

The Discussions of S.A. Dange with the C.P.S.U.(b) (July-September 1947)

Published below are the transcripts of three discussions held by S.A. Dange with the Soviet leadership, along with ancillary documents, shortly before and after the transfer of power in India and Pakistan in 1947. They may be seen as the beginning of a series of contacts and exchanges between the leaderships of the CPI and the CPSU(b) which included the discussions of 1951 in which J.V. Stalin was a participant and which culminated in the formation of the programme and tactical line of the Communist Party of India of that year. The participation of A.A. Zhdanov and M.A. Suslov, both leading theorists of the period, in the second and third discussions with Dange indicates the importance which the CPSU(b) attached to these exchanges. The visit of S.A. Dange to the USSR was prompted by the need of the CPI to establish permanent contacts with the CPSU(b) and to receive fraternal assistance and advice on the policies and tactics of the Indian communist party. These concerns were voiced in the report submitted by Dange on 24th July 1947 to the Staff of the Department of Foreign Policy of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b). In his exposition Dange noted the temporary narrowing of support for the CPI amongst its urban sympathisers who were unable to understand the logical basis for the policy of People's War but also its broadening amongst the working class and the peasantry. Dange argued that the new Congress and Muslim League governments in India and Pakistan enjoyed the support of the people despite the domination of the 'extreme right section' in their leaderships and their compromising tendencies in relation to British imperialism. He underlined the influx of landlords, industrialists, traders and moneylenders into the Congress Party on the eve of 'independence'. While the CPI had put forward its own people's democratic perspectives it had rendered support to the national construction programme of the new Indian government. **S.A. Dange did not allude to the June 1947 evaluation of the CPI which regarded the Mountbatten plan as a certain step forward rather than as an imperialist manoeuvre which the party later in the year retracted as a right opportunist mistake.** The CPI, in order to preserve the unity of the Indian people, did not support the formation of a separate Communist Party in Pakistan or, indeed, of separate mass organisations. Dange augments our knowledge of the reformist understanding of the CPGB on the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in Britain and reveals from his own experiences how the British party — in line with the revisionist theses of Earl Browder — anticipated that the anti-fascist powers would provide a just and democratic solution to the colonial question so that it was not necessary to intensify the national liberation movements in the colonial countries. We are also provided with new insights into the organisational problems of the Communist Party of Burma.

The second discussion of 16th August 1947 touched upon a wide range of questions: the character of the new bourgeois and landlord states of India and Pakistan which were compromising with British imperialism, the characterisation of the Congress Party and the Muslim League and their leaders, the propagation of communalism by imperialism, the implications of the establishment of the new state of Pakistan, the evolution of the CPI policy on Pakistan, the position of the anti-feudal struggles, the position of the 'untouchables' in the trade unions and the agrarian struggles etc. Particularly valuable are the numerous probings made by Zhdanov on the Indian socio-economic situation, the different levels of industrial development in the subcontinent, the position of the agrarian struggles, the importance of the remnants of the caste system, the role of the 'untouchables' in the democratic organisations, the attitude of the Hindu and Muslim masses to the division of India.

This free and frank discussion sheds a flood of light on the thinking of the CPI and the standpoint and concerns of the CPSU(b) on the central questions of the Indian revolution in the period of the transfer of power — a period which is sparsely covered in the existing documentary collections of the CPI. At the close of the discussion Zhdanov informed Dange that the evaluation of the line of the CPI that he demanded could only be made after informing Stalin and holding consultations with the Central Committee of the Soviet party. In the third and final discussion of 6th September 1947 Zhdanov

informed Dange that this process had been completed. He also cautioned Dange that the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) was making its suggestions with regard to the policies of the CPI and that these were not to be understood as directives. These remarks confirm the practising of democratic norms by the CPSU(b) with the fraternal parties in the period of Lenin and Stalin.

First, Zhdanov recommended on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) that as two states, India and Pakistan, had come into existence it was essential to have separate Communist Parties and Trade Unions so that no party was deprived of the right and possibility to influence the affairs of state. Second, it was suggested that the Communist Party of India reorganise itself and form a Party of Labour. Similar advice had been tendered by Joseph Stalin to Enver Hoxha in July 1947 (E. Hoxha, 'With Stalin, Memoirs', Tirana, 1979, p. 62) with regard to the Communist Party of Albania. A number of the Communist Parties in the people's democratic states had similarly re-established themselves. Stalin and Zhdanov opined that in those countries where the peasantry were a major force they were fearful of the communists as they imagined that they would be divested of their lands, and so preferred to be organised in other parties. The party could revert to its communist name once the peasantry had acquired confidence in the Party of Labour, when it had linked itself indissolubly with the party and the working class, and the movement had shifted to a higher stage. This recommendation may have come as a bolt from the blue for Dange as the class composition of the CPI and the social structure of India and Pakistan had not been the subject of detailed discussion in his exchange with Zhdanov. The final suggestion made by Zhdanov was that the CPI needed to pay serious attention to the elimination of the remnants of the caste system as these distinctions obstructed the working people from recognising the distinctions of class.

