the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)—Short Course published in 1939. (Steinmayr, 2000) Stalin’s problem with a section of the top most leaders of the CPSU has been the issue of plethora of writings and he was criticized severely by Khrushchev in his secret speech in 1956. However, ‘every “revelation” in Nikita Khrushchev’s infamous “secret speech” to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is provably false’. (Furr, 2011) This study of Grover Furr substantiates the position maintained by Steinmayr to an extent.

If we look at some of the striking features of the Seventh Congress decisions, it would be found that the Congress rejected the previous assertion that the proletariat should be the sole leader of the national liberation movement. The policy of the Comintern, directed towards forming a united anti-imperialist front and establishing relations of cooperation with the patriotic strata of the bourgeoisie, provided new opportunities for developing the communist movement, for increasing the influence of the communists in mass organisations and for consolidating the political role of the proletariat in the national liberation movement. The implementation of the new strategic line was not very easy for the Indian communists (CPI) as the party was banned in 1934 which continued till 1942. However, the main obstacle was the issue of reconciling the position of the Sixth with that of the Seventh Congress. Thus, soon after the Seventh Congress, the CPI leadership, referring to the new orientation, observed that the decisions of the Seventh Congress did in no way undo the work of the Sixth, but carried it forward by basing itself on the decisions of the Sixth Congress, and thus formulated a new tactical line for the changed situation. (Datta Gupta, 2006: 185) But the CPI, in practice, found it difficult to put the new strategy into action. They were confused about how to apply the policy of united front with those who were branded as enemies to national liberation movements just a few days back. An attempt was made, in the meantime, to come in terms with the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) but the project did not materialise and the CPI-CSP rift instead of bridging widened further. However, with the breaking out of Second World War in 1939 the tactical line of action changed somewhat. For the CPI, the War has become the ‘imperialist war’ between two greedy power blocs and full support was extended to the Comintern’s characterization of War. Secondly, calls were now given to launch and intensify anti-British struggles throughout the country. Thirdly, the Congress and the CSP were severely criticized for their passivity in regard to anti-British struggle. The War, the CPI believed, provided an opportunity for the seizure of power.

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 created a decisive turn in the history of the Comintern. The ‘Imperialist War’ now turned out to be the ‘People’s War’ for the Comintern. The
Comintern asked the communist parties to reverse its line and go back to the understanding of the Seventh Congress that a difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism indeed existed. (Datta Gupta, 2006: 205) However, it was not an easy task for the CPI to switch over to the new strategic understanding. Because, acceptance of the new Comintern line, they feared, would lead the CPI to give up the policy of opposing the British war efforts and, at the same time, British imperialism too. What CPI pursued later on as the fall out of the Comintern decisions was to oppose the Quit India Movement launched all over the India in 1942 and, in the process, instead of cementing unity with the people further, got themselves isolated from the main currents of anti-imperialist movement.

It was not a coincidence that in 1935, as soon as the Seventh Comintern Congress was over, steps were taken to decentralise the organisation by giving individual parties a significant degree of autonomy in managing their affairs. From this time onwards, there would be no more congresses, no more Executive Committee plenary sessions, which had been very frequent in the past. In 1941 the management of its work was placed in the hands of three leading figures who were proved to be anti-Stalinist afterwards – Dimitrov, Manuilsky and Togliatti. The news of dissolution of the Communist International was announced in 1943. This took place without convening a congress but as a result of the ‘growth and political maturity’ reached by its communist parties. The Executive Committee of the Seventh Congress announced that ‘the Presidium of the E.C.C.I., unable owing to the conditions of the world war to convene the Congress of the Communist International, permits itself to submit for approval by sections of the Communist International the following proposal: To dissolve the Communist International as a guiding centre of the international labor movement, releasing sections of the Communist International from the obligations ensuing from the constitution and decisions of the Congresses of the Communist International.’ (Dissolution, 1943) (details in Appendix 1e) By declaring that its dissolution had been ‘proper and timely’, Stalin must have reached the conclusion that the Comintern had ceased to be of any use as an organ of the socialist revolution. However in 1947, on Stalin’s personal initiative, a new Marxist-Leninist international, on a restricted basis, was set up in the shape of the Communist Information Bureau, or Cominform, under a new leadership which excluded Dimitrov and Manuilsky. Significantly, the first acts of the Cominform were to express strong criticism of the revisionist lines of such communist parties as those of France, Italy, Japan and, later, Yugoslavia.
Leader of the Chinese Revolution Mao Zedong supported the dissolution of Comintern:

Comrade Mao Tse-tung asked: 'Why should the Communist International be disbanded? Did it not devote all its efforts to the emancipation of the working class of the whole world and to the war against fascism?'

