



The Formation of the Post-colonial Indian State in Soviet Historiography: The Interplay Between the Ruling Ideology and the Writing of History

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ABSTRACT

India gained her independence from British rule in August 1947, and her Constitution came into force in January 1950. These important events opened up a new page in the history of Indian state development, and also ushered onto the world stage a defining era of decolonization. Moreover, India was amongst the first colonies to endorse the so-called "civilized divorce" from her former colonial power, which promoted the smooth and gradual shift towards her sovereign status. Therefore, the events, which ultimately led to Indian independence and the formation of the post-colonial state, have been previously documented by historians of various schools of Indian history in different parts of the world. The present paper will discuss the formation process of Indian state sovereignty during 1947-1950, as it had been imagined, studied, and constructed by Soviet historians. It is important to study this issue in the light of Soviet historiography in order to recognize this interpretation of the past as an example of the relationship between history-writing the ruling government ideology. In addition to providing a detailed analysis of Soviet historiography on the status of post-colonial Indian state formation and sovereignty, this paper seeks to identify key moments in the development of Soviet history-writing in the post-war period, which can be useful in helping us to discern some of the main themes and intricacies of Indian state formation from a Soviet perspective.

Keywords : Ideology, Post-colonial State, Indian State, Soviet Historiography Formation

1. SOVIET IDEOLOGY & HISTORIOGRAPHY: AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS

The transfer of power into Indian hands on August 15, 1947 created new conditions for the political and economic development of an independent India. This led to the growth of post-colonial Indian studies in the Soviet Union, which mainly emphasized what India intended to be after it became free and independent. On the whole, the form and the enforcement mechanisms for the transfer of power in the Indian sub-continent had become a pivotal point of Soviet historiography after 1947, and thus influenced assessments of all Indian history and the development of new Indo-Soviet relations. The present paper will

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discuss the reasons for and the means of the Indian peaceful, yet uneasy, transition from its colonial status to a sovereign republic drawn from a wide range of Soviet Indian writings. It is part of larger research that examines the relationships between India and Britain in course of Indian state formation during 1946-1955 (A. Kulnazarova, 2001).

The paper is organized into three main parts. The first part presents an introductory analysis of the interrelationship between Soviet ideology and state-building policy as they were applied within Soviet historiography. In this context, it is essential to know how Soviet historians wrote history, what views and ideology influenced them, what objectives they evolved, and what they accomplished. The second part opens up with a historiographical discourse on state formation and development in India, primarily influenced by a Stalinist approach to the freedom movement and state-building. The third part presents a discussion on how political changes within the Soviet Communist Party and the government resulted in a reconsideration of the problem of Indian independence and state formation within Soviet historiography.

The point of departure for most Soviet Indologists in the post-war period has been that the whole picture of the Indian Freedom Movement before 1947 had already been sketched in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism - subsequent research would only develop the details, but not alter radically the thematic and factual outlines.¹ Historiographical interpretation of any given political event directly reflected the Soviet government's attitude towards it, because the country of victorious communism was governed by a ruling ideology that consisted of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, which did not allow Soviet scholars and historians to conduct independent historical thinking and writing. In fact, Soviet historians had documented a Communism as a powerful instrument of Soviet foreign policy in its drive towards world domination, particularly after Stalin emerged as the undisputed leader of the Soviet Union, as well as for the world Communist movement. Due to these pressures, Soviet scholars pursued a form of history-writing that reflected and amplified the opinions of the ruling government, which were partly unsympathetic towards India and, particularly, towards Indian state formation after 1947. Further, in order to meet the tasks of the government, Soviet historiography developed a language that was dominated by a Communist vocabulary. Formation, process, class, party, law, Marxism, proletariat - these words were the underpinnings of the new Soviet historiographical language. The most widely-used term in Soviet historical writings was "struggle" (Afanasyev, 1996). Eventually, the political leadership of the USSR, by using all the means at its disposal, gradually transformed the historical discipline into a compulsory component in the governing political system. For these reasons, differences between Soviet and Western historiographies were already visible soon after the October revolution of 1917, and grew until Soviet historiography reached a point of complete isolation. The differences between the two historiographies arose simply, because Western historians retained a philosophical eclecticism and political pluralism as expressed in parliamentary democracy, a free press and free trade unions. Soviet historians, in contrast, froze Marxist philosophy and ideology into a closed system of orthodoxy. Even leading scholars demonstrated their loyalty to the state and party and accepted the roles assigned to them. Therefore, as it has been sharply underscored by the contemporary Russian historian and former Co-chairman of the Interregional Deputies Group in the USSR Congress, Yuri Afanasyev, the task of writing a "true" history in the Soviet Union was:

