

## CHAPTER-1

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDO-SOVIET RELATION

#### **Ancient Period :**

From the time immemorial Indo-Soviet relationship exists. This is found in the studies conducted by Gleb Ivashentsov and Nikolai Koltsov<sup>1</sup> in linguistics, archaeology, anthropology, and ethnography. A similarity is found between the Russian language and Indian language (Sanskrit). For example, the Russian words "dever" (brother-in-law); "braht" (brother); "svyokor" (father-in-law) have phonetic similarity with the words "devri", "bhratri" and "swakar" respectively in Sanskrit. The word "bog" (god) is similar to "bhoga" in Sanskrit. The name of Hindu sacred hymns 'Vedas' is of the same origin as Russian word 'vedat' (to know). A section of people named 'veda' lived in Belorussia, a former Soviet Republic. There are numerous other examples like this. In archaeological study, it is found that two Indian silver coins of the 9th and 10th centuries were dug up in the former pereyaslavl district of the Doltava guberniya. It was also discovered that kievian Rus bought precious stones and jewels in the East and sold furs, honey and wax there. Archaeological discoveries also proved that Indo-Russian ties were found in Kushan period which was connected with the spread of Buddhism. In 1980's, archeologists of the Soviet Union unveiled the remnants of many Buddhist temples, monasteries and other religious establishments in various areas of what are known as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turmentstan. Rest it, huge amount of sculptors, frescoes, manuscripts written in ancient Indian languages were found. Thousands of Indian manuscripts and miniatures were brought to Central Assia and were passed from generation to generation and now these have been stored in scientific centres in Tashkant, Dushanbe and in other museums. Manifestations of Indo-Russian ties were found not only in manuscripts, but also in numismatic objects.

The kinship and similarity of languages and cultures of ancient India and Russia are found in the writings of G.M. Bongard-Levin and G.F. Ilyin. The name of their book is "India in Ancient Times" published in 1985. Another book that was published in New Delhi

by P.M.Kemp, "Bharat Rus: An Introduction to Indo-Russian Contracts and Travels from Mediavel Times to October Revolution" narrates the ancient ties between these two countries. The common root of Indo-Russian culture was embodied in the paintings of Nikolai Roerich. The Russian people had a natural attractioin to India .The folk stories of Vasily Buslayev, Sadko , Duke Stepanovich and many others that were associated with India. Many literary sources confirmed the staying of Russian people in India . In "Tughlak-Nama " , it is found that the Russians formed an army of Ghazi Malik . This army occupied Delhi where they formed new Indian dynasty of Tughlakids(1320-1413). Nikolai Karamzim<sup>2</sup> remarked , "Until now , geographers were unaware that Russia has the honour of having produced one of the earliest recorded Euoropian journeys to India... at a time when Vasco da Gama was just contemplating the possibility of finding away from Africa to Hindustan, our men from the town of Tver was already on the Malabar Coast" . Bimal Prasad<sup>3</sup> quoted a few lines from "The Story of India the Rich " - a Russian book on India belonging to the 12-13 century, to show that India found a place in Russian legends and fables some 600 years ago.

Russian traders of the 15th century , Afanasy Nikjtin contributed a lot about the ancient ties between these two countries . In his book " Voyage Beyond Three Seas", Nikitin , narrated different aspectds of the relations . Nikitin voyage to India lasted for about three years from 1471 to 1474 .About Nikitin, Yevgeni Rummyantsev<sup>4</sup> wrote, "Today, over five centuries later , we can be proud of the fact that , unlike the European colonialists, Afanasy Nikitin did not enter this legendary country with a sword and cross, but instead stretched one of the first threads of the spiritual friendship between Russia and India." Afanasy Nikitin's work was dedicated to India. As an attentive and thoughtful observer who sought to learn about a world that was new to him , Nikitin wrote many interesting things about India , with a great sympathy for its people<sup>5</sup>. In 16th century and after, a number of successful attempts was made to make a trade relation between India and Soviet Union . Devendra Kaushik <sup>6</sup> wrote , "Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich was the first Russian ruler to make an attempt to establish diplomatic and economic relations with the Mughal rulers of India. In 1646, he sent Nikita Siroyezhen and Vasily Tushkanov as envoy to the court of Shahjahan." Later on, Semyon Malenki came to Delhi in 1695. He was received by Aurangzeb who allowed the Russian traders to carry on trade with India . A detailed discussion of the

history of Indo-Soviet trade relation will be carried out in the later chapter .

Russian interest in India , its folk epics, customs, morals and religious belief was constantly growing . In 1788 , the ‘ Bhagavad-Gita’, ‘Mahabharata’ and philosophical thought of ancient India was published in Russian language. Kalidasa’s ‘Abhijnana Sakuntalam ‘ was translated and published in Russian journal ‘Moskovsky’ in 1792 by Nikolai Karamzin. Another person , Filip Yefremov who visited India through Karakoram pass within 1774-1782 wrote a book “Nine Year Wanderings”. Knowing Hindustani and Kashmiri language well, Yefremov described these two provinces with exceptional accuracy. Another Russian Indologist Gerasim Lebdev, who lived in India for twelve years from 1785 to 1797 promoted Indo-Soviet friendship to a greater extend. Going back to his nativelyland, Lebdev wrote one book in 1805, “ A Scholarly Contemplation of the Brahmin System of East India”. On returning to Russia , he set up a printing press where he used the Bengali type for printing the above-mentioned book. Introduction of India in Russian study was his credit . In the last part of the 19th century, Russian people paid enough attention to the growing freedom movement of India.

### ***HISTORICAL PART OF 20th CENTURY***

I.P Minayev, a renowned Russian scholar, visited India thrice and showed an exceptional interest in India’s national liberation movement . Minayev was the only Russian, who participated as the foreign delegate at the first Indian National Congress session in Bombay in 1905. The revolutionary democrats Vissarian Belinsky, Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Nikolai Dobrolyubov played an important role in establishment of friendship between India and Russia. In 1905, the famous Russian writer Maxim Gorky was thrown into prison . Being shocked by this imprisonment of Gorky, Gandhiji protested it by his newspaper ‘Indian Opinion ‘ on July 1, 1905 ; Gandhiji also appreciated Gorky’s selflessness and fearlessness. The first Russian Revolution of 1905 exerted great influence on the political conciousness of the people of India . For many Indians , who had long been fed by the imperialist propaganda of “threat from Russia” this event proved to be an eye-opener<sup>7</sup>.