This suggestion retains its force today. Retarded industrial development has ensured that only the pre-conditions exist for industrialisation in contemporary India rather than the essential characteristic of industrialisation, the production of machinery by machinery, as a result of which only a small percentage of the population is engaged in the industrial sector. In the absence of a democratic solution to the agrarian question the fitful attempts to follow the path of agrarian capitalism have formed only a semi-feudal capitalism which maximises the retention of the pre-capitalist tribal, caste and feudal forms of labour.

The survivals of the caste system remain as a challenge to the communist movement today.

Vijay Singh

No. 1.

Top Secret

Transcript of the Discussion of S.A. Dange,
Member of the CC of the Communist Party of India
with the Staff of the Dept. of Foreign Policy,
CC AUCP/b/ Held on 24 July 1947.

S.A. Dange, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India during the discussion informed us about the following:

P.C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India assigned him to secure entry into the USSR, meet any of the leading members of the CC AUCP/b/ and put before them the question of establishing regular ties between the Communist Party of India and the AUCP/b/, so that the Indian communists can receive from the CC AUCP/b/ fraternal support and advice on important questions of

policy and tactics in the new and extremely complex conditions.

Taking into account the great interest in the USSR among different sections of the Indian people, Dange also asked for permission to send a group of committed communists to the USSR from India for learning the Russian language and socialist construction in the USSR so that they can bring improvements in the work of popularizing the USSR in India.

Further, Dange gave a short account of the present state of the Communist Party of India.

At present the Communist Party of India has 100,000 members. During the recent plenum of the CC a decision was taken to call the 2nd Congress of the party in September of this year. Intense preparations are being conducted for holding this Congress in all of the organizations of the party.

In connection with the tactic of supporting the British in the war against Hitler's Germany and Japan, a large section of intelligentsia and urbanized petty bourgeoisie, which were earlier under the influence of the Communist Party, have now distanced themselves from it. In the opinion of these sections, the Communist Party sank to a position of compromise in relation to British imperialism, whereas **the National Congress, which came out against supporting the British in the war, is viewed as an organization that is fighting for the national interests of the Indian people.** In that period the Communist Party could maintain its influence only among the working class and partially among the peasants' organizations. **Subsequently, when the correctness of the political line of the Communist Party was vindicated by the events during the war and the post-war period, the attitude changed towards it.**

The day-to-day struggle of the Communist Party for national interests and also for the democratic and economic rights of the working people has again strengthened the trust of the masses in the Communist Party. **The largest organization of the working class – The All India Congress of Trade Unions is led by the Communist Party.** Gradually, the influence of the Communist Party **in the peasants' unions (Kisan Sabhas)** is also increasing. **The most influential peasants' unions – those of Punjab and Bombay, Madras and Central Provinces are led by the Communists.** In Bihar, Orissa and the United Provinces base of the peasants' movement has been created **by the workers of the Communist Party specially sent for the purpose by the CC.** In the Bengal province the Muslim peasants' union is under the influence of the Communist Party. The Communist Party **has considerable influence in the Students Federation,** though it does not have youth organizations of its own.

Shortcomings in the preparation of party cadres do not allow the Communist Party to encompass the rapidly developing movement in the country in an organized manner. A lack of cadres in rural areas is felt exceptionally seriously. Work among the youth is another weak area.

In connection with the creation of two dominions in India, Dange mentioned the growth of the influence of the Congress and the Muslim League. Both the newly created governments of India and Pakistan enjoy the support of the people, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the ministers in both the **governments belong to the extreme right section of the leadership of the Congress and the Muslim League who tend to compromise with English imperialism.**

The right wing of the Congress which extensively publicises the 'independence' achieved by peaceful means is gaining strength inside the Congress through the influx of thousands of **landlords, industrialists, traders, and money lenders into the Congress** as the ruling party. This complicates the conditions for the communists. After giving a negative assessment of the division of the country into two states, the Communist Party, however, has **declared its support for the programme of national reconstruction that was announced by the national government of India.** The Communist

Party has set before itself the objective of **achieving the democratic resolution of the agrarian question – the liquidation of the large land holdings without the purchase of land from landlords, social insurance, the establishment of wage norms and the nationalization of the main sectors of industry.** The Communist Party will expose all the attempts of the right wing of the Congress to conduct national reconstruction at the cost of the workers and also the tendency of the reactionaries to reach compromises with the English colonialists.

The Communist Party, in its fight to maintain and strengthen the unity of the Indian people, has taken the decision not to allow a division of mass organizations into two parts: Indian and Pakistani. The creation of an independent Communist Party in Pakistan has been condemned by the leadership of the CPI, moresoever, **as Teja Singh, the organiser of the Communist Party of Pakistan was expelled from the membership of the CC and the party two months ago for factional activities and the misuse of party finances.**

Commenting on the relations between the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of England, Dange characterized them as normal, however, **he underlined that the Indian communists do not expect serious support from the English Communist Party as they consider that the leadership of the British Communist party does not have an in-depth understanding of the problems of the colonized peoples, specifically the Indian problem.** Dange stated that a part of the activists of **the English Communist Party is not free of social-democratic ideas, in particular, the idea about the possibility in the post-war period of a peaceful transition to socialism.**

As an example, Dange, cited the following fact: during his long stay in **London in 1945**, the CC of the English Communist Party organized classes on the national question for the party members. It was suggested that Dange read a few lectures. After the first lecture, in which he put before the audience the question of the necessity of intensifying the movement for national independence in the colonies and showed the illusory nature of the expectation that the imperialist powers would voluntarily give up their rule in the colonies, **he was summoned to the CC, where it was sought to convince him that the union of the great democratic countries of the world formed during the war, under contemporary conditions, will provide a just and democratic resolution of the colonial question, and therefore, orienting the masses toward an expansion of national liberation movements would be unjustified.** Dange did not accept this explanation and so had to give up the further reading of his lectures.