Complicated by the fact that in the country "of the triumphant socialist revolution", an understanding of current events was never a high priority. The political leaders, who were also the main ideologues, had an unassailable and predetermined interpretation of current and past events; the country experienced a socialist revolution in accordance with the laws discovered by Marx and Engels, and developed by Lenin, Stalin and the Communist party. The historians labored to prove what had long been obvious for the founders. (Yuri Afanasyev, 1996, para. 19)

However, if a scholar or a historian had asserted his or her independent opinion to pursue the truth, they would have been denounced by the Soviet leadership as an "enemy of the Soviet people".

By following Marxist philosophy, the Soviet account of the Indian pre-independence movement towards political sovereignty, as a dominated discourse, implied the assertion that the Indian liberation was historically inevitable and predetermined. To give one example, while assessing the Sepoy revolt of 1857 in British India, Karl Marx (the founder of the Communist ideology) had pointed out that even before there had been a mutiny in the Anglo-Indian army, the revolt of 1857 is distinguished by its own characteristic features. Karl Marx wrote:

The unorganized peasants of India fought one of the most powerful empires in the world to near defeat with limited resources and even more limited training. It is clear that British interference governments and the oppression of the Indian people, religious and economic, created a bloody revolution... If there is a lesson to be learned from any of this, it is that a people, once pushed into a corner, will fight for nothing more than the freedom to fight, and live, if not for religion then for their basic right to live in freedom. (K. Marx & F. Engels, 1959).

The main "lesson" of 1857, according to Marxist historians, was that it had finally shown the British colonizers how dangerous the unity of the Indian masses could be to their political authority. In fact, the Indian masses had most potentially demonstrated how united they were during the first war of independence in 1857. Hindu and Muslim soldiers united and fought the British soldiers as one, thus shaking the very foundations of British rule in India. It is, therefore, not surprising that soon after the Sepoy revolt, the British administrators tried to provoke, even harder than before, communal unrest between the two communities of Hindus and Muslims: "Divide et impera" was the motto of the British Indian administration, whether it was in the political, civil or military spheres. By contrast, Western historiography around this time claimed that Indian Independence had not always been such an urgent goal for the British Government, because the first half of the twentieth century had already seen a series of small and gradual steps towards self-government in the Indian sub-continent. Traditional imperialist historiography of the West held that these ventures marked a carefully incremented process, part of a process of training the Indians to govern for themselves. From a geopolitical point of view, the Declaration of Indian Independence on August 15, 1947 may not have been totally unconnected with the British concern to keep the Soviet Union as far away as possible from the Indian sub-continent. Russia had been a concern for the British in India long before Russia was taken over by communism. However, Stalin's takeover of the USSR, the Soviet Union's powerful victory over Germany in 1945, and subsequent Soviet ambitions to extend the country's influence right up to the Arabian Sea only served to heighten Britain's concern.