The Tolstoy Museum in Moscow has 28 letters written by Gandhiji to his Godfather Tolstoy. Gandhiji was highly influenced by Leo Tolstoy who was, to him, known as the 'mirror' of the Russian Revolution of 1905. In fact, Gandhiji drew support and inspiration from the life and work of Leo Tolstoy when he initiated his non-violence, non-cooperation movement against the British. Gandhiji called Tolstoy his 'teacher'<sup>8</sup>. He confessed that it was in the teaching of Tolstoy that he found the substantiation for his own belief in non-violence. "Russia", Gandhiji wrote, "gave me in Tolstoy a teacher, who furnished a reasonable basis for my non-violence. Gandhiji also acknowledged that it was Tolstoy who gave him the first perception of his movement in South Africa. Gandhiji wrote, "It was he (Tolstoy), who had prophesied that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring hope to the downtrodden people of the earth"<sup>9</sup>. E.N. Komrov was of the opinion that Tolstoy's actions undoubtedly awakened national-liberation aspirations in India. In his famous 'Letter to a Hindu' (1907) Tolstoy advised the Indian: "Do not resist evil, but do not yourselves participate in the evil, in the coercion of the administration, courts, in the collection of taxes and mainly, in the army, and nobody in the world will enslave you"<sup>10</sup>. The newspaper 'Vihari' wrote in 1907 in this connection that Tolstoy was very right in his suggestion for Indian as 'a handful of Britishers' could not enslave the multimillion Indian nation if the Indians refused to serve in the British army and stopped paying taxes to the British exchequer. Tolstoy's idea of general boycott of British rule in India was evidently evoked by the fight against tsarist autocracy during the first Russian revolution, in 1905. Dadabhai Nawroji mentioned the events of Russia at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1906 while demanding for self-government for India. Madam Cama, the wellknown Indian revolutionary stated in the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart in 1907, "the day will come when the nations of India will awaken and follow the example of our comrades, in Russia, to whom we send our particularly fraternal greetings"<sup>11</sup>.

In Soviet Union, Gandhiji's name was not only associated for his role in India's freedom struggle, but also for the "invariable sympathy Gandhiji has for this country until his last days. He was one of those who stood at the foundations of Indo-Soviet friendship"<sup>12</sup>. On the eve of the October Revolution, both the countries, India and the U.S.S.R. had their common goal to become an independent nation with independent foreign policy. In 1908,

Lenin wrote in his article , 'Inflamable Material in World Politics', "there is no end to the acts of violence and plunder which goes under the name of British system of government in India . Nowhere in the world - with exception of course, of Russia- will you find such chronic starvation among the people". Freedom fighter B.G. Tilak was sentenced to six years' imprisonment by the British court in 1908 , and as a consequence of this , Bombay workers went on a six-day strike . Lenin reacted in the above-mentioned article , "... this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money-fag evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay". In 1911 , the underground Bolshevik "Rabochaya Gazeta", a workers' newspaper edited by Lenin , wrote , "Long live revolutionary Persia! Long live revolutionary China! Long live revolutionary India!" This slogan expressed the main theme of the political line-up of Russian revolutionaries and democrats with regard to India . In mid-1917 , Lenin stressed in the article "Foreign Policy of Russian Revolution" published in ' Pravada' that one of the goals of this policy was to drive the British out of India. Lenin stated that the "working masses of Russia are following with unflagging attention the awakening of the Indian workers and peasants"<sup>13</sup>

So, during the First World War, Lenin developed the political guidelines what signified that , even after the victory of 1917 February Revolution , the working class in India would be able to enjoy the support of its northern neighbour. And the victory of this revolution introduced a new phase of relations between Russia and India.

### ***IMPACT OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION***

Former Prime Minister Late Morarji Desai, during his official visit to the Soviet Union, said that the October Revolution was "an epochmaking event in the history of your country as well as the history of world which has inspired and continues to inspire millions of people outside your frontiers."<sup>14</sup> The great October Revolution had a tremendous impact on the freedom movement of India . The then Secretary of State for India , Lord Montague and the Viceroy of India , Lord Chelmsford , in their famous report on Indian Constitutional Reforms published in 1918 wrote, " The revolution in Russia in its beginning was regarded in India as triumph over despotism, it has given impetus to Indian political reforms "<sup>15</sup>. The Great October Revolution began the propagation of the idea of socialism in India and gave new perspective to social progress.<sup>16</sup> V.Pavlovsky said that the Great October Revolution

had proved that imperialism and colonialism are not all-powerful, and they can and must be vanquished. The Russian revolution awakened the colonial and dependent peoples to struggle, and exerted a great influence on the development of the national-liberation movement, particularly in India.<sup>17</sup> The British tried their level best to prevent the success story of October Revolution from being known by the Indians. Instead, they distorted the picture, but they did not fully succeed in their endeavour. Indian press helped much to reach the news to the mass. 'Kesari' published from Poona and edited by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, printed one article on January 29, 1918 on "The Russian Leader" with a view to countering propaganda carried out by the British sources about Lenin and the Russian Revolution"<sup>18</sup>. Barely 21 days after the occurrence of the Revolution, on 28th November, 1917, the great Indian poet Subrahmaya Bharati, wrote in one of the Tamil newspaper that the socialists of Russia under the leadership of 'Sriman Lenin' had achieved their goal and commanded the principle of distribution of wealth "between peoples of the world on the basis of equality"<sup>19</sup>. "The Amrita Bazar Patrika published from Calcutta wrote on August 17, 1920, "The Soviet is not only a powerful as any government in Europe, but some of its principles are more enlightened than any followed by any other government in the world"<sup>20</sup>. The Hindu daily 'Aaj' (Banaras) wrote on October 5, 1920: "If one Lenin goes, ten other Lenins will take his place. By Lenin, we mean the man who is representing the domination of Shudras"<sup>21</sup>. Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>22</sup> wrote to his daughter Indira Gandhi, "The year you were born in 1917 -was one of the memorable years in history, when a great leader, with a heartfull of love and sympathy for the poor and suffering, made his people write a noble and never-to-be-forgotten chapter of history. In the very month in which you were born, Lenin started the great Revolution which has changed the fate of Russia". On July 20, 1920, 'Kesari' declared that the Soviet government had past the three tests of genuine government: "they had established an orderly economy, they had built up a powerful army"<sup>23</sup>. Twelve days after the publication of this editorial, Tilok died, and the supreme leadership of the Indian National Congress and freedom movement passed to the head of Mahatma Gandhi. This heralded the new phase of the history of the Indian freedom movement.

