

Indian National Movement and Political Ideology of working class (1920-1939): An Assessment

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SUMMARY

Divided in altogether six chapters, the thesis entitled: "**Indian National Movement and political Ideology of Working class (1920-1939): An Assessment**" is an original work oriented to explain and evaluate the ideology with which the working class of India interfered in the national movement and attempted to give the national movement direction to tilt towards progressive ideology of socialism.

Of all the six chapters that have given a full shape to this research monograph the first is:

Introduction, first and foremost, characterized the Indian national movement as an anti imperialist struggle of the Indian masses emanated due to sharpened contradiction between the British finance capital and the Indian masses in an aura of changed global economic scenario of capitalism owing to its transformation from industrial capitalism to finance capitalism. The First World War, the chapter has inferred was an outcome of the growing inter-imperialist rivalries among the established imperialist nations and the state which newly acquired imperialist status in world capitalist system.

In such inter imperialist economic competition waged by newly developed imperialist countries during the war time when due to war born compulsions the stranglehold of Britain on Indian economy deteriorated considerably how England applied economic and political devices to protect British interest in India and how and to what extent the Indian working class was grossly effected by that, are the points the chapter has explained.

The chapter has given a close look upon the economic and political policy-changes initiated by the British government fostering care of the British government and the British capital. Under such a policy-changes the native and the British capital reaped enormous profits but the condition of the Indian working class remained as deplorable as it was in the pre and during the First World war. The chapter has projected a scene of exploitation of working class in India by the citation of various examples.

In the post- First World War, the global capitalist economic crisis, the successful completion of a socialist revolution in Russia and the formation of All India Trade Union congress in the latter months of 1920 were the events that yielded a sense among the working class in India to interfere with a distinct ideology to the national movement. All these facts, combined together, have been treated as objective factors to insert a new vision, the vision of socialism, to working class conscience in India. Thus has been laid a ground to interpret the national movement on ideological plank.

Chapter second, captioned as "**Emergence and Growth of an Ideology of working class**", is a discussion as how the working class in India, started its fight in the second half of 19th century for the amelioration and redressal of its economic condition and economic demands and got its movement transgressed the narrow economic bound and transformed its struggle into a political one directed to oppose imperialism in its every manifestations. The chapter has correlated it with the emergence of native industrial capital and its appearance in India's industrial life, and

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the strike struggle conducted by working class in later half of 19th century. After formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and pursuance by it the policy for 20 years with which its founders had constituted it, the political lull was broken only in 1905 with the spontaneous struggle of working class against Bang- Bhang and Tilak deportation for 6 years. The working class movement was par excellence the result of the galvanized radicalism caused globally by the 1905 Russian revolution and the defeat of czarist Russia by Asiatic Japan which eliminated the myth of European invisibility. But the compromise with imperialism by the national movement by the acceptance of the Morley Minto Reforms of 1909 culminated a sense among the working class and revolutionary leaders to think otherwise – as in India ultra evolutionism emerged mostly in Bengal and a section of revolutionaries migrated to foreign countries to make India free with the assistances of nations hostile to Britain.

The chapter has briefly analyzed how the actions of émigré revolutionaries and their organizations the contacts of Indian working class with anti –imperialist organizations like Workers Welfare League, communist International etc. ideologically steered the working class movement in India.

Inside India ideological propaganda about Marxism, socialism etc. started by Singaraveluchettiar, Ramakrishna Pillai, J. B. Hardyal etc. contributed much to working class in India and the decision of the Communist International on Indian struggle for freedom played much role in the insertion of radical ideologies to working class in India. The chapter has analysed the theme on basis of all these political events.

Chapter III rd entitled "**Probe into National movement by Working Class Ideology**" is a portrayal of national movement in its gradual march from an upper class elite movement to mass movement in the period after the First World War. In the period after the First World War the numerical strength of the Indian working class, although still not big enough in comparison to India's total population, had approached to an extent with which it could have interfered in the national movement ideologically.

In the post 1st World War the political situation in India ushered fundamental changes caused due to internal and external conditions both. War born economic crisis and the Russian revolutions of 1917 exerted their severe impacts on the working class psychology. The former compelled the Indian workers to fight against the exploitation while the latter tilted among them a new ideology that was of socialism. The advent of Gandhi in the national movement contributed much to transform the national movement into a mass movement not experienced by India ever before.

The formation of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920 and its international linkages with global anti-imperialist organizations like Workers Welfare League, which had presented a memorandum to Montague the Chairman of committee appointed by the British parliament to suggest constitutional Reforms, the publication of journals like the socialist etc. were the events for stylization of working class on ideological front. Above all were the discussions on colonial thesis in the Second Congress of the Communist International which dealt specifically the Indian national liberation movement and directed the Indian working class and its party to have closer linkage with the Indian national movement fought and waged under the leadership of Gandhi, who was leading a bourgeois-democratic movement in India. Thenceforward the Communist International (C.I.) in its various Congresses discussed and guided revolutionary movement in India and suggested the working class to evolve an anti-imperialist joint front of various class forces.

In reference to all these political developments the Indian working class appeared in the national movement as factor not to be denied by any political force of its significant roles. With such a spirited revolutionary vows and commitment it appeared in the national movement and contributed much in the struggle for freedom. In the boycott of Prince of Wales visit to India and in the Simon Commission boycott movement the unimaginable role of working class can be seen. Its international linkage with League against Imperialism, whose conference was attended by Jawahar Lal Nehru, was one of the memorable feature of ideological tempering of working class of India. The imperialist government was so much afraid of the growing radicalization of

the working class and its growing impacts on Indian national movement that in March 1929 it arranged wholesale arrest of the militant leaders and started the Meerut Conspiracy Case. All these facts have been assimilated in the chapter to explain the ideological intervention of working class in India's struggle for freedom.