Comrade Mao Tse-tung said: 'It is true that the Communist International was created by Lenin himself. During its entire existence it has rendered the greatest services in helping each country to organize a truly revolutionary workers' party, and it has also contributed enormously to the great cause of organizing the anti-fascist war.' Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed particularly to the great services of the Communist International in aiding the cause of the Chinese revolution....

Comrade Mao Tse-tung further pointed out: 'Revolutionary movements can be neither exported nor imported. Despite the fact that aid was accorded by the Communist International, the birth and development of the Chinese Communist Party resulted from the fact that China herself had a conscious working class. The Chinese working class created its own party - the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party, although it has a history of only twenty-two years, has already undertaken three great revolutionary movements'...

Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that at present the form of revolutionary organization known as the Communist International is no longer adapted to the necessities of the struggle. To continue this organizational form would, on the contrary, hinder the development of the revolutionary struggle in each country. What is needed now is the strengthening of the national Communist Party [min-tsu kung-chan tang] of each country, and we no longer need this international leading centre.....

In the course of...revolutionary movements, the Chinese Communist Party have already acquired its own excellent cadres endowed with rich personal experience. Since the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935 the Communist International has not intervened in the internal affairs of the Chinese Communist Party. And yet, the Chinese Communist Party has done its work very well, throughout the whole Anti-Japanese War of National Liberation... (Mao, 1946)
Role of Comintern and the CPI- Perception of Revolutionary Converts:

Satyendra Narayan Mazumdar, an Anushilan activist who joined the CPI upon his release in September 1945, writes that he & his fellow travellers treated the CI as the vanguard detachment of the different forces of the world revolution. It helped in exposing the character, designs and maneuvers of world imperialism. It analysed the new turns in the world situation and outlined the common tasks before the different sectors of the world revolutionary process. Without the knowledge of such analysis it is not possible for the forces of revolution in any country to have a correct perspective of struggle or to devise any effective plan of action against imperialism. In spite of committing mistakes, the role of the CI cannot be undermined in any eventuality. (Mazumdar, 1979: 274-276; Ghosh, Ganesh, 2004: 122-123)
So, for him and for his fellow national revolutionaries’ who earlier became the members of Communist Consolidation in the Andamans or in various detention camps the only option acceptable was to join the CI affiliated CPI. After their release, the members of the Communist Consolidation joined the CPI. It appears here that though this group of revolutionaries was not fully satisfied either with the Comintern or CPI policies, after some initial vacillations, they found in the CPI the culmination of their search for ‘A Revolutionary Ideology and A Revolutionary Programme’.