The comment of Bengali weekly 'Atmashakti' of 18 April, 1923 was more revealing: The Bolsheviks are opposed to imperialism, that is why the British, the French and other imperialists are trying to destroy this new-born state. But God's will is different. The

Bolsheviks led by Lenin, have emerged triumphant, the imperialists are on the run. The victorious Bolsheviks are spreading throughout the world the message of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Oppressed humanity today looks forward, with the hope of salvation, towards Lenin and the Bolsheviks''<sup>24</sup>. It is very vivid that Indian sentiment was so deep-rooted that after the death of Lenin, a good number of daily as well as weekly papers paid tribute to the departed leader with a very touchy language. 'Ananda Bazar Patrika' of Calcutta wrote on January 30,; "The noble-minded Lenin, the friend of humanity is dead''<sup>25</sup>. 'Labour Kishan Gazette(Madras), edited by Singarvilu Chettiar expressed on 30 January: "Lenin, the great, has passed away and joined choir invisible. The world, the worker's world, is today poorer by the passing away of its great teacher''<sup>26</sup>.

'The Tribune' published from Lahore wrote on January 29, 1924: "No one can, no one dare, deny that the world today is distinctly the poorer for the death of one who has made revolutionary Russia a thing to reckon with instead of being the plaything of European diplomats''<sup>27</sup>. On the same day, 'Abhyudaya', a Hindi weekly, commented, "World's greatest man of the age has passed away from this world. It is most heartbreaking to publish the news of Lenin's death''<sup>28</sup>.

Indian people being ruled and oppressed by the British got their cherished expression in Lenin's activity in Bolshevik Revolution. In this regard, a good number of books was published in Indian languages and in English where the Indian writers found a similarity between those two countries' situation. Some important books are worth mentioning: S.A.Dange's "Gandhi Vs, Lenin"(1921), G.V, Krishna Rao's Nikolai Lenin: His Life and Works"(1921), Ram Shankar Avasthi's "Roos Ki Punarjanma"(1920) and "Bolshevik Jadugar (1921), Som Dutt Vidyalankar's "Roos Ki Punarjanma"(1921), Vishambhar Nath Jijja's "Roos Me Yugantar"(1923)", and in the same year another book was published by Pran Nath Vidyalankar, this was, "Roos Ki Panchayati Rajya". The above-mentioned books were written in Hindi. Dange, in his book commented on the October Revolution, "The Russian Revolution is the beginning of the destruction of this 'bourgeois period'. This is the significance of the Russian Revolution''<sup>29</sup>. G.V.Krishna Rao wrote, "Truely, the Russian Revolution wrote on the wall of the world that the day of despotism was gone''<sup>30</sup>. The most fascinating comment was made by Pran Nath vidyalankar, "Russia and India sail in the same boat, while the one was ruled by the Czars, the other is being ruled by

British bureaucracy. The Russian masses have been relieved by the Bolsheviks, but Indians are still suffering at the hands of the bureaucrats.<sup>31</sup>. Vidyalankar mainly tried to show the similarity between the two countries in their respective political atmosphere .

Bengali writer Phani Bhusan Ghosh in "Lenin"(1921) and Kannadi writer Gorakh in "Liberation of the poor in Russia Nikolai Lenin" (1924) made a comparison between Lenin and Gandhi two leaders of two struggles in Russia and India . Ghose wrote , "On the whole , both Gandhi and Lenin have a common aim : to liquidate all forms of corruption from society , especially try to end poverty of the masses and uproot the domination of despots"<sup>32</sup>, while Gorakh wrote , "Today, there are two great men dominating the world stage -Lenin and Gandhi...Their common aims are to remove the ills from the world to get rid of the misery of the poor, destroy every kind of despotism.....while their strategy is the same at bottom , outside it looks different"<sup>33</sup>. Two writers in two different languages, sitting in two extreme corners of India with different cultures evaluated Lenin and Gandhi in uniform line of thought. This is nothing but the deeprooted expression of tribute of the people of India to these two great leaders. R.Vidyanath<sup>34</sup> mentioned also a number of books written in English by the Indians on Soviet Union. A few of them are: M.B.L.Bhargabva's 'Lenin -a biography . of Lenin published from Bombay in 1929; M.N.Roy's 'The Russian Revolution' published from Calcutta in 1949 . Devendra Kaushik <sup>35</sup> mentioned Rahul Sankrityayan's work on Central- Asian history regarding the Indo-Russian ties.

The October Revolution of 1917 was earmarked as the transitional period from the capitalism to the socialism. Consequently, this revolution inspired the colonial people. The leaders of the October Revolution declared the principle of national self-determination not only for the nationalities which comprised the tsarist empire, but also for all subject people. This was indeed "an explosive statement and all natives of Asia working for the freedom heard it with a new hope"<sup>36</sup>. It was correct that revolutionary upsurge in Russia speeded up the freedom movement of India.

Jagjit Singh Anand wrote, "The October Revolution dealt a telling blow at the very roots of world imperialism -a blow from which it never recovered"<sup>37</sup>. This brought a new hope to the Indian people for their success in the liberation movement . Gandhiji highly

evaluated the historic significance of the Revolution , and he wrote in 'Young India' ,  
"There is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice  
of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake. An ideal that is  
sanctified by sacrifice of such master spirits as Lenin can not go in vain; the noble example  
of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicker..<sup>38</sup>.