Thus, during the Stalin's rule history-writing in the USSR was tightly controlled and, in effect, the use of archival materials was censored by the party and other official organizations. This resulted in the falsification and distortion of history, a narrowing of the documentary basis for scholarship, and self-censorship about certain facts and events in order to please particular personalities and to agree with ruling doctrines. As a result, creative discussions and debates ceased as early as the 1930s; instead, historians merely illustrated party documents, speeches, and presentations (Afanasyev, 1996). Hence, Soviet historiography served the goals of the Communist Party and the ruling Soviet ideology.

2. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE: A STALINIST APPROACH

Eventually, on 3 June 1947, Viscount Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last British Governor-

General of India, announced the partition of the British Indian Empire into a secular India and a Muslim Pakistan. On the 14th of August 1947, Pakistan was declared a separate nation. At midnight on the 15th of August 1947, India became an independent nation. While independent India embraced the idea of a secular nationalism, Pakistan has justified its creation by projecting a distinctive Islamic identity.

There has been little Soviet historiographical debate on issues relating to two-nation theory about the attainment of Indian statehood. Rather, the forms and the enforcement mechanisms of independence that divided India became the subject-matter of Soviet Indian study. The first publications on the issue were the works of the well-known Soviet historian, A. M. Dyakov (1947, 1948). In his studies, we find an official presentation of the Soviet government's opinion concerning the role of Indian political leaders in their struggle for independence. Yet, in 1925, Stalin (1939) stressed:

The main and the new trend in terms of the existence of such colonies as India lie in the fact that the conciliatory part of Indian bourgeoisie reached a deal with the British imperialism. The fear of revolution pushed this bourgeoisie back into the camp of their enemies. (p. 209).

Adhering to the Stalinist conception of the place and the role of the national Indian bourgeoisie in the Indian Freedom Movement, A. Dyakov (1949) in his Post-War English Plans of Indian State Organization wrote:

Indian bourgeoisie compromised with the British imperialism on the basis of denial of its initial demands. The Indian National Congress agreed to divide India and to retain the status quo in the Princely States. The fear of revolution forced the Indian bourgeoisie to compromise with Britain, and, thus, to divide the Indian market with British imperialism. (p. 65).

Prior to British colonial rule, the South Asian sub-continent was a rich mosaic of contending local and regional sovereignties. Different scholars have tendered various estimates as to the exact numbers of such sovereign territories. For example, in 1929 the Butler Commission report referred to 562 Princely States. After the Draft constitution report in 1935, many Indian and Western authors referred to 560 Princely states. However, Jawaharlal Nehru mentioned that there were 600 states, while Lee Warner, the author of numerous books on the history of Indian Princely States, believed that 693 states existed. During the British-ruled period, interaction between British India and the Princely States only took place via London. Therefore, Aleksei Dyakov has constantly criticized the compromising position of the Indian National Congress leadership over the status of the Princely States. (T. F. Devyatkina, 1961; C. A. Mikoyan, 1956).

In A. Dyakov's subsequent work (1952), the mainstream conciliatory tradition of Soviet historiography was presented even stronger. This tendency can also be traced in the works of other Soviet historians. For instance, V. Balabushevich (1948), in his article "New phase in the Indian freedom movement", wrote that "implicit in the aspiration of Indian bourgeoisie was a denial of working classes' direct involvement in the freedom movement, as in the era of imperialism true and complete freedom implies the liberation of Indian people from all the sections of society not only from British colonizers, but also from their own national bourgeoisie." Further, Balabushevich concludes that "the Indian bourgeoisie had always compromised with the British imperialism, thus reckoning on their support in their struggle against working classes of India." (p.45). Thus, these historians presented a consistent affirmation of the Soviet Marxist ideology that fear before the mass revolution became the main reason of why the Indian political leadership had to compromise with the former imperial metropolis on the status and forms for the transfer of power in the Indian subcontinent.