Again, a good number Anushilan revolutionaries who accepted Marxism for their future political battle and organized themselves as Anushilan Marxists since 1937 were not inclined to join the CPI and were the staunch critics of the Third International and its Indian national section, the CPI. (Samanta, 1995: 768-771) For them, as it has been recorded subsequently, the Third International had been following the opportunist policy of United Front and Popular Front which resulted in the complete betrayal of international socialism and world revolution. On the pretext of saving the world from fascist aggression, it was alleged, the Third International and its branches played into the hands of the international bourgeoisie. (RSPI, May 1946: 152-153) A large number of Anushilan adherents who were converted to Marxism examined the implications of the policies formulated by the Communist International and their implementation by the CPI. More particularly, the Seventh World Congress line was subjected to close scrutiny. After prolonged debates and discussions, Anushilianites who were by that time convinced of Marxism clearly felt that the CI had lost its internationalist character and transformed itself into an agency for carrying out the foreign policy needs of the Soviet Union and that the CPI's policy of shift from 'leftist' policy to 'United front' tactics was not the product of its own independent judgment of the correlationship of class forces prevalent in the country vis-a-vis imperialism but of its unquestioned, uncritical allegiance to the dictates from the Comintern. Anushilan Marxists held that a considerable
degree of unity among the broad sectors of the anti-imperialist masses had already been achieved under the Indian National Congress and as such the INC provided the most suitable basis for the organisational realisation of revolutionary anti-imperialist people's front. But they clearly understood that the INC was not already such a front but it had to be transformed into one. The dominant leadership of the INC was bourgeois reformist and the anti-imperialist masses were still prevented from exerting sufficient pressure on the leadership not being sufficiently organised themselves, the duty, as conceived by Anushilan Marxists, was to discourage the anti-imperialist rank and file of the Congress from the bourgeois reformist leadership and assume the leadership of the Congress on behalf of the masses and transform it into a real anti-imperialist people's front. This was in striking contrast to the line of thinking of the CPI about the formation of the anti-imperialist people's front. The CPI thought, according to Anushilan Marxists, that with the increasing offensive of imperialism since the days of the general crisis of capitalism the Indian bourgeoisie as a whole barring a handful of rabid reactionaries had moved to the left and it would be possible to retain them (even the Congress right wing) within the AIPF. This line of thinking, as Anushilan Marxists viewed it, was an ‘illusion which fundamentally misunderstands the dual role of the Indian bourgeoisie’

Under the circumstances, more advanced elements among Anushilan Marxists felt the impelling necessity of preparing a document defining their ultimate aim, immediate objective and attitude towards anti-imperialist struggle from an authentic Marxist-Leninist point of view. By 1936 they thought of introducing a new Marxist trend in Indian politics as an alternative to the current official communist line. The draft document of Anushilan Marxists was prepared in the Deoli Detention Jail in Rajputana by the close of 1936 which was subsequently discussed and debated in different jails and detention camps. It was only when most of them came out of jail in the middle of 1938 they adopted their thesis in September 1938 (Bhattacharyya, 1982: 29-30) The Anushilan Marxists formed their own party as a ‘Marxist-Leninist working class party’, shortly, in March 1940 and took the name of Revolutionary Socialist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [From May 1946, as RSPI and, then from 1956 as RSP]. Thus, a group of revolutionary converts’ gave birth to a new party based on ‘non-conformist ‘revolutionary Marxism’ as opposed to ‘conformist, official communism of the CPI’. (Bhattacharyya, 1982: 49) At the same time, another important cause of their aversion to Comintern was the belief that under Stalin, the Comintern has lost its international character and became fully subservient to the needs of the Soviet Union.
Now, coming to third point of view which considered the ‘CPI was full of blunders and vacillations and the Comintern was basically correct’, we find another set of revolutionary convert[s], who initially joined with the initiative of the formation of RSP and became members of the party, formed a separate ‘platform of action with a party content’ in May 1946 in the name of SUC with a Provisional Central Executive Committee (PEC). However, subsequent to the split in the platform, they reconstituted the earlier PEC as the Central Committee of a separate Marxist party SUCI. They were of the opinion that the general programme of the Sixth Congress of 1928 was not only adopted on the correct study of world economic structure also did not fail to envisage the rise of fascism in Europe. Against the capitalist world economic structure, the programme of socialist revolution was accepted as the general international programme of the communist movement.

But it does not follow from it that this programme is to be applied in toto in all cases and in all countries. The thinking of those who asserted that general programme is applicable to all countries irrespective of the objective conditions is non-dialectical and formalist. The application of the general programme must differ with different objective conditions. The general programme only provides guiding programme, ultimate objective which in particular is to be applied differently in different countries, differently to England than to India, differently to India than to China. A country in the phase of bourgeois democratic revolution cannot as such accept the general programme of socialist revolution as its immediate programme. India was in the phase of bourgeoisie democratic revolution at the time of Sixth World Congress of Comintern. So the correct application of that general programme to India in particular would have been then to strengthen the national liberation movement along with other democratic forces and to lead this bourgeois democratic revolution to its logical conclusion, the socialist proletarian revolution through the establishment of working class leadership over the country by neutralizing the bourgeoisie hegemony. (Ghosh, 1948: 14-15) But, for Ghosh, instead the CPI blindly accepted the general programme as the particular programme of India, applied it in entirety, dissociated completely from the national liberation movement, declared the INC as a bourgeois party without taking notice of its all national anti-imperialist platform character. 'This definitely wrong ultra-left move deprived the country of the possibility of establishment of working class leadership.' (Ghosh, 1948: 16)