In South Africa, Gandhiji was moved by the earlier phase of the Russian Revolution  
. Later on, he wrote , "There is much similarity between the government of India and that  
of Russia. The power of the Viceroy is in no way less than that of the tsar...The movement  
in Bengal for the use of Swadeshi goods is much like the Russian movement . We also can  
show the same strength as the Russian people have shown"<sup>39</sup>. Gandhiji also made a prophetic  
statement in 1905: "If the Russian people succeed this Revolution (of 1905) in Russia will  
be regarded as the greatest victory, the greatest event of the present century"<sup>40</sup>. But assuming  
leadership , Gandhiji could not prefer Soviet-styled struggle ; and he criticised in 1921 the  
Soviet leadership for its supposed reference on violent means . This does not necessarily  
mean that Gandhiji believed in the Bolshevik menace. However, the situation was changed  
and the nationalist leadership adopted a clearly friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union .  
The most important contribution in this regard was made by Jawarhalal Nehru who held a  
special position in the party, even in the 1920's. He was very close to Mahatmaji and used  
to enjoy his confidence all along. Jawaharlal influenced Gandhi regarding Soviet Union  
and former had a clear inclination towards Soviet line of action. Jawaharlal Nehru became  
the idol of the youth of contemporary period. He participated in the International Conference  
against imperialism in Brussels in February, 1927 being a delegate of the Indian National  
Congress. He, with his family , visited Moscow in November, 1927. This visit brought two  
countries closer as Nehru could understand that post-tsar socio-economic situation in Russia  
would be similar to the independent India as both the countries being predominantly  
agriculture-based . so, Nehru wrote , "If Russia finds a satisfactory solution of these, our  
work in India is made easier"<sup>41</sup>. On returning from Russia he expressed his mind on Russia,  
"I must confess that the impression I carried back with me from Moscow were very  
favourable and all my reading has confirmed those impressions, although there is much that  
I do not understand and much that I do not like or admire"<sup>42</sup>. At the same year, Jawaharlal,

at a student gatherings apprehended that India and the Soviet Union could have been friend of one another for so many common reasons<sup>43</sup>.

Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in 1927 convinced him that the Soviet Union was a powerful anti-imperialist force and that the colonial countries had something to learn from the Soviet system. It is the Soviet Union that made up his mind to opt for socialism after independence. Because the Soviet Union stood against Nazism and Fascism. In a letter to Moulana Azad he wrote, "It would be a tragedy if Soviet Russia was crippled and weakened by a war against her, for then the only powerful opponent of imperialism would be removed"<sup>44</sup>.

No study of Indo-Soviet relations can be completed unless we examine the perception which shaped the course of India's history, particularly that of Jawaharlal Nehru who designed the foreign policy of India. The period 1917-47 was crucial in this sense. In the 1930's, Nehru accepted socialism as the only salvation for the world and he advocated for socialism in India and subsequently, Nehru's idea of Soviet Socialism was supported by Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Rabindra Nath Tagore and others. The ideology of Indian National Congress was highly influenced by the success of the Soviet experiments in the fields of economic and social development.

The policy of friendship and support for national aspirations of the Indian people became a state policy of Soviet Russia<sup>45</sup>. This policy helped India to get a faithful friend like Russia who, in all steps of freedom movement used to give India a moral support. Not only that, the Bolshevik Party, in 1916, took decision to render economic and cultural help to the oppressed people of India by the new socialist government. Jawaharlal Nehru, in 'Discovery of India', wrote regarding the October Revolution, "I had no doubt that the Soviet Revolution had advanced human society by a great leap and had the foundation for the new civilisation towards which the world could advance"<sup>46</sup>. The first legislative act adopted by the Soviet government was the Decree on Peace with regard to India.

The address of the Soviet Government "To All Workers Moslems of Russia and the East" on December 3, 1917, contained a passionate appeal to the peoples of the East,

Persians, Turks, Arabs and Indians, to raise against their oppressors: 'Waste no time and cast off the age-old plunders of your lands! No longer let them pillage your down dear hearths! You yourselves should build your own lives in your own fashion and likeness! You have the right to do so, for your fate is in your own hands!'<sup>47</sup> The address, was so passionate, well-cemented and it was written in such a lucid language that it evoked serious concern and even fear among the British colonial authorities. Three days after this address, British secretary for Indian affairs Edwin Montagu gave a note to Viceroy of India, Lord Chemsford to ban on the circulation of this address. In spite of this ban, it reached the land of freedom struggle and it produced tremendous impact on the working people, as the victory of the socialist heralded the advent of a new social order free from oppression and exploitation.

After the October Revolution, the first Indian delegation visited Russia in November, 1918 to greet the people for their world's greatest social revolution and, in March, of the same year a group of emigre Indians living abroad came to Petrograde from Kabul at the invitation of the New Soviet government. Raja Mahendra Pratap led the delegation. He stayed almost one month in Petrograde and Moscow. No writers could clearly establish the identity of the November delegation to Moscow. Zafar Imam<sup>48</sup> only presumed that this delegation was probably the emigre Indian Muslims living in Afghanistan, that consisted of Mohammad Barkatullah, then Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of India based at Kabul. They handed over a message on behalf of the Indian People that was published in 'Pravda', "India congratulates you on the great victory gained by you for the good of the democracy of the whole world. India is marvelling at the noble and human principles that you have proclaimed in seizing power."<sup>49</sup> This message also requested the Soviet people to support the freedom struggle of India. On November 23, 1918, this delegation was received by Lenin and two days later, this delegation was invited to attend a session of the All-Russian Central Executive Council where one of the delegates got opportunity to speak for India. On the same day, they handed over one memorandum to the Chairman of ARCEC, Yakov Svesdlov in which detailed socio-economic conditions of India and problem of freedom movement were narrated and sought help for the liberation of India. Accepting this memorandum, the Chairmen told, "We hope that all the enslaved countries will quickly establish contacts with Soviet Russia. Our appeal for reforms and progress will reach India

and other Asian countries and the people who are now enslaved by the British will rise in rebellion, cast off the chains of slavery and unite with other peoples in striving for freedom. We authorise Indian representatives to convey the best wishes from the Executive Committee and our hopes for the speediest liberation of the Indian people''<sup>50</sup>. The 'Volga Trude' newspaper wrote that the Indian delegation was greatly interested in the programme of the communist, and "...is busy translating the Soviet Constitution into their languages". The delegation also addressed a public meeting in the Hall of Columns of the Trade Union House in Moscow, where Mohammed Hadi spoke for the Indians. He broadly elaborated the colonial exploitation of India. Within the interval of May and July 1919, Barkatulla met Raja Mahendra Pratap from Berlin in Petrograd and Moscow. And with the company of Abdul Rab, P. Acharjya, Dilip Singh Gill and Ibrahim, Mahendra Pratap and Barkatullah met Lenin in July 1919.

This mission in 1918 and 1919 created an awareness in Soviet Union regarding the situation of British-ruled India. 'The Knowledge gained by the Soviet leadership perhaps did contribute to assessing the Indian situation in the Comintern conference later'<sup>51</sup>. The semi-official treatment rendered by the Soviet authority to the Indian delegates and wide range of publicity in Petrograd and Moscow made possible to draw sympathy from all class of people in Soviet Union. This delegation continued their works until summer of 1920 in Taskent, Baku and including Moscow and Petrograd.