At the same time, the Declaration of Indian Independence 2 was considered by V. Balabushevich (1947) to be a product of the "Ancient Roman law "Divide and Rule", the foundation of British policy in India". In pointing out that after the transfer of power into Indian hands on the status of dominion, British capital retained its position within the Indian economy, V. Balabushevich ended up by remarking that "the Declaration of Independence did not solve the main problem of India - the status of her independence," because "after the partition of British India into the Indian Union and Pakistan, both dominions had economically, politically and militarily remained as dependent entities of British imperialism" (p. 44, p. 49). This assessment of the dominion status of the new Indian government was widely supported by M. Alekseev (1949), who even went further in his criticisms by claiming that "the partition of Indian sub-continent and the independence grant in the status of dominion to separate Hindustan and Pakistan allowed the British to preserve their political power in India. From this it follows that India remains a colony of British Crown." (p. 59-60) It should, however, be noted that Alekseev was one of the first Soviet Indologists who attempted to examine the methods and mechanisms for the transfer of power in the subcontinent by the British government. In this context, he pointed out that "the transfer of power in South Asia was implemented by the Labor government by the means of social and national demagoguery, which was in contrast with the former Conservative Government policy in India." At the same time, Alekseev noted that "Laborites could transfer the power in India in an easiest and quickest way, because the leaders of Indian National Congress were in close ties with the former, and therefore, they had readily compromised with the Labor Government." (p.59) It cannot be denied that historically the Indian Freedom Movement leaders and intellectuals, mainly educated in England long before the independence, were fairly pro-British, even after 1947. In the initial decades of the post-colonial period, the centralized structure of the Indian State was at least, partially, if not completely tempered by the nationally-based political party of the Indian National Congress, which, according to Soviet historians, remained loyal to their former colonial masters. This was the cornerstone of the Soviet government's constant criticism of the Indian political leadership, as it used to receive prestige and privilege due to its alliance with the British establishment.

Within this discourse, S. Melmann, another prominent Soviet Orientalist, in her then newly-published monograph *The Economy of India and the Policy of English Imperialism* (1951), came to the idea that "Her Majesty Government had no intention of letting go its "jewel in the crown" - until it had no choice. And in post-war period the British imperialism was ultimately forced to transfer the power into the hands of Indian national bourgeoisie as to its allies and agents" (p.205). While assessing the English plan for the formation and development of an Indian state, S. Melmann further pointed out that

The English plan had been worked out with such an advantage in order to retain India as a market place for English capitalism, and also as a military and strategic base. The partition of India on religious basis was the core of the imperialistic plan. (p.207)

Melmann, like other historians following this line of thought, stated that "the Declaration of Indian independence did not bring to India a desired and complete Independence" (p. 266).

In 1952, A. Dyakov published a 259-page book entitled *India during and after the World War II (1939-1949)*, which was a detailed study of the economic and political development in colonial and post-colonial India, and of the problems and difficulties she faced in the late 1940s. In particular, Dyakov analyzed the Indian Freedom Movement during the post-war II period, observing that "the span of anti-British movement elsewhere in India, particularly in 1946, forced the British to alter the form of its administration in India and, even, to allow the upper classes of Indian bourgeoisie to exercise political power in British Indian government" (p.119). According to Dyakov, the partition of India into the two dominions did not solve the problems of Indian independence and state sovereignty (p. 121).

Thus, the main claim of Soviet historiography from 1947 through to the beginning of the 1950s was that the partition of the Indian subcontinent into two dominions did not solve any of the fundamental questions that the Indian Freedom Movement had put forward.

The only conclusion that Soviet historiography could make was that India did not achieve her full independence and sovereignty, even after the Declaration of Independence was announced to both dominions on August 15, 1947. Moreover, it made no attempts to tackle questions such as why India was partitioned along mainly religious lines for the first time in its five millennia history. Rather, a historiographical discourse on the subject was limited to the critical assessment of key moments within the formation and development of the Indian state.