On the question of Comintern’s role, these young converts’ were of the opinion that as a general international programme the stand of the Comintern Sixth Congress was correct. But, the acceptance of united front policy in the Seventh Congress was a ‘blunder’. This was a swing to the ‘right wing’ of liberalism. As a general international political programme it was undoubtedly a deviation based on
wrong analysis of correlation of world social forces. The general programme of the united front of the Comintern with imperialist capitalist betrayed the cause of socialist revolution in various countries of Europe, particularly in France. Therefore, the Comintern has been designated as ‘corrupt and incompetent’ with respect to the wrong formulation of policies following the Seventh Congress. (SUC, 1948: 12-13)

The last but not the least important perception is that the national sections of the Comintern had no other alternative but to follow the Comintern line without raising any question as they were bound to do so as per the Terms of Admission into the Communist International proposed by Lenin and accepted by the Second Congress. Sobhanlal Datta Gupta was one of those commentators on Comintern who believes that becoming member of the Comintern was fine but, at the same time, it was also a beginning of losing independence in formulation and political action on the part of the national sections. So for Datta Gupta, it already prefigured the destiny of the communist parties in different parts of the world including India and not a single party affiliated to the Comintern were in the position to challenge the programmes accepted by the Comintern in various Congresses in spite of genuine misgivings regarding those policies. Once a member of the Comintern, the fate was sealed. (Datta Gupta, 2006: 1-2) In the concluding note in his seminal book, Communism and the Destiny of Communism in India 1919-1943, Datta Gupta makes the following observations:

The reconstruction of the history of Indian communism in the light of the new revelations on Comintern ..........points to four moments when the intervention of Comintern decisively shaped its destiny. First, the birth of communism in India was marked by a sectarian stance from the beginning......

The second moment of intervention was the aftermath of the Sixth Congress, when, in 1928, the Indian Communists were expressly directed by the Comintern to disband the Workers’ and Peasants’ Parties .......... and to switch over to the line of left extremism.

The third moment was the Comintern’s shift in 1935 to the united/popular front strategy but without admitting that the line of the Sixth Congress had been a mistake ...

The fourth moment refers to the Comintern directives concerning the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and transformation of the “Imperialist War” into a “People’s War”, which ...were channeled to the CPI through the CPGB...
All alternative notions of difference, locality and autonomy were thus destined to be erased and
the Indian case was no exception to this process. (Datta Gupta, 2006: 297-298)

Hence, the fate of the CPI was destined to be doomed since its formation as the party remained always
a faithful follower of the Comintern dictates.

**Communist Party of China and the Comintern:**

Here, an attempt may be the made on the patterns of interaction between the Chinese Communist
Party and the Comintern as CPC is the party which after its formation in 1921 always kept coordination
with the Comintern and successfully led the Peoples’ Democratic Revolution in 1949. So, how they
responded to the Terms of Admission to the Comintern by keeping its independent political activities
unabated, even going against the Comintern directions at times? These would help us in understanding
better whether the CPI was, as has been argued by Datta Gupta, really helpless in exerting
independence from the fetters as imposed by the Comintern!

Let us begin with Mao, the leader of the CPC and the Chinese Revolution:

**The Chinese revolution won victory by acting contrary to Stalin’s will.** The fake foreign devil [in
Lu Hsün’s *True Story of Ah Q*] ‘did not allow people to make revolution’. But our Seventh
Congress advocated going all out to mobilize the masses and to build up all available
revolutionary forces in order to establish a new China. During the quarrel with Wang Ming from
1937 to August 1938, we put forward ten great policies, while Wang Ming produced sixty
policies. If we had followed Wang Ming’s, or in other words Stalin’s, methods the Chinese
revolution couldn’t have succeeded. When our revolution succeeded, Stalin said it was a fake.
We did not argue with him, and as soon as we fought the war to resist America and aid Korea,
our revolution became a genuine one [in his eyes]..........................