To the question whether the Communist Party of India knows anything regarding the split in the **Communist Party of Burma that occurred in February 1946**, Dange replied that the split in the Party did not occur due to political reasons but due to personal differences in the leadership of the Party. The Takin Soe Group, that is underground at present, is represented as a 'left wing' and even Trotskyite grouping by its rivals. This is not true. Takin Soe is one of the most gifted leaders and a talented organizer who commands great respect among the working people of Burma and is one of the more politically mature leaders. Takin Soe did commit mistakes, but these mistakes must not be depicted as 'leftwing', more so, as he had fairly quickly corrected these mistakes. A few months ago, the CC of the Communist Party of India made a strong suggestion to both the communist groups of Burma to unite as they do not have any fundamental differences. However, Dange did not know if any action was taken on this suggestion. The present situation in Burma allows us to conclude that the Communist Party of Burma has yet not come out of its formative phase. **There are communist groups but no Party. Each of the groups contends to be the Party.**

The discussion was held by
Head of the Section of DFP S/d (Plishevskii)
Instructor S/d (Kozlov)

RGASPI F. 17 Op. 128 D. 1127 LL. 202-205.

No. 2.

Secret

To

The Secretary of the CC AUCP/b/
Comrade A.A. Zhdanov

Secretary of the CC AUCP/b/
Comrade M.A. Suslov

S.A. Dange, the Chairman of All India Congress of Trade Unions and member of the Communist Party of India who has come to Moscow on a visit on the invitation of the ACCTU (All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions – ed.). In discussions with the staff of the CC AUCP/b/ said that he has been assigned by P.C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, to meet someone from the leadership of the CC AUCP/b/ in order to discuss a number of issues of a political nature and ask for appraisal and suggestions for the documents 'A Call to the People of India' and 'A Memorandum to the Interim Government on the Communist and Workers' Policies' which are under preparation; to agree to establish permanent contacts with CC AUCP/b/, so that the Communist Party of India can get brotherly support and advice on significant questions of policy and tactics, and to agree to send to the USSR a group of committed Communists and also to inform the CC AUCP/b/ about the state of the Communist Party of India.

At present S.A. Dange is on a visit to various cities and regions of USSR (Leningrad, Magnitogorsk, Uzbek SSR) and would return on 10th August.

A note regarding S.A. Dange, a letter from Dange for the Secretary of the CC AUCP/b/, notes of the discussions with the Department of the CC AUCP (b) and a note on the 'Draft of a Call to The People of India' with the comments of the staff of CC AUCP/b/ are attached.

Waiting for your instructions

Asst. Head
Dept. of CC AUCP/b/
/L. Baranov/

"2" August 1947.
N25-g-2090

RGASPI F. 17 Op. 128 D. 1127 L. 195.

No. 3.

Absolutely Secret

To

Comrade Stalin I.V.
Comrade Molotov V.M.
Comrade Zhdanov A.A.
Comrade Beria L.P.
Comrade Mikoyan A.I.
Comrade Malenkov G.M.
Comrade Voznesensky N.A.

I place before you the transcript of the discussions with S.A. Dange, Chairman of the All India Congress of Trade Unions and a member of the CC of the Communist Party of India who is on a visit to the USSR on the invitation of the ACCTU, a letter from com. Dange for the Secretary of the CC AUCP/b/, the annotation of the document 'A Call to The People of India' submitted by him and a testimonial of S.A. Dange.

The other document that Dange talks about 'A Memorandum to the Interim Government regarding the Policy of the Communists and the Workers' is not being sent as the document does not have any significance separately and only elaborates some of the issues put forward in 'A Call To the People of India'.

(M. Suslov)

6 August 1947
N25-C-2112
Material from the Secretariat of com. Suslov M.A.
Special packet through Techsecretariat
6.VIII-47.

RGASPI F. 17 Op. 128 D. 1127 L. 201.

No. 4.

Shripat Amrit Dange
Member of the Executive Council
All India Federation of Trade Unions
Member of the CC Communist Party of India

He was born in 1899. Member of the CP of India since 1924. One of the founding members and active worker of the Communist Party of India and the All India Federation of Trade Unions. He is a well known literary critic. Eminent social and political worker. Founder of the first workers' newspaper in Marathi language. He has been persecuted by the English authorities for communist and trade union activities and was arrested a number of times and has stayed in jail for an overall period of 13 years.

In 1928 he became the general secretary of 'Girni Kamgar', the revolutionary trade union of textile workers. Was jailed for communist activities and organisation of a strike.

In 1929-1936 was convicted in the Meerut conspiracy case against the workers' movement in India

In 1936-1939 was working in the party and the trade union.

In 1939 was convicted to 4 months of rigorous imprisonment for organising the strike of textile workers.