Around the same time, an often-repeated claim by many British and other Western historians and scholars has been that the Hindus and Muslims of the sub-continent have always been at war and that there has been centuries of hatred between them. Therefore, the partition was inevitable (perhaps even a historical necessity), and Pakistan can be seen as a logical outcome of that "ancient" hostility between the two peoples. In contrast, Soviet historians have claimed that the partition of the Indian subcontinent according to a religious line was a well-planned and implemented process for the transfer of power to a divided India, which would allow the British to dominate over the Indian sub-continent. However, Soviet historiography in this particular period paid little attention to the economic, political, social, and military grounds of why India had agreed to attain her independence at the status of dominion and as a divided state. Such an important aspect in the study of the formation of the Indian state and sovereignty, as the proclamation of the Indian Republic in 1950, still remained beyond the Soviet history-writing of this period. It is obvious that the state sovereignty, that was in the making, involved far too many conflicting threads to permit an easy accommodation of all internal difficulties. However, Soviet historiography, consistently adhering to the Stalinist conception of the conciliatory roles and policies of the Indian political leadership, did not recognize the first years of Indian independence as the most promising way towards constructive state-building. Soviet historians had characterized the Indian decision to remain as a dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations, even after she gained her independence, as a compromise with British imperialism. Ultimately, the whole Indian Freedom Movement was branded as a movement of collaboration with British imperialism.

As it has been fairly noted by Tatyana Antonova (1991), a historian of Indo-Soviet relations, "the Soviet scholars of post-war period tended to interpret such important problem as the Indian post-colonial state formation in a very simplistic and dogmatic way" (p. 67). In other words, Soviet historiography was the object of prolonged manipulation by government authorities. Under such conditions, Soviet historiography during 1947-1953 had restricted objective reasoning and interpretation, because "an understanding of current events was never a high priority". Moreover, Soviet historians claimed that the status in which India had finally attained her independence from Britain, was "insecure and subject to question", because the territory remained contested between the former colonial power and the former colony. Although Soviet historians have contributed valuable insights into the logic of sovereignty, still it cannot be said that they have studied sovereignty rigorously. They have limited their investigations to critical reflections of its present consequences.

3. THE KHRUSHCHEV THAW: HISTORIOGRAPHY RECONSIDERED

From the mid-1950s, a new approach to the analysis of Indian post-colonial state formation started to emerge and develop. This important reconsideration of Indian state-building policies was directly associated with the domestic reforms undertaken by the Soviet government under Nikita Khrushchev's rule. Stalin's death in 1953 also saw the beginning of a thaw in the areas of international relations and Soviet foreign policy. In November-

December 1955, the first Soviet official delegation led by Nikita Khrushchev and Nikita Bulganin visited India, in the course of which the Soviet leaders greatly and very positively appraised the domestic and foreign policies of the Indian government (The Fourth Session of Supreme Council of the USSR, 1956). The Soviet leaders' repeated statements and remarks that "the Soviet government and people regard India as a "Great Nation and Power," made a deep impression not only in India, but also within Soviet scientific circles (p. 431). The role of the Indian political leaders as the central actors in their struggle for independence had clearly been reaffirmed. As a result, it is perhaps no surprise that a revisionist approach to the state-building policies in India was on the rise. As direct outcomes of Soviet leaders' first visit to India, there developed a greater readiness to study the factors within the change and transformation of the Indian political organization--from its colonial status, passing through its transitional dominion status to a sovereign republic--by analyzing the economic, social, political and ideological reasons. Such analyses represented a considerable shift in the entire Soviet attitude, reflecting a new political thinking.