In the second phase of sojourn in Moscow by the Indians, M.N.Roy took a great part. He reached Moscow in early summer of 1920 on the eve of the Second Comintern Congress. M.N.Roy<sup>52</sup> himself wrote in one Calcutta based newspaper that he was received by the Soviets with warm welcome and he met Lenin immediately after arrival in Moscow. Lenin was highly impressed by his youthful zeal for Marxism and fair knowledge about British oppression in India, Though M.N.Roy was a delegate from Mexico in the Second Comintern Congress, still he and P.Aharya acted as the main delegate from Indian side. Immediately before this Congress, the Indians, viz. M.N.Roy, P.Acharya, G.A.Khan, Luhani, Dr. Mansoor from Berlin, M.Barkatullah from Kabul and Mohammed Shafique from Tashkent gathered in Moscow in order to form one association by the name of the 'Indian Revolutionary Association'<sup>53</sup>. Lenin highly praised of the formation of the new

association for the movement of self-determination of the Asian sub-continent . As M.N.Roy took a major part in forming this association , his credit also goes for the decision of the Comintern Congress that stood as the landmark in the history of Soviet Russia and the National Liberation Movement of the world. M.N. Roy emerged as one of the star performers of the Congress. Immediately after the third anniversary of the October Revolution, M.N.Roy came to Tashkent, and ultimately he became one of three members of the Central Asiatic Bureau of the Communist International .Roy wanted to organise a movement against the British in India in Soviet style; accordingly, he conceived of training and equipping an army with Soviet help. This army was to consist of Anglo-Indian Army, international volunteers and ; tribals of North-West India. According to him , this plan of army also interested Lenin and Soviet Ambassador in Afghanistan and for this purpose, the arms and ammunition were given by the Council of the Soviet Government Later on , Abhani Mukherjee and others joined Roy.

In June, 1921, a 14-member delegation of the Indian Revolutionary Committee arrived in Moscow in order to attend the Third Comintern Congress. Hirendranath Chattopadhyay led the delagation and other members of the delegation were Bhupendranath Dutta, Varinder Nath Das Gupta , Khankoji , Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani, Nalini Gupta, Dr.Mansoor, Champa Karaman Pillai , Mahendra Pratap and Agnes Simedley, then M.N.Roy's wife. M.N.Roy, by the beginning of 1922 , became the main spokesman of Soviet policy in India and in the Fourth Comintern Congress held in the summer 1922, Roy was highly praised for his Marxist interpretation of the Indian conditions. But from the very beginnig of his sojourn in the Soviet Union , he had a tendency to criticise and overstep the Comintern policy and on the other, he was interested in keeping a separate communist movement in India for which the Comintern did not show any intention of supporting and encouraging this separate movement.<sup>54</sup>

In 1920 , Indian revolutionaries who met in Kabul sent greetings to Lenin as he raised his voice for the liberation of oppressed classes, particularly for India. Lenin, in a radiogram , on May 10,1920, said ,''I am glad to hear that the principles of self-determination and the liberation of oppressed nations from exploitation by foreign and native capitalists proclaimed by the worker's and peasants' Republic, have met with such a ready response

among the progressive Indians , who are waging a heroic fight for freedom ‘‘<sup>55</sup>. The First Congress of the Peoples of the East was held in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan in September, 1920 where 14-member delegation took part from Indian side. The document of this Congress had an organic hatred for the racist policies of British colonialism in India.

Being influenced by the October Revolution , the national liberation movement of India became stronger and thus the working class movement gained momentum in India . K.M.Panikkar wrote , ‘‘Before the October Revolution , the nationalist movement in India was liberal and exclusively political . The movement had neither a defined social nor an economic objective ....The Russian Revolution altered all this ...’’<sup>56</sup>. After 1927 , a series of strikes was there where over 600000 people were involved . These strikes, though primarily based on economic demands, were converted into political one and chanelised into an colonial wave. The subsequent development of the Indian liberation struggle after the October Revolution corroborated Lenin’s view: Fight against colonialism . In the first year of Soviet power after revolution, Lenin, paid attention for strengthening friendly ties between these two countries. Once, Lenin told academician S.F.Oldenburge in 1919 to go to the masses to tell the history of Indians who were enslaved by the British for a long time .<sup>57</sup> Due to friendly ties, Soviet people rendered material help more than once to the striking Indian workers through their trade unions. M.N.Joshi, the General Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C. recognised this help in his letter to Moscow <sup>58</sup>.Soviet trade unions also helped the Indian people in 1927 in the Railway strike and for the flood victims in Gujrat . According to S.D.Panikar, the material aid received by Indian workers from the Soviet trade unions within 1925-32 exceeded the total as from such organisations as the Amsterdam International of the Trade Unions , the International Federation of Textile Workers and the International Federation of Transport Workers <sup>59</sup>; as a result , Indian trade unions started observing May Day, Lenin Day of October Revolution since 1927-28.

The social ideals of the victorious October Revolution attracted the Indian society with the passage of time . In Soviet society, achievements in various fields of life was possible only by implanting socialism. Though , at the very outset , Mahatma Gandhi rejected the revolutionary forces in 1919 and called ‘Bolshevism’ to be a ‘calamity’ engendered by ‘modern materialistic civilisation’. Later on, he understood the great importance of the

ideals of October Revolution, and he wrote in 1928: "I am firmly convinced that nothing strong may be created by means of force. Nevertheless, one can not doubt the fact that the Bolshevik's ideal is supported by pure self-sacrifice of countless men and women, who had given all for its implementation, the ideal which was consecrated by the self-sacrifice of such great spirits as Lenin can not go in vain"<sup>60</sup>. There is no doubt that the concept of socialism in Gandhiji's thought was the byproduct of the October Revolution. His dream of establishing a socialist society in India and the whole world was created by this. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his 'Discovery of India' commented, "But most of all we had the example of the Soviet Union which in two brief decades, full of war and civil strife and in face of what appeared to be insurmountable difficulties, had made tremendous progress. Some were attracted by communism, others were not, but all were fascinated by the advance of the Soviet Union in education and culture and medical care and physical fitness and in the solution of the problem of nationalities by the amazing and prodigious effort to create a new world out of the dregs of the old ...If other could do it, why not we?"<sup>61</sup>.