In 1940-1943 was under arrest for organisation of a general strike of textile workers in Bombay.

In 1943-1944 was chairman of the All India Congress of Trade Unions.

In 1944-1945 he was a delegate of the All India Congress at the World Trade Union Conference in London. In October 1944 was the representative of the Communist Party of India at the XVII Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain in London.

In 1945-1947 he was the vice chairman of the All India Congress of Trade Unions.

From October 1945 he is the member of the Executive Committee and chairman of the General Council of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

In 1946 he participated in the work of the plenum of the EC World Federation of Trade Unions in Moscow.

Since February 1947 he is the chairman of the All India Congress of Trade Unions.

s/d Plishevskii

RGASPI F.17 Op.128 D.1127 L. 216.

No. 5.

Top Secret

To,

Secretary CC AUCP (b)
Com. A.A. Zhdanov

Secretary CC AUCP (b)
Com. M.A. Suslov

I am forwarding the transcript of your discussions with S.A. Dange, member of the CC Communist Party of India and also his letter to the Secretary of the CC AUCP (b).

Deputy Head
Dept. of CC AUCP(b) (L. Baranov)

"18" August 1947
No. 25-F – 2240

RGASPI F.17 Op. 128. D. 1127 L.217.

No. 6.

Top Secret

To

The Secretary CC AUCP(B)

It is possible that some moments in my statements during our talks were not completely clear because of the language problem, therefore, I would take this opportunity and give in writing those particular points to which I would like to draw your attention.

1. It is desirable that presently the AUCP(b) pays more attention to the situation in India and express its opinion in the form most acceptable to you. Your opinion, when it is necessary, may be made known only to the Communist Party of India.
2. I request you to also pay attention to the politics, tactics and slogans that the Communist Party of India has been following in recent years and to give your assessment in a manner of fraternal support to the Communist Party of India in its endeavour to achieve its goals. I am confident that your party is not indifferent to these questions but I want to underline its necessity in the new situation created in India in the post-war period.
3. I assume that it is necessary that we establish the mutual exchange of opinions and materials. It is desirable that the forms and means of our ties be worked out before my departure.
4. If it is possible I request you to resolve to allow us to send the best of the members of the Communist Party of India to the USSR for studies in party affairs.
5. I request permission for the visits of writers and journalists from the Indian trade unions on the recommendation of the Communist Party of India.
6. It is desirable that the Communist Party of India is supplied with large quantities of material on the Soviet Union.
7. I express my readiness to discuss any question which you would think necessary to put to me.

Your Sincerely,
S.A. Dange

RGASPI F.17 O. 128 D 1127 L. 218.

No. 7.

Top Secret

Transcript of the Discussion of Comrade A.A. Zhdanov with
Com. Shripat Amrit Dange, Member of the CC of the Communist Party Of India

The discussion was held on 16.VIII.1947 from 6 pm to 8 pm

Participants in the discussions:

Com. M.A. Suslov
Secretary of the CC AUCP(b)

Com. L.C. Baranov

Deputy Head of the Dept. of the CC AUCP (b)

Interpreted by com. I.I. Kozlov
Instructor Dept. of the CC AUCP (b)

Comrade Zhdanov and Dange greet each other.

Com. Zhdanov asks com. Dange which places he has managed to visit in the USSR during his stay, and how are the arrangements for his stay etc.

Com. Dange says that he has come as a guest of the AUCCTU and proper arrangement have been made and that he does not need anything.

Then, com. Zhdanov reminds com. Dange that Dange has requested that a meeting be arranged as well as consultations on certain questions regarding the functioning of the Communist Party of India. Com. Zhdanov tells him that they are now ready to listen to Dange's information.

Com. Dange said that he has been out of India for quite some time, and that during this period important changes have taken place in the country. In particular, now two states have been established – Hindostan and Pakistan. A number of events have taken place of which he does not know much but believes that in the struggle of the Indian people no fundamental changes have occurred and that he can, if it is of interest to you, inform you about the major ones.

Com. Zhdanov requests com. Dange to inform him about the situation in India.

Com. Dange briefly spoke about the situation in India. He said that essentially what characterizes the political situation in India in 1947, in contrast to the earlier period, is that the Indian masses – workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and the population of the princely states – are now all involved in the movement against British imperialism.

This explains – said com. Dange – that British imperialism is now forced to use tactics of dividing the unity of Indian organizations and peoples' democratic forces. This tactic of British imperialism is not a new one and it has been utilized even earlier. The new dimension in these tactics is that British imperialism has been successful in spreading religious hatred right down to the grassroots and the mass of the people.

If earlier – says com Dange – Hindu-Muslim contradictions were present mainly among the bourgeois-nationalist elite, now the British have managed to sow these contradictions among the masses too.

If earlier the trade unions in India were established on a class basis, today attempts are being made to create them on a religious criterion.

The same could be said about the peasants' and other social organizations. If the English – says com. Dange – were not able to break the unity of this movement, the united Indian democratic organizations would have more strongly resisted the English.

A large number of facts suggest that the leadership of the Congress and the Muslim League is in league with English imperialism in this policy of creating a rift in the unity of the Indian workers' and democratic organizations.

Further, com. Dange points out that if the influence of the Congress among the masses has increased

the leadership of the Congress has moved to the right. Capitalists, landowners and speculators are present in large numbers in its leadership.