The shift from the Stalinist conception of the conciliatory role of the Indian bourgeoisie to the idea that the Indian political leaders had played a significant and principal role in the transfer of power in the subcontinent opened up new perceptions about the political development of a post-colonial India within Soviet history-writing. The first, fresh idea expressed by historians of the Thaw period was that the Declaration of Independence in 1947 had marked the beginning of the formation process towards Indian State sovereignty, with the adoption of the Republican Constitution by a free India in 1950 bringing a close to the process. To some extent, this shift can be explained both by the internal changes in the Soviet Union and the need to improve her relationship with independent India. 3

In a joint article, published in 1956, L. Alaev, I. Baranova and V. Kulanda (1956) claimed that the Declaration of Independence in India into the dominion status did not end Indian struggle for complete independence and sovereignty, but it did open a new stage "in India's achievement and reinforcement of the full political and economic independence" (p. 32). On the issue of the role of the Indian national bourgeoisie within the Freedom Movement, the authors took a more constructive position. From this perspective, they wrote "the Indian national bourgeoisie strived for creating the propitious economic conditions in the country in order to protect Indian industry from foreign competition" (p.37). Therefore, the economic policy of the Indian government during 1947-50 was principally aimed at strengthening the economic independence of India from her former colonial power. The further adoption of the Republican Constitution in 1950, in the opinion of L. Alaev, I. Baranova and V. Kulanda, signified the achievement of a full and complete independence in India. However, the authors also continue by noting that as the first Indian Constitution was developed and adopted at a time when the Indian bourgeoisie was still under the direct influence of British imperialism, the young independent state had decided to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations despite its republican status which was a first for Commonwealth history (p.38).

Within a relatively short time, more academic papers and monographs were published, and seminars and conferences were held. In addition to many others, in response to the Soviet leaders' first official visit to India, in 1956 the Soviet Academy of Sciences held a scientific conference to mark the seventh anniversary of the Indian Declaration of Independence. Presentations were given by well-known Soviet Indologists and Orientalists, such as K. Antonova, B. Gafurov, N. Goldberg, I. Reisner and others.

In his keynote speech, the Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Professor B. Gafurov pointed out that "the new stage of Indian history begins from August 1947, when India achieved her independence". Professor Reisner's presentation "The main characteristics of Indian Freedom Movement" was an assessment of the roles of the Indian political leaders in the struggle for freedom. The presenter pointed out that the most significant and key moment in this struggle was the role of the Indian bourgeoisie led by Mahatma Gandhi

(p. 32). In sharp contrast to the Soviet historiography influenced by the Stalinist conciliatory conception, Soviet historians of the Thaw period argued that the Indian bourgeoisie had played a central role in the post-colonial state formation of India.

It is noteworthy that by the end of the 1950s Soviet Indologists extended their thematic outlines to studies about the evolution of Indian foreign policy. In his *The Essays of Indian Foreign Policy* (1957), V. P. Nikhamin provides a detailed study in which he makes his initial attempts at analyzing the evolution of Indo-British relations in the post-war period. Nikhamin argued in favor of India's decision to remain as a dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations:

After the liquidation of colonial administration, India was still dependent on Britain, particularly in the military field. The Indian Army, which had been initially established on the basis of British colonial army, continued to be supplied and armed by Britain. British officers remained in independent India in the capacity of military advisors." (p. 49).

Therefore, this military dependence on the former colonial power had become the main reason for why India accepted the status of dominion in August 1947. However, the status of dominion did not mean for India the end of her struggles for full independence, which were ultimately concluded with the proclamation of the Indian Republic on January 26, 1950. Thus, "the liquidation of dominion status has strengthened the political independence of India and extended the opportunities of national economy". Further, Nikhamin concluded that "the struggle of Indian proletariat and other progressive forces of Indian society was a key condition which led to the declaration of Indian Republic" (p.50, p.52). In the 1950s and- 1960s, similar viewpoints were held by other Soviet historians, such as S. Mikoyan, T. Yershov, T. Giyasov, E. Komarov, and G. Goroshko.