The year 1930 was earmarked for two events that contributed to the growth of Indo-Soviet friendship to a great extent. First, on January 21, 1930, Bhagat Singh, one of the great freedom fighters, was in trial in the court room at Lahore. This day was the sixth anniversary of the death of Lenin. In the court room, at their respective places, Bhagat Singh with his fellow fighters raised their voices with following slogans: 'Long Live Socialist Revolution! Long Live Communist International! Down the imperialism! Long live people! Lenin's name will never die!' After that Bhagat Singh read out the telegram at a louder voice that he wanted to send to the Third International through the court: "On Lenin day we send hearty greetings to all who are doing something for carrying forward the ideas of great Lenin. We wish success to the great experiment Russia is carrying out. We join our voice to that of international working class movement. Proletariat will win, capitalism will be defeated. Death to imperialism!"<sup>62</sup>

The second remarkable event of 1930 was Rabindranath Tagore's sojourn to Soviet Union. And the year the poet visited Soviet was very important from the point of view of socioeconomic condition of that country. After the assumption of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917, the opponents to the regime raised white armies to wage a civil war across the

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country; and this white armies occupied a large part of the country . As a result , all the scarce resources were needed to be mobilised for the defence purposes. Consequently , a 'moneyless economy', which emerged in the process, characterised the period of war communism from 1918 to 1921. Under the leadership of Lenin, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was outlined in the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party in March 1921. The NEP covered the years from 1921 to late twenties <sup>63</sup>. The first Five-Year Plan was approved at the Sixteenth Party Conference in April 1929. With the landing of Rabindranath Tagore in Russia, a new era was ushered in that country . Rabindranath was invited several times to Soviet Union , hut due to his ill health , he was not in a position to visit this country in 1926 and 1929. Being accompanied by Harry Timbers , Miss Margot Einstein, Soumendranath Tagore , Arriam Willams and Mr. Amiya Chakravorty, Rabindranath landed on the country of socialism , and he stayed there from September 11 to 25 September, 1930. He was highly impressed by different matters in Russia and he wrote a number of letters to different people immediately after his return. At a crucial point of time both for India and Soviet Union, Rabindranath visited the country. "Russia of late emerged, "B.N.Ghosh wrote, "after throwing away an authoritarian regime , as independent socialist state and was engaged in the task of rapid development of the country , whereas Indian was trying hard to shake off the foreign control and domination. Both the countries were struggling hard with perhaps one common objective of freeing the people from human misery and destitution "<sup>64</sup>. Aiming at this target Russia went some way ahead. Tagore compared and contrasted at times the socio-economic situation of theses two countries .

Tagore's book 'Letters on Russia' is a beautiful embodiment and lively impressions of an artist and thinker about Russia , inseparably linked with rapt meditation on the situation in India, with the search for paths for its progress <sup>65</sup>. During the 16 days that he was in the USSR, Tagore met writers , artists, scientists and scholars, teachers, workers, peasants, students and school children .He was not only interested in education, health and culture , he deeply observed the application of the idea of social equality, which he himself had nurtured for a long time. Education was not for only white Russians but it was extended to also half-civilised middle- Asians. Every effort was made to reap the fruits of science . No dishonour , no feeling of inferiority complex were there . Observing the working class of Soviet Union , Tagore commented that working class of England was inferior to that of

Soviet Union . Russia had been doing the same thing precisely as Tagore wanted to do at Sriniketan. Tagore suggested that the Indian workers , at least a representative portion, should get trained from Soviet Union. Harry Timbers, Tagore's American friend was more interested in observing the health programmes of the Soviet Union, but Rabindranath was keen in examining the hunger of the million of people of India in contrast to Russian people who were like Indian, but by October Revolution and its after-math strategy designed by socialism had been changed and upgraded to a significant extend. Tagore stayed for a few days in the Grand Hotel of Moscow. To him the whole city seemed to be dirty and poor ; but there was no vestige of inequality. As a result, richness could display their luxury, on the other hand, poverty did not get scope to express themselves in a ugly manner. Tagore visited the house of a high official named Petrov; but he was surprised to see his simple living style . Petrov's house had only an old table, a few furnitures and no carpet. He had no feeling of embarrassment for this; rather he appeared to be very happy . Apparently, everyone had the same condition. This was a novel experience for Tagore<sup>66</sup>.

When Tagore was invited in Soviet Union, he did not have any clear-cut idea about Bolsheviks, on the other hand, he heard many things against it and as a result of it he had a doubt about the prevailing systems of that country. Many people including a good number of Englishmen inspired Tagore to visit Russia . Tagore considered that had he not visited Soviet Union he would have missed to witness the greatest historical 'Yajna' that had been going on in Russia. Rabindranath Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize in the year 1913. Nobel prize, to any scholar, brought world wide fame and familiarity. So, when Rabindranath visited Soviet Union, the people of that country knew him well and wanted to understand the philosophy of India through him . Many of his writings were translated into Russian languages and these were very much liked by them .Rabindranath also felt oneness with Russia. So returning from Russia, he wrote :

"The dumb have found their voice, the ignorant have cast the evil from their minds, the helpless have become conscious of their own power and those who were in the depths of degradation have come out of society's 'black hole ' to claim equality with everybody else. This is Soviet Russia's achievement in less than eight years time"<sup>67</sup>.

Such utterances were not just expression of momentary admiration for the ideals of the October Revolution, they were also indicative of the impact of the Revolution on the political mind of India. This impact was particularly noticeable on all the rank and file as well as the leadership of the Indian National Congress and nationalist movement. Tagore's travel across the Soviet Union helped the friendly ties between these two countries to be cemented. Tagore's letter from Russia are filled not only with admiration for the achievement of the world's first Socialist country but with wrathful protests against the oppression by the British colonialists. Tagore's 'Letter from Russia' though published in Bengali magazine "Prabashi" first, was subsequently translated into different languages and printed several times in Russia also. Today this book stands as the living proof of friendship between these two countries.

Soviet Indology marked its eighty-year jubilee in 1997. This long span of time created a new wave in world history which was initiated by the Great October Revolution. In Soviet Union, Indology was considered, according to Balabushevich and Wafa,<sup>68</sup> to be a complex branch of science, which studied all spheres of Indian society at all stages of its development. In the initial stage of the development of Soviet Indology "the historical-materialistic theory of the social process had developed into a methodological basis for exploring the problems of India. Indology sought, above all, to satisfy the mounting interest of Soviet people in the life and struggle of the Indian people for their freedom"<sup>69</sup>. In 1920's and 30's, the works of F.I. Scherbatskoy and S.F. Oldenburge are worth mentioning. From mid-30's, Indian studies in Soviet Union gathered momentum. In 1932, I.M. Reisner's book 'Essays on the Class Struggle in India' was published. This book was devoted to the question of source, social essence, the motive power and trends of development of the Indian national-liberation movement. The same writer, in his book 'The New History of Colonial and Dependent Countries' published from Moscow in 1940, discussed about the Moghul empire and the Maratha confederation.