Chapter IV is "**Ideological Inner Conflict of the Movement**" which has attempted to depict the working class role in various major national movements and the differences on ideological ground.

In the struggle against the Rowlett Bill was the first movement, described in the chapter from where ideological skirmishes of working class emanated against the dual role of the national movement led by the Indian National Congress- to unite masses and wage struggle against the government and compromise for concession to Indian capital. The ideological conflict in the national movement in the period under review, first emanated on the characterization of war, as for the Indian working class the war was out and out a predatory war fought for the domination of market and investment of extra capital accumulated in various imperialist countries which wanted to widen their imperialist domain. But for the congress it was a war to protect democracy and the congress full heartedly supported the British government in its efforts for successful execution of war. Similarly the working class treated the Montague- Chelmsford Reform proposals highly unsatisfactory while stands of the Indian National congress remained fluctuating, sometimes in its support and sometimes in opposition.

The most severe ideological conflict, the working class waged, was on unconditional withdrawal of the Non-cooperation movement and even more anguishing for the working class of India was the resolution adopted by the congress working committee at its Bardoli meeting and its re-affirmation by the AICC meeting at Delhi. For the working class the withdrawal was a type of negation to the movement which had approached a revolutionary phase and Chauri -Chaura incident was an instance of an unison between the working class and peasantry.

On the split at the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress and the formation of the Swaraj Party were characterized by the working class as the failure of the Gandhian tactical line of the national movement but the Swaraj Party, which defied the Gandhian line of action, could not evolve an effective alternative, as the party was representing the progressive upper section of Indian bourgeoisie standing on the slippery ground of capitalist ideology. Consequently, its programme not only failed to project any alternative rather it put the politics in a reverse gear which ultimately led the party to compromise with imperialism.

On the Simmon Commission boycott movement the working demanded to challenge' the authority of the British parliament to provide a new constitution to Indian and accused the slogan given by the Congress to boycott the Commission due to its character being an all white commission and the Swarajist demand to convene a Round Table Conference. For the working class both these two slogans were directed to have compromise with imperialism.

The Chapter has also explained the ideological conflict in Trade Union movement, the split in the A.I.T.U.C. and later onit's unification.

Chapter Vth entitled as "**Impacts of Working class Ideology on National Movement**" deals primarily with the political agitations against the British government during the major political movement such as agitation against the Rowlett Bill, working class contribution to the Non-cooperation movement, against Simmon Commission, and working class movement during the civil disobedience. Besides these movements the Indian working class fought against the repressive measures initiated and launched by the imperialist government to restrict the spread of socialist ideology in India, launching of various conspiracy cases against the working class leaders, such as Peshawar conspiracy case, Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy case, Meerut conspiracy case and repressive acts and repressive acts like the Trade Dispute Act etc.

The strike movement conducted by the working class of India during various periods yielded perennial impacts on Indian national movement.

During the war period working class strikes and the efforts by the workers leader created conditions on which account the Indian national movement assumed a mass character. The impacts of October revolution and greater mobilization of working class against the British rule were the main reasons responsible for immediate declaration of 1919 reforms directed to achieve a definite goal that was to neutralize the impacts of the October revolution on the Indian working class. After formation of the All India Trade union Congress the contacts of the Indian labour was established with many anti-imperialist organizations like workers welfare League, Red International of Labour Unions, League Against Imperialism, Labour Research Departments, Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. And the émigré Indian revolutionaries who had organized Gaddar Party, Berlin Committee and provisional government of Hindustan in Kabul attempted to link the Indian national movement with the world revolutionary process. Consequently, the Indian National movement acquired an important place in global anti-imperialist movement. Once the movement got itself associated with global revolutionary process the conditions in India became ripen to give Indian struggle a form of anti-imperialism owing to which many congress leaders like Jawahar Lal Nehru, S.C. Bose, D.R. Thengadi etc. got themselves associated with working class movement. The anti-imperialist creed of the Indian national movement conditioned Indian political scene to support liberation movement in China and other enslaved nations fighting for their liberation from colonial yoke. These were the main contributions which turned Indian politics against imperialism.

Chapter VIth is "**Conclusion**" which has summarized the entire discussions and drawn inferences, making the whole review period in the phases as:

1. Working class ideological vents regarding the character of the first world and the new offensives launched by the imperialist finance capital under its perilous condition arisen due to global capitalist economic crisis and the changes introduced in British policy towards India. In this context the working class movements have been evaluated, specially fought under the ambit of movements against the Rowlatt Bill and workers supportive movements to Non-cooperation movement.
2. Working class ideological probe in political scene in the period of great political lull caused by the un-conditional withdrawal of Non-cooperation Movement split in the congress, emergence of the swaraj party etc.
3. Working class attitude and approach to simon commission, and its distinct approach from the congress and the swarajist.
4. Lastly, working class ideological steelization in the period from 1927 to 1939 and its impacts on national movement in turning the movement in the anti-imperialist direction have been discussed.

The entire discussion, assimilated in every chapter, has been substantiated by the citation of reliable facts and data with sources given as foot notes. Sources used for the drafting of chapters are mainly original which make the research an original work.

A short and select Bibliography has been inserted at the end of the research monograph as an un-alienable part of it.