Com. Zhdanov: What is Nehru – a capitalist or a landowner?

Com. Dange: A bourgeois.

Com. Zhdanov: And Jinnah?

Com. Dange: Also a bourgeois. He is an eminent advocate, has acquired a lot of money and has invested it in enterprises. Nehru also belongs to a family of eminent advocates and has invested his substantial savings in the Indian company of Tata.

Com. Dange continues. He states that if power comes solely into the hands of the Indian National Congress in one part and the Muslim League in the other, then no positive changes would occur in the conditions of life of the Indian people because of the social composition of the elite leadership of the Congress and the Muslim League.

In the National Congress – com. Dange states further – there are two wings: one of them with Patel at its head is the extreme right and in its views and methods it resembles fascism, and the second – the left wing with no leader is democratic in its views and methods. At present all the power in the Congress is in the hands of the right wing and Patel. This leadership is moving away more and more from Nehru and Gandhi.

Com. Zhdanov: Are there any elements in the Congress which would have support among the workers?

Com. Dange: The influence of the Congress among the workers has begun to increase since 1942. Nobody represents this tendency in the Congress. There are some individuals at the lower organs of the Congress but none in the central leadership.

Com. Zhdanov: What is the number of the membership of the Congress?

Com. Dange: Before the war there were 6 million members. At the present there is a big inflow of members but it is difficult to give a precise number.

Com. Zhdanov: What is the method of awarding the membership – individual or collective?

Com Dange: At present it is individual, but a reform is being drafted and it is being proposed to change over exclusively to the collective method.

Com Suslov: What is the explanation for this?

Com Dange: The leadership of the Congress, frightened by the prospects of infiltration of left elements into the Congress, want to organise admittance in such way so as to restrict access to undesirable elements. Under the collective method they can judge a particular organization that wants to gain admittance into the Congress according to the leadership of the organization and thereby close the doors for the left democratic elements and organizations.

After this com. Dange characterised the foreign policies of the Indian National Congress.

He asserted that on the question of foreign policy there were also two currents in the Congress. The

first current which is headed by Patel bases itself on the contradictions between the three great countries : the USSR, England and the USA. Patel and his adherents play on these contradictions and try to find a line on Indian foreign policy by which they endeavour to hold to the Anglo-American bloc. Patel and his group consider that in the new Indian State it is necessary to retain fully all of the English bureaucrats and officers and to conclude a military alliance with England. Patel is a proponent of weapons standardisation on the common American model.

Com. Zhdanov: What is Nehru's line?

Com. Dange: Nehru has a particular line. He believes that everything must be done in order to have close, friendly state to state relations with the Soviet Union but Soviet influence in India must not be permitted.

Com. Zhdanov: So Nehru wants to bear all the burden of relations with the Soviet Union on his own back and not let any one else share it?

Com. Dange: Nods affirmatively to Com. Zhdanov's joke.

Com. Zhdanov: What kind of a person is the present Indian ambassador to the USSR, Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi? Does she have an independent line on questions of foreign policy?

Com. Dange: Lakshmi does not have an independent line. The most independent figure in the Embassy is her secretary.

Com. Zhdanov: And in general is she intelligent?

Com. Dange: No, not very, at the level of a student.

Further com. Dange switched to characterizing the internal policy of the government of India and the conditions of the working class and the peasantry. He pointed out that the present Indian government cannot solve even a single problem either of the workers or of the peasants. The task is to create united workers' and peasants' organizations in order to force the government to satisfy the needs of the workers and peasants, because otherwise if we are unable to do so, then the English would crush the democratic organizations of India.

It must be recognized – says com. Dange – that the English policy in India at the present stage has been very successful.

Continuing his depiction of the situation in the country, com. Dange said: at present the movement has become particularly intense in the princely states. This is explained by the fact that the feudal oppression in the princely states is particularly severe, much more severe than in the territories of British India. This is why the wide masses living in the princely states are looking to us to lead them. In the princely states – says com. Dange – there is a tussle between the Congress and the English. The English want to place their agents there. In order to undermine these attempts and to gain the leading role in the princely states, the Congress is being forced to make certain concessions to the princely states at the expense of the workers and the peasants.

Com. Zhdanov: Are the princely states industrially less developed than the regions of British India?

Com. Dange: Yes. In some of the princely states industries do exist, in the majority the remnants of feudalism are very strong.

Com. Zhdanov: Thus there the main form of struggle has an anti-feudal nature?

Com. Dange: Yes.

Com Zhdanov: Therefore a peasant struggle?

Com. Dange: Yes.

Com. Zhdanov: What are the organizational forms of the peasant movement?

Com. Dange: Most of the actions of the peasants are directed against the landlords with the demand of transferring the land to the peasants.

Com. Zhdanov: Are these demands mainly put forward by the farm workers?

Com. Dange: By different sections: small lease farmers, landless and farm workers, the majority of the latter belong to the 'untouchables'. The movement is conducted on two tracks: on one hand, there are protests against the exploitation by rich farmers, and on the other, for the rights of the 'untouchables'.

Com. Zhdanov: What is more dominant in the democratic organizations in India – the common national interests or the caste remnants?