**In short, our basic line is universal truth, but details differ.** This applies to each country and to
each province. There is unity and there are also contradictions. The Soviet Union stresses unity,
and doesn’t talk about contradictions, especially the contradiction between the leaders and the
led. (Mao, March 1958 - Emphasis added)
Mao further discusses the issue of independence from the Comintern:

‘They did not permit China to make revolution: that was in 1945. Stalin wanted to prevent China from making revolution, saying that we should not have a civil war and should cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek, otherwise the Chinese nation would perish. But we did not do what he said. The revolution was victorious.................. Later when I went to Moscow to sign the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance, we had to go through another struggle. He was not willing to sign a treaty. After two months of negotiations he at last signed. When did Stalin begin to have confidence in us? It was at the time of the Resist America, Aid Korea campaign, from the winter of 1950. He then came to believe that we were not Tito, not Yugoslavia......
(Mao, Sep 1962)

In the Talks on Questions of Philosophy Mao further stated:

Stalin felt that he had made mistakes in dealing with Chinese problems, and they were no small mistakes. We are a great country of several hundred millions, and he opposed our revolution, and our seizure of power. We prepared for many years in order to seize power in the whole country, the whole of the Anti-Japanese War constituted a preparation. This is quite clear if you look at the documents of the Central Committee for that period, including On New Democracy. That is to say that you cannot set up a bourgeois dictatorship, you can only establish New Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat, you can only set up a people’s democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat. ...

Even before the dissolution of the Third International, we did not obey the orders of the Third International. At the Tsunyi Conference we didn’t obey, and afterwards, for a period of ten years, including the Rectification Campaign and down to the Seventh Congress, when we finally adopted a resolution (‘Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party’) and corrected [the errors of] ‘leftism’, we didn’t obey them at all. Those dogmatists utterly failed to study China’s peculiarities; ten-odd years after they had betaken themselves to the countryside, they utterly failed to study the land, property, and class relationships in the countryside. You can’t understand the countryside just by going there, you must study the relations between all the classes and strata in the countryside. I devoted more than ten years to these problems before I finally clarified them for myself. (Mao, Aug 1964-Emphasis added)
As an authority of Marxism, Mao Zedong clearly states the issue of independence of the national communist parties. In one of his essays written in 1936, Mao explained that the experience of the civil war in the Soviet Union directed by Lenin and Stalin has a world-wide significance. All Communist Parties, including the Chinese Communist Party, regard this experience and its theoretical summing-up by Lenin and Stalin as their guide. But this does not mean that it should be applied mechanically to their specific conditions. In many of its aspects, China's revolutionary war has characteristics distinguishing it from the civil war in the Soviet Union. Of course it is wrong to take no account of these characteristics or deny their existence. This point has been fully borne out, as Mao wrote, in China's ten years of war. (Mao, SL-Vol I, 1975: 194-195)

Zhou Enlai, another important leader of the CPC also spoke on the relations between the CPC and the Comintern. In this speech, Zhou Enlai upheld the principle of independence of the national communist parties:

I have been asked by the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee to speak on international relations, particularly the relations between the Communist International and the Chinese Communist Party.

I wish to make six brief points:

1. It was necessary to establish the Communist International and it was also necessary to dissolve it. ... There is no question that it was necessary to establish the Communist International, which played an important role in helping to form Communist Parties in various countries and in stimulating their growth. But by the time these Parties grew up and matured, there was no longer any need for the Communist International to exist......

2. ...Only by integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the country can one enrich and develop Marxism-Leninism...

3. Each Party must think independently with regard to revolution and construction in its own country. .......

4. In revolution and construction, a country should act independently and rely on its own efforts. Comrade Mao Zedong once observed that both revolutions in the two big countries, the Russian October Revolution and the Chinese revolution, succeeded when the Communist International was not in existence...