

ABSTRACT

FROM NATIONAL REVOLUTIONISM TO MARXISM: A STUDY OF IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY (RSP) AND THE SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (SUCI)

The Indian nationalist movement was a continuous process starting from small-scale local resistance to an all India movement. The participants of the nationalist struggle followed a variety of strategies, tactics, and mode of involving masses of different strata against the British rule. Among these, the radical and revolutionary activities during the period of 1904 to 1934 were of great relevance in Indian history of independence.

The year 1934 saw the termination of explicit national revolutionary politics. After 1934, no act of violence had been perpetrated. Because, by that time, revolutionaries realized the insubstantiality of the politics of 'terrorism'. Most of the revolutionaries were under detention since the early thirties and found time for reviewing their strategies and tactics followed for the last thirty years. A major section of national revolutionaries accepted Marxism as a most scientific and viable alternative, although they failed to organize themselves into a single unified Marxist party after being released from jail in 1937-38 (in the case of Andaman detenus, it was 1946).

However, two political parties were formed exclusively by the national revolutionaries turned Marxists, belonging to Anushilan & HSRA as Marxist parties. These parties are the RSP and the SUCI. The Democratic Vanguard was also formed in 1943, which became the Workers Party of India later in 1960.

The RSP originated in 1940 through the efforts of a number of 'Anushilan Marxists' and the HSRA activists who, because of the difference of opinion, did not join the CPI and preferred to work with the CSP for providing an 'alternative to the official Communist line'. However, being disillusioned very shortly severed their relationship with the CSP and formed their own party known as RSP.

Again, a group of younger members of RSP soon started questioning about the organizational structure and the process of formation of the party. As these differences of opinion could not be resolved within the organizational framework of the RSP, this group of Marxists evolved a 'Platform of Action with a party content' in 1946 and then, in 1948, founded the SUCI, as a political party.

The central focus of the present exercise is, therefore, on the transition from national revolutionary politics to a pre-dominantly Marxist ideology after 1938. Among those who embraced Marxism, some

either joined or formed different Marxist political parties. Why so? The answer is searched with reference to the formation of, first, the RSP and subsequently, the SUCI by national revolutionaries. The analysis focuses on ideological differences as such behaviours.

The exercise, actually, attempts to connect ideological position (different interpretations of Marxism) and choice of a political party. This is a question of political motivation and, in that sense, group psychology. It, therefore, involves a question which cannot be answered with the aid of standard methods of research methodology. The present work relies more on theoretical framework used mainly for normative elements/choices.

As a result of the limitation of behavioural research methodology in addressing the issues concerning normative preferences like the choice of ideology which is a concern of the present study, the theoretical framework is derived from a critical perspective. The present study is concerned with ideological preference, and both Karl Marx and Mannheim connect ideologies with social structure. Marx in his famous passage of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx: 1859) and also in other writings placed ideology in the realm of super-structure, conditioned by economic base. Similarly, Karl Mannheim in his *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (Mannheim: 2015) argues that thought is a cultural product and speaks of existential or social determination of cultural objects. In Mannheim's scheme, analysis of ideology or ideological preference demands analysis of existential factors of ideology.

In the light of such expositions of ideology, C. Wright Mills in his treatise *The Marxists* (Mills, C Wright: 2012) argues that the study of any ideological position requires the analysis of the historical context of both the ideology and its adherents. With reference to the above framework, the present study attempts at addressing the issue of transition towards Marxism on the part of national revolutionaries by placing them in the historical context of national movement and the background history of the leadership of the RSP and the SUCI. The framework, therefore, emphasizes contextual analysis of ideological positions.

In addition, the present work also is premised upon the idea that social trust or what Robert Putnam in his book *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Putnam: 1993) calls social capital, also plays an important role in the determination of political choices and efficiency. Putnam argues that the presence of horizontal linkages among individuals and groups in voluntary associations improve the political performance of the government. Similarly, the present work assumes that social trust

generated by associations like Anushilan Samiti or Jugantar was one of the conditions which shaped ideological preferences of the RSP and the SUCI. The framework, therefore, approaches the whole issue of transition in its historical and sociological context. The scope and objectives of the proposed project, therefore, clearly suggest the application of historical analytical method with an insight into the process of dialectical development of class-consciousness, favouring the working class and growth of revolutionary politics.

Regarding the scheme of the study done, it may be stated that the general overview of the background leading to the formation of a number of leftist-Marxist political parties just prior to the Indian independence and a survey of literature as available on the theme of the present dissertation has been undertaken in Chapter I.

The primary objective of the present work is to analyze the forces and factors leading to the formation of the RSP and the SUCI. In doing so, the study seeks to investigate the problems relating to the growth of a number of Marxist political parties in India on the basis of (a) the socio-economic formations of the then India, (b) the process of development of petty-bourgeois vis-à-vis proletarian class consciousness among the Indian national revolutionaries, and (c) the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of the revolutionaries. This has been tried to be discussed in Chapter II.

Secondly, analyses of the ideological differences among the national revolutionaries centering around their concepts of nationalism vis-à-vis internationalism, their attitude towards armed rebellion vis-à-vis mass revolution etc. and the growing tension in the urban-industrial areas on the basis of the class based trade union & peasants' movements are of utmost importance. This has been tried to be examined in Chapter III.

Thirdly, the study has undertaken a detailed analysis of such phenomena as the influence of the foreign Communist Parties and Comintern on the national revolutionaries and their reactions thereto. The possible impact of the Comintern decisions on the national revolutionaries in the process of conversion to Marxism has been examined in Chapter IV.

The process of ideological origins of both the parties and the mutual differences between the RSP and the SUCI concerning their attitude towards the issues like the process of formation of a Marxist party etc. has also been discussed in Chapters V & VI respectively.

Chapter VII provides a brief summary of our study.