Com. Dange: There are about 60 million 'untouchables' in India. The Congress, various petty bourgeois organizations and we communists are contesting to win leadership position among them.

Com. Zhdanov: Are there 'untouchables' in the general trade unions or do they have their own ones?

Com. Dange: They are there in the general trade unions, part of them are in our trade unions and a part in the trade unions under the leadership of various petty bourgeois organizations, but the 'untouchables' do not want to participate in the trade unions established by the Congress.

Further, com. Dange informed that the peasant movement is intensifying in Pakistan as Pakistan has the largest number of landowners.

Com. Zhdanov: Are Hindostan and Pakistan economically very different?

Com. Dange: There is a big difference. More than 70% of all the industry is concentrated in Hindostan. Pakistan is the most agrarian part of the country.

Com. Zhdanov: What, in your opinion, are the prospects of political development in India and what are the tasks of the Communist Party?

Com. Dange: We perceive these prospects in the following way. As the English have not been successful in completely breaking the united Indian organizations and creating these on religious basis, it is imperative to thwart further divisions in the mass organizations and continue the struggle for their unification.

Com. Zhdanov: How do you understand the objectives of unification?

Com. Dange: We believe that the splintered organizations of the workers be united on the basis of the

concrete demands of the working class. The same needs to be done with the peasants' organizations.

Com. Zhdanov: You want to have common organizations for Hindostan and Pakistan?

Com. Dange: Yes, united.

Com. Zhdanov: And the Communist Party too?

Com. Dange: Yes, also.

Com. Zhdanov: At present you have one Communist Party?

Com. Dange: Yes, one.

Further com. Zhdanov asks com. Dange to explain why the Congress managed to strengthen its authority.

Comrade Dange opines that during the war the Congress, taking into account the anti-English sentiments of the wide masses, opposed the English and by this action acquired a semblance of a national organisation fighting for the national sovereignty.

The Communist Party during the war supported the allies, including the English and by this action weakened its influence as a lot of people could not correctly understand the position of the Party. A considerable part of the supporters of the Communist Party during the war shifted to the Congress.

Com. Zhdanov: How do the masses assess the division of India into Hindostan and Pakistan?

Com. Dange: The section that follows the Congress and represent its official line – do not support the division. This cannot be said about the Muslims. They, in their overwhelming majority, do not support unification and support division.

Com. Zhdanov: If the communists support unified organizations, would not the people look upon you as the agents of the Congress, which, as you said, opposes division?

Com. Dange: That is how the leadership of the Muslim League views us. They are trying to convince the masses also about the same. But we also have another difficulty. The leadership of the Congress accuse us of defending the Muslims as we uphold the right of the nations to self-determination even until secession.

Com. Zhdanov: But the Hindus and the Muslims are not separate nations, after all they belong to the same nationality.

Com. Dange: Yes, it is correct.

Com. Zhdanov: I do not remember any instance in the last 100-150 years of the establishment of a state on religious principles.

Com. Dange: Yes, it is true.

Com. Zhdanov: Is it really so that religious fanaticism is so strong that it eclipses the national

and class unity of the workers. Are there a lot of atheists in democratic organizations and what are their views on the state? Com. Zhdanov jokingly remarked that ‘why do the atheists not ask for a third state of their own?’

Com. Dange: laughed at the remark and replied ‘it appears that it won’t reach this level of absurdity’.

At present – continued comrade Dange – among the working class religious fanaticism is not as strong as before. The sentiments of class and democratic solidarity among the workers is dominant. **The leadership of the Congress and the Muslim League on the contrary are trying to promote religious commonality.**

Com. Zhdanov: It appears that the class solidarity and even national, among the Indian workers was insufficient, and weak, in order to resist the plans of the English and the internal reaction. Further com. Zhdanov asks com. Dange:

Are there forces in India, capable of turning the events in a different direction, from Hindostan and Pakistan to the creation of a unified state, or the perspective is such that Pakistan and Hindostan would develop and strengthen as independent states?

Com. Dange: Such forces are present in India, it is the only force – the working class. At present a struggle is on for the control of this force. The main task of the Communist Party is not to allow the division of the working class and its organization.

Com. Zhdanov: Evidently, Nehru and Jinnah appear like national heroes. Apparently, they have support among the people because they have managed to establish in the **dominions two states which if not totally independent are still independent to a certain extent. Can the communists afford not to take this into consideration?**

Com. Dange: Yes, we are forced to say this.

Com. Zhdanov: Is there not the danger that the Communist party would fall between two states?

Com. Dange: No, I don’t think that we will find ourselves in this position. The support that the Congress and the League enjoy – is just illusory. The masses will soon turn away from them as they will get convinced in practice that they will not gain anything from them.

Com. Zhdanov: But they (the masses) after all expect something. They hope to gain something. **That it will be worse for them has still not been proved by anyone. After all it needs to be proven.** If the working class is strong, then independent of the number of states or republics being **formed it can still from the worst of the republic create a good one**, create a good state out of a bad one. **If it is weak – then it will not be in a position to create a good state even if it is united. If among the working class the class solidarity is stronger than religious bias then it will be capable of leadership independent of the number of states that may exist in India.**

As you know – com Zhdanov said – part of the territory of the Soviet Union was occupied by the Germans and forcibly incorporated into the Reich by Hitler. **But the patriotism of the Soviet people under the German rule did not die. They were all the time hoping to be united with their motherland and they conducted themselves like Soviet citizens.**

Com. Dange: it cannot be said that the working class of India is so strong. This constitutes our weakness.

