

Radio Free Europe/Munich
Research and Evaluation Department
Background Information USSR

East-West

19 December 1961

THE CONTRAST IN ATTITUDES TO INDIA

On the day before the the Indian Army began its operation for the forcible capture of Goa, L.I. Brezhnev, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, arrived at Delhi Airport to begin his state visit, which is called in Pravda (16 December 1961) a "visit of friendship and peace." During his speech after landing, Brezhnev gave a short résumé of the current official Soviet attitude to India, which at present is all sweetness and light.

"Each such visit means a new step forward towards increasing the mutual understanding between our countries and the development of cooperation between the peoples of India and the USSR - to the considerable benefit of both sides and of the cause of universal peace.

"The friendship of the USSR and India is above all the friendship of two peace-loving states, of hundreds of millions of citizens who advocate peace, friendship and independence for all peoples..."

"We regard my visit to you as a visit of peace, friendship and good will in the fullest meaning of these words..."

None of this would be in any way remarkable were it not for the current Chinese propaganda line on India. A Pravda reader who happens to see an article about the Indian situation in Ta Kung Pao, for example, might well be forgiven if he thought it dealt with a totally different country. In fact there are not merely two varying communist attitudes, there is also a third - that of the Indian Communist Party, which fell out of step after the Belgrade Conference of the "neutral" countries.

At that time, Pravda was luke-warm in its appraisal of the Conference, the Chinese represented Belgrade as a partial success achieved by the defeat of the Indian delegation, and the Indian CP (New Age, September 10th, 1961) said the meeting had been cause for "spectacular rejoicing" which had provided a "precise image" for non-alignment with Nehru as "the most influential spokesman." The reason for the I.C.P.'s enthusiasm is the approach of the election, and it is therefore strictly tactical. The cleavage between the Chinese and Soviet appraisals goes deeper, because Peking has recently again been portraying Nehru both as "isolated" and defeated. The Chinese correspondent in Belgrade wrote:

"Several hundred journalists and unofficial observers had a lively discussion on who had gained and who had lost, and India was definitely put on the losing list." (Peking Radio, September 9th, 1961)

The Chinese attitude at present is parallel with that of 1959, after the Dalai Lama had successfully escaped from his occupied country. It seeks to show India as an agent of imperialism, partly by quoting Western official praise for Nehru, and partly by exaggerating the importance of the "Aid India Club". Peking Review, (10 November 1961), for example, published an article describing the "increasing role of foreign aid" in the Indian economy which concluded:

"With its 3rd Five Year plan beset with difficulties and its foreign exchange crisis deepening all the time, India, it seems, is becoming more and more dependent on the West, and especially on the U.S."

The Frontier Problem

Differences concerning the trend of the Indian economy (in which the USSR is a major investor) and on Belgrade have been multiplied by the renewed crisis over the border problem. The Indian Communist Party, forced to take a stand by the approach of the election, chose for the first time under its Moscow-trained General Secretary Ajoy Ghosh, a strongly nationalist position:

"News of Chinese check posts and patrols in Indian territory cannot but heighten tension and create deep resentment among the people of India,"

Ghosh said (New Delhi Radio, 21 November 1961). He added that the Indian C.P. demands an immediate end to these acts, and a guarantee that they do not recur.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry, on the other hand, appears to care little or nothing for the electoral chances of Mr. Ghosh. It issued a statement on December 7th (Reuter, Peking), which observed that:

"India must bear full responsibility for the resulting new tension" if it continues "to push forward into Chinese territory."

Moreover, India was accused of "inciting Tibet rebels fugitive in India to carry on anti-Chinese activity", and the statement added that

"from refusing to settle the boundary question through negotiations, the Indian Government has turned to realizing its territorial claims on China by armed force" -

a notable comment one week before the start of Brezhnev's state mission of "peace and friendship."

The question of Tibet is important, not only because it is a reminder that the country is still occupied by China, but also because it is now clear that the Indian-Chinese Treaty of 1954 on Tibet will be allowed to lapse when it expires in June 1962.¹

¹Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4 December 1961.

This means in turn that the Chinese trade missions in Calcutta, Bombay and Kalimpong will have to close down, as will the three Indian commercial posts still in Tibet (which have not been allowed to function normally for years past). Thus the five principles (Panch Shila) in the preamble to the Treaty between India and China are now admitted by Delhi as well as Peking to have failed between the two greatest Asiatic powers.

India as the Agent of Washington

People's Daily (December 7th, 1961) used the example of Mr. Nehru's recent visit to Washington to argue that Indian policy had won much praise in the US and that "the internal and foreign policy needs of the Indian ruling group" were responsible for the "anti-Chinese movement" abroad which was maintained primarily for the sake of the US."

This tack was immediately followed by the leaders of most of the puppet "democratic parties" in China. One of them, the Chairman of the Democratic League, Shen Chun-ju, said on December 8th (Reuter, Peking) that:

"The Indian ruling bloc aims at getting more assistance from US imperialism by rendering a service through its anti-China campaign."

Finally, the Hong-Kong communist newspaper, Ta Kung Pao, which is still controlled by Peking, went still further (December 12, 1961) when it "pointed out the importance of India's role in the execution of Washington's global strategy."

Thus there are at present at least three widely divergent communist images of India. No doubt there may well be a temporary rapprochement as all three participants join in shrill condemnation of Portuguese colonialism represented by Goa, but at best this would afford only transient relief from the long-term, fundamental nature of the dispute. The I.C.P., guided by anti-Chinese nationalism, by electoral ambition and prodded by Moscow, the Kremlin, anxious to obtain a political return on its large-scale economic investments in India, and Peking, half-