describing it as a reactionary organisation and viewing it as a continuation of British imperialism's 'divide and rule' policy. However, the CPI later shifted its position on the issue of nationalities and openly supported the idea of Pakistan in 1944. It also endorsed Muslim League candidates in the 1945-46 elections and sent its Muslim members into the League, where they actively participated in its political activities. Despite being a relatively weak political organisation, the CPI rejected the 'Mountbatten Award,' viewing it as a policy of divide and rule, which led the CPI to adopt an anti-League and anti-Pakistan stance on the eve of India's independence. The partition of India resulted in a mass exodus, with the majority of Hindu and Sikh communists leaving for India.

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