Com. Zhdanov: The solidarity of the working class in the USSR with the working class and communists of India has not diminished because two states – Hindostan and Pakistan – have been established.

Com. Dange: I earnestly request you to make a critical appraisal of our work basing yourself on the materials provided by me to you. We need your suggestions.

How important it is for us I will try to explain by giving just one example. Four years ago when the issue of Pakistan was raised the Communist Party of India wanted to support this movement. But this was corrected by the British Communist Party by pointing out the mistake in our position.

The same opinion was voiced in the Soviet press by com. Dyakov. Then we decided to come out in support of an unified state but even now we do not know how correct our position is.

Com. Zhdanov: We have no knowledge that com. Dyakov whom you mentioned had asked the CC for suggestions or consultations or that Dyakov was entrusted to put forward this point of view. We do not venture to give any suggestions to our Indian comrades immediately and do not possess the qualities that Dyakov has. It must have been nothing more than his personal opinion, no more. Please keep this in mind. But regarding our suggestions, then com. Dange himself has recognized that the situation in **India is very complex and therefore we cannot take upon ourselves to make any suggestion immediately without a thorough examination of the issues.** This discussion and the information given by com. Dange is just the first step toward the formulation of any opinion on the questions that interest the leadership of the Communist Party of India. **I believe that com. Dange will give us the opportunity to think over it, have consultations with the members of the CC, above all inform com. Stalin and if the CC judges that certain suggestions can be made, then these would be conveyed before the departure of com. Dange.**

But I request com. Dange not to be annoyed if we are not able to make suggestions on all the issues which interest him.

Blood is flowing in India and somebody is culpable for this bloodshed. If as a result of incorrect advice further blood flows that will be utterly criminal on our part. The blood of the Indian worker is costly. We must justify ourselves if we do not give a reply immediately to these questions.

Com. Dange replied that he did not mean that immediate response be made on the issues covered by him and said:

I am very happy that after many years we have been able to directly inform the CC AUCP (b) and also talk about our doubts.

Com. Zhdanov: We will continue to strengthen our ties and we believe that they will be fruitful. We hope that as a result we will come to know more about the situation in India and with your help and permission be able to make suggestions.

Com. Dange: I am asking these questions because we have nobody to consult except the AUCP(b). Earlier there was the Comintern but it is not there now and we are facing difficulties. During the visit to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria we met comrades Tito and Dimitrov and asked for their suggestions.

Com. Zhdanov: We agree, but request you allow us the opportunity to make good and correct suggestions. **The suspension of the Comintern does not mean that the fraternal parties cannot have consultations among themselves.**

In the end I would like to say – com. Zhdanov continues – that from all that been said here it follows that there is no ground for pessimism for the Communist Party of India. There are forces in India which are stronger than the forces that are bent on dividing her, and if the Communist Party is able to bring into motion all the forces then the democratic proletarian movement will be unbreakable.

Com Zhdanov requested com. Dange that they meet once more before his departure to his country.

Com. Dange expressed his gratitude for the meeting and with great satisfaction accepted the proposal of com. Zhdanov regarding another meeting.

Note made by (L. Baranov)

" " August 1947.

RGASPI F. 17 Op. 128 D. 1127 LL. 219-229.

No. 8.

Top Secret

To,

Comrade A.A. Zhdanov.

I am forwarding to you the transcript of the discussion with Com. Shripat Amrit Dange, member of the CC of the Communist Party of India held on the 6th of September of this year.

Enclosure: The previously-mentioned in 4 pages.

Deputy Head of the
Dept. Of the CC AUCP (b) (L. Baranov)

"9" September 1947.

25-B-2449

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No. 9.

Top Secret

Transcript of the Discussion of Comrade A.A. Zhdanov with
Comrade S.A. Dange, Member of the CC of the Communist Party of India

Discussion was held on 6.IX.1947.

In the discussion the following participated:

Comrade M.A. Suslov,
Secretary of the CC AUCP (b)

Comrade L.C. Baranov
Deputy Head of the Dept of Foreign Policy
CC AUCP (b)

Comrade I.I. Kozlov

Interpreter – Instructor of the Dept. of Foreign Policy
CC AUCP (b)

Comrade Zhdanov welcomes com. Dange and informs him that he, i.e. com. Zhdanov, has made a report to the CC about the questions which were discussed during the previous discussion and which were of interest to com. Dange and that now he is in a position to reply and make suggestions.

But com. Zhdanov cautioned com Dange that he, com Dange, and the Communist Party of India should not view these suggestions as a directive. If they find these suggestions useful and correct, they may follow them, and if not – then reject them.

Com. Dange replied that he understands these sentiments.

1. On the partition of India into Hindostan and Pakistan and on the situation of the Communist Party in and other social organizations these circumstances.

Com. Zhdanov states that, as the partition of India into two states Hindostan and Pakistan has now become an established fact, and it is now impossible not to take it into consideration as existing reality, then in the opinion of the CC AUCP (b), the Communist Party and the Trade Unions it is essential to have separate Communist Parties and Trade Unions in each of the countries.