In Russian literature also, the Indo-Soviet friendship was reflected. Here Maxim Gorky took a great part to make Indian literature acquainted with Russian people. The 'Mahabharata' and the 'Ramayana' were the first Indian publications in Russia. Later on, works of Rabindranath Tagore, Prem Chand, Mulk Raj Anand and Vedas were published

These works were translated by the prominent Indologists Sergei Oldenburge, Fyodor Shcherbarsky, Yevgheny Bertelson. Prominent Soviet poet, Nikolai Tikhonov in his poem 'Indian Dream' published in 1920, compared the atrocities of the British colonialists who shot at peaceful rally in Amritsar in April 1919 with the 'Bloody Sunday' of January 9, 1905, in Petersburg. On the other hand, in India also, there was a growing interest on Russian and Soviet literature. But the main difficulty was that before 1947 hardly any Indian knew the Russian language and there was no provision for teaching Russian language in any Indian University. Those who wanted to get acquainted with Russian literature had to depend on the English translation of it. In spite of this difficulty, on the one hand and tight British censorship, on the other, Indian literature constantly found inspiration in the works of Mayakovsky, Yesenin and Tikhonov not to mention Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky Chekhov and Gorky. Maxim Gorky with his 'Mother' became the most popular writer in India in mid-20's. The theatrical art and the cinema were also participating in this bilateral process. In spite of colonial barriers, interest grew in Soviet cinema after Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in 1927. In 1935, Soviet cinema officials received an invitation to attend an international cinema exhibition in Bombay.

"Paradoxically enough while India's interest in the USSR has been traditionally keen and deep", wrote R. Vaidyanath,<sup>70</sup> "Indian achievements in the realm of Russian and Soviet studies have been negligible". Within 1950 and 1970, as many as 1000 doctoral theses were submitted in the USA on Russian and Soviet studies, whereas in India it was very few. The main cause of it was the constant anti-Soviet propaganda by the British. Britain sought to prevent Indians from coming in too close a contact with their Russian counterparts. They wanted to germinate one type of suspicion and distrust in the minds of Indians about Russian. Vaidyanath mentioned that the 'battle against Bolshevism' in India was fought on many fronts and in diverse forms. Firstly, a strict vigil was kept on those Indians who wanted to spread the 'disease' of Bolshevism; secondly, mass media were used to propagate the anti-Bolshevik campaign; thirdly the universities were prevailed upon to immunise their students and scholars against the 'harmful' influence of Bolshevism. And as the universities were targeted by the British authorities, so the Soviet studies could not be conducted upto the expected level. As a result, university scholars and researchers were vehemently criticised by many public figures including Jawaharlal Nehru and

Rabindranath Tagore. Later on, the writings and speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore on the USSR exercised considerable influence on the minds of educated Indian youths. Thereafter, demand for literatures on the Soviet Union was growing to a greater extent.

In 1920's, a good number of books came into market, which discussed various aspects of Russian life. R.S. Avasthi's two books were published in 1920 and 21, which were 'Lenin, His life and His Thoughts' from Calcutta and 'The Rebirth of Russia' from Banaras. On Lenin, G.V. Krishna Rao wrote, 'Nikolai Lenin: His life and Activities' published from Madras. M.B.L. Bhargava's book 'Lenin' was a biography of Lenin. In 1923, two more books on Soviet Union were published from Calcutta; which were U.N. Jijja's "The Great Change in Russia" and P.N. Vidyalkar's 'The Soviet State of Russia'. In 1928 Avasthi's third book 'The Red Revolution' was published following another publication of Dev Vrat's 'Russia Today' in 1930. Other Hindi books were published between 1934 and 1937; these were S.D. Bharathi's 'Mahatma Lenin'; D.R. Prem's 'Awakening of Russia'. Risi Das's 'Sobiyat Desher Itihas' (History of the Soviet Union) in Bengali and Venkalathur Swaminatha Sharma's 'Russiyavin Varalaru' (History of Russia) in Tamil gained popularity in their respective language-speaking people.<sup>71</sup>

In the way of the reconstruction of Soviet Economy after October Revolution, a good number of technical personnel from India were engaged. Among them a few names are A.K. Shah (1928), Chemical engineer K.S. Ramaya (1930), P.S. Mookherjee, A.N. Arlik etc. Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru visited the USSR during their 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution. They were received by Mikhail Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union. "A distinctive feature", Nikolai and Gleb wrote,<sup>72</sup> "of the Soviet Indian relations was that these began to take shape as relations between equal nations, though a colonial regime still existed in India and its people had no possibility to pursue an independent foreign policy". Indira Gandhi called Nehru, her father, an architect of Indo-Soviet friendship.

Before October Revolution, industrial revolution could not take place in any socialist countries for obvious reasons. Only some capitalist countries experienced industrial

revolution upto 1917. But the Great Socialist October Revolution promoted it under socialism. On returning from the Soviet Union in 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, "Both are vast agricultural countries with only the beginning of industrialisation; and both have to face poverty and illiteracy . If Russia finds a satisfactory solution for these, our work in India is made easier"<sup>73</sup>. The first Five-Year Plan of Soviet Union that was started in 1928, ended in 1932 with a grand success. This convinced the Indian nationalist movement that India would adopt the way of planned economy in future .The Indian National Congress and their then leadership was highly influenced by the planning methods of the Soviet Union and its consequences in economic and social achievements. Nehru told T.Mende <sup>74</sup>, "The thing that impressed us most was this idea of planning ; and more especially, the stories we heard of the tremendous changes in the Central Asian parts which were very backward ". In 1931, the Karachi resolution of the Indian National Congress was very much influenced by the induction of the planning process of the Soviet Union and it declared that 'political freedom should include economic freedom for the starving millions'. After the completion of the first Five-Year plan and at the last stage of the second Five-Year plan in Soviet Union, a book was published by Visvesvaraya in 1936 prescribing a blueprint for Indian Planning method. The name of the book was 'Planned Economy for India'. In Haripura session of the Indian National Congress, in February, 1938, then President Subhash Chandra Bose also emphasized upon the national planning for reconstructing the economy .Regarding socialist planning in India ,he categorically said, "I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty , illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution, can be effectively tackled only along socialist lines"<sup>75</sup>.