The CC AUCP (b) accepts the fact of the existence of the two states, and whatever may be our attitude toward the creation of these two states, we have to contend with the fact. As you know – com. Zhdanov continues – Communist Parties everywhere are established not on an inter-state basis, but in each state separately. Depriving a party of the right to exist within a state means depriving it of the right and possibility to influence the affairs of the state.

This, certainly, does not exclude – com. Zhdanov says – but, on the contrary, presumes the presence of fraternal ties and solidarity between the two Communist parties also, just as these ties and solidarity exist between all the other fraternal communist parties.

It is understood, – com. Zhdanov says – that both the parties **must take all the measures toward the cessation of killings between the Muslims and the Hindus**, which is happening at present and toward establishing fraternal relations and solidarity between them. This is the main task of both the parties. Understandably, both the parties will become the source of friendship and not enmity. That the parties would be able to achieve this – says com. Zhdanov – we do not doubt.

2. On the name of the party.

We are inclined to think – com. Zhdanov continues – it would be better for the Communist Party of India to reorganize itself from a communist party into a workers' and peasants' party or a Party of Labour. The experience of other parties shows that the peasantry, especially during the initial

stages, is afraid of the name 'communist' and therefore prefers to organise itself in other parties. In order not to frighten the peasants away from itself **and because the party will be able to rely not only on the workers, but also on the peasants and the intellectuals, the communists in India must present themselves in the form of another party, eg., the Party of Labour.** The way we view the affairs is that when the peasants become used to considering the party as their own and start to trust it, when the movement shifts to a new and higher stage, then the peasants will not be afraid of communist slogans and the name can then be dispensed with in favour of the old one.

If – says com. Zhdanov – the Indian communists do not have the aim of the immediate inception of communism then there is no need to annoy people with communism.

The slogan of the transition to communism needs to be put forth only when the conditions mature for this as well as the situation is ripe, **when the party has prepared the masses on the basis of democratic slogans.**

I can refer to the experience of the Communist Party of North Korea, where the Communist Party united with other democratic organizations, including the peasants' organizations and formed a single united Party of Labour, established a leading position for itself in this party and spread its influence over the majority of the peasants and the population. Thanks to this the communists of north Korea successfully conducted a series of important democratic reforms and transformation (nationalization of large scale industry, land reforms, 8 hours working day at the enterprises, equal rights for women and equal pay for women and men etc.), established a peoples' democratic government with prime minister Kim ir Sen at its head.

We – com. Zhdanov said – would desire something like this for you too.

We request you not to think that we want that the Indian communist stop being communists (com. Dange laughs). **It seems that such forms need to be selected which would allow you to carry the majority of the people with you.** We always adhere to the Leninist principle – com. Zhdanov pointed out – which teaches us not to skirt around the stages yet to be ushered.

Such is our second suggestion which comes from a pure heart and a sincere wish for your success.

What concerns the platform, we think that it should be formulated in accordance with the prevailing conditions and must envision such democratic reforms that would change the balance of forces in India in favour of the working people in preparation for the transition to socialism and destroy the capitalist roots. I do not consider it is necessary – com Zhdanov said – to talk about the details of such a platform as the Indian communists are more competent than us. I have just elaborated the general principles.

3. On the caste differences and the struggle for the eradication of the remnants of caste system.

It appears to us that without the eradication of the remnants of the caste system it is impossible to move forward as the caste system obstructs the working people from recognizing class distinctions and replaces these with the distinctions from an archaic past. **We consider – com Zhdanov continued – that this is the most reactionary vestige and poses the biggest difficulty for the Indian communists.** But the Communist Party must make all efforts in order to eliminate these vestiges though we are aware that this cannot be achieved in the near future.

We request the Indian comrades – com. Zhdanov said – to pay serious attention to this question.

These are the basic suggestions of the CC AUCP(b).

Regarding some specific questions – com. Zhdanov said – we also give a positive reply.

We have no objection to Indian communists studying here taking into consideration the organization of such studies in the near future.

We positively relate to your proposal for more frequent visits for trade union delegations to USSR.

We will be very happy to have direct ties with the Communist Party, but there are certain difficulties in this area and therefore for the time being we will have to limit ourselves to certain ‘occasions’. We recommend you to include communists with specific commissions in future delegations.

Regarding improving the supply of materials relating to the Soviet Union – said com. Zhdanov – it will be done through various state and social organizations (Sovinformbureau, Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga, Voks etc) that are meant for the purpose of strengthening cultural ties with foreign countries.

Com. Dange expressed his gratitude for the suggestions and said that all the major issues on which he has had discussions would be placed before the CC CP on his return.

At the same time com. Dange drew attention to the unsatisfactory working of the Sovinformbureau and the Radiocommittee (the transmissions are conducted in incomprehensible language) and requested that measures be taken for improving the working of these organizations.

Comrade Zhdanov promised to take the necessary measures and also requested **that the Indian communists also intensify their efforts to conduct radio propaganda of the Soviet Union as this would produce much better results than the Soviet people themselves.**

Com. Dange concurred.

Written: (L. Baranov)
8th September 1947.

RGASPI F. 17 Op. 128 D. 1127 LL 231-234.

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