Introduction of Soviet Five-Year Planning promoted the Indian National Congress to set up the National Planning Committee (NPC) with Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman and Professor K.T.Shah as secretary. The main objectives that were enunciated by the NPC to make one national plan were: (i) the attainment of national self-sufficiency; and (ii) the doubling of per capita income within a decade.

First secretary of the NPC K.T.Shah published a book on Indian planning 'National Planning: Principles and Administration' where he advocated for common cultivation in the realm of agricultural transformation . Mr. Shah also envisaged the nationalisation of

land mines, forests etc. Regarding industrial transformation, the NPC envisaged the creation of public sector and overall state control of production and distribution. The NPC also suggested for the nationalisation of all the public utilities.

The Soviet planning not only influenced the democratic movement in India, but also stimulated various exercises in Indian planning. A team of industrialists like JRD Tata, G D Birla etc proposed for 'Bombay Plan'. On the Gandhian thought, another plan was propogated by S.N. Agarwal what was known as the 'Gandhian Plan'. M.N. Roy suggested the 'people's Plan' which was sponsored by the Indian Federation of Labour. The crux of the plan was that planning and capitalism could not go hand in hand, and this view was substantiated by the contrasting situation in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. The Soviet Planning was based on the socialisation of the means of production. So, the People's Plan also concluded that Indian planning should follow the socialist path and change the capitalist character of Indian economy. And the most important thing is that the People's Plan advocated the abolition of landlordism with compensation. Not only that, it also told the nationalisation of the land with full and perpetual tenancy rights to all tiller.

The Second World War had a tremendous impact on the Indo-Soviet relation. The character of the Second World War was radically changed by the German's attack on the USSR. On 22nd June, 1941, Nazi German attacked the Soviet Union. This made a sensation among the Indian people. On December 30, 1941, the Congress Working Committee condemned Nazi Germany for the unprovoked aggression against the Soviet Union<sup>76</sup>.

The liberating goals of the Soviet Union people's great Patriotic war coincided with the national interests of the Indian people. German planned to enslave India and on their way they tried to capture Caucasus. No other world power except Soviet Union could save India from aggression. So, all the political organisations and press of India resolutely condemned the Nazi aggression and expressed their sympathy for the Soviet people. During the Second World War, Mahatma Gandhi was under arrest and was told that Russia might not win the war, then Mahatmaji said, "No, Russia can not lose the war, if Russia loses the war, who will look after the interest of the poor of the world. Russia must not lose the war."<sup>77</sup> Rabindranath Tagore also from the death-bed expressed sympathy for the Soviet

people . He was sure that “they will succeed. They alone can curb the beast”<sup>78</sup>. The support of the Indians for the Soviet Union’s struggle against the Nazis was broadened by the formation of Friends of the Soviet Union Societies. The first of its kind was formed in Bengal in June, 1941. In November in the same year, societies were formed in Bombay, New Delhi, Karachi, Nagpur, Guntur and Silchar. In December, 1942, this movement of the Friends of the Soviet Union received support from Jawaharlal Nehru and other Indian National Congress leaders and subsequently, these societies were formed in different parts of India. Under the patronship of Nehru, conference of the Friend Society was held in February in 1942 in Lucknow. The first All India Congress of the Friends of the Soviet Union was held in Bombay on June,3-4,1944. Sarojini Naidu became the President of the All India Society of Friends of the Soviet Union.

During the Second World War, in India, the convulsions of the war created a new awareness of the alignment of forces in the world. The feeling of the people was that Britain had been less dangerous as compared to Germany and Italy. Nehru appealed his countrymen to express their sympathy to the 'allied cause'. But he categorically said that for the defeat of the fascist forces, India’s contribution would be rendered if and only if India was free. Some confusion among the Congress Leaders were created regarding the issue of the 'allied cause'. Gandhiji made it clear that India’s freedom must come first before India could join the British war effort, though he did not want to see China or Russia defeated. The majority of the Congressmen did agree with him. The obvious logic behind his argument was that one subject country would not make sacrifice for the freedom of other countries.

During the Second World War, some Indian servicemen were given Soviet military gallantry award; e.g. Sub.Narayan Rao Nikkan and Hav. Gajendra Singh were awarded the “Order of the Red Star”; Capt. Ram Singh - the “Order of the Kutuzov, Third Class”; Pirtha Singh Kurung- the “Order of the Patriotic War, First Class “;Lt. Col. W.R.B.Williams in the “Order of Alexander Nevsky” etc.

After the Second World War, India reached the last lap for long-awaited political independence. The “Quit India” called by Gandhiji electrified the whole nation. Thousands of people came out from their houses and raised voices with courting arrest in every corner

of India. In the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, while taking the resolution for the "Quit India Movement" Nehru insisted on containing a glowing reference to the Soviet Union.

The World War was over by the autumn of 1945. The people of England rejected Churchill and voted for the Labour Party. The Labour government took final decision to give India independence. In this juncture, Nehru defined independent India's foreign policy. He also thought of having close association with the Soviet Union.

In the year 1945, at San Francisco conference of U.N., Soviet delegates raised their voices about the subordinate position of Indian delegate and they advocated for India so that India could have been treated at par with U.K. according to U.N. Charter. Soviet delegates said, "We have at this conference an Indian delegation, but India is not an independent state. We all know that the time will come when the voice of an independent India will be heard too"<sup>79</sup>. No other delegate uttered like this.

Mrs. Vijaylaxmi Pandit, Nehru's sister was posted as India's first ambassador to the USSR. This proved that Nehru was very much interested to start the diplomatic relation with USSR.

The interim government was sworn in on September 2, 1946. Jawaharlal Nehru took the posts of Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs. After a short period, during October-December, 1946, the first session of the UN General Assembly was held in New York where Vijaylaxmi Pandit headed the Indian delegation. This delegation's representation regarding the racial discrimination against Indian nationals in the Union of South Africa was supported and protected by Soviet delegates against the British-US opposition. A joint statement published in the USSR and India on April 14, 1947, reads "Seeking to preserve and further strengthen the friendly relations existing between the USSR and India, the government of the Soviet Union and the government of India have decided to exchange diplomatic mission at embassy level"<sup>80</sup>.

In April, 1947, India and USSR established diplomatic relations when India was not even formally independent.

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