During the 1960s, G. Kolykhalova turned her attention to the study of Indian sovereignty-making policies. In 1966, Professor G. Kolykhalova published the only scholarly book, *India and Britain. The Problems of economic and political relations after 1947*, devoted to the evolution of Indo-British relations. In the first pages of her book, she states that "15 August 1947 has marked a new stage in the Indian history; it marked a stage of the country's evolution toward the status of independent and sovereign state" (p.5). At the same time, according to Kolykhalova, "the Declaration of Independence ... did not answer to the main political demand of Indian freedom movement - the achievement of full sovereignty, since it diminished the concept of Indian state sovereignty to the status of dominion of the British Commonwealth of Nations" (p. 26). Thus, while recognizing the 15th of August as the Day of Indian Independence, Kolykhalova argued that India had not yet achieved her full sovereignty. However, the continuous struggles of national political forces for a broadening and extending of the concept of state sovereignty resulted in the adoption of the first Indian Constitution in December 1949 (p.27). According to the Constitution, India was proclaimed a sovereign Republic from 26 January 1950. Therefore, the 26th of January 1950, as it was concluded by Kolykhalova, constitutionally secured the final victory of the Freedom Movement in India in achieving her full sovereignty, as "the constitution does not mention anything about political relationship between India and the British Commonwealth of Nations and does not make certain reservations about the Crown as the symbol of this unity." (p.35). Further she takes steps to explain why India had decided to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations, even after the proclamation of the Republican Constitution in 1950 (p.33). That is to say, "India even after 1950 still remained dependent on Britain, mainly in economic and military fields." Antonova, Bongard-Levin, and Kotovskyi (1979), in their collective book *History of India*, pointed at the shortage of national cadres in different sectors, particularly "in the Indian State apparatus, army, and especially in diplomatic sector up to 1000 British men had been still employed in 1949" (p.479). Another Soviet historian, Y. Nasenko (1975), has remarked that in the same year a total of 560 foreigners were employed in the Indian Ministry of

External Affairs (p.11). Also, within the security and military sectors, India was under the British strategic umbrella beyond the first decade of the post-colonial period, and, to that extent, India's view of her overall security and military environment has not undergone any profound changes.

The prominent Soviet Orientalist T.L. Shaumyan (1989) in his scholarly article "Foreign policy of independent India" pointed at the economic reasons behind India's decision to retain her membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations:

The significant positions of English capital in the Indian economy, the dependence of her national productivity from the English market had determined the decision of Indian ruling circles to continue her membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. However, they could only agree upon such relationships, which would guarantee the national sovereignty of India. (p. 115)

This was particularly relevant in the context of the domestic economic transitions experienced in post-colonial India, which made her further incapable of realizing any dramatic change in terms of her political posture. The British capital was mainly concentrated in raw materials sectors, and the trade and credit system. The total value of British investments were approximately 97% in the oil industry, 93% in rubber, 90% in match manufacture, 89% in jute, 86% in tea production, 74% in mining, 62% in coal-mining, 46% in the banking system, 43% in electrical power, and between 21 to 37% in the coffee, sugar, cotton, and textile industries. 4 Therefore, India's relationship with the former metropolis was of profound mutual significance. The figures also indicate the type of role that Britain had played in the transfer of power in the subcontinent. Thus, the dimensions of London's economic influence, including her positions as a manufacturing power-house and a foreign investor, the largest creditor and India's biggest pool of financial and investment funds played a principal role in India's decision to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations. 5 The British had invested in irrigation schemes and technological improvements that increased productivity. Or else, they recycled that surplus in the towns through the patronage of monumental building projects or manufacturing ventures. However, the British eventually exhausted India in enriching Britain.

Thus, within the evolution of Soviet historiography on Indian state formation and development during the post-colonial period, we can point to two periods: 1) the end of the 1940s to the first half of the 1950s: During that period, Soviet historians did not consider the Declaration of Indian Independence as the starting point for her sovereign status; 2) from the mid-1950s: It was a time when Soviet historians started to reconsider the whole process of Indian state formation and development. They came to understand that the state and/or national sovereignty that a country demands after it has been granted freedom draws its inspiration from its own cultural heritage and socio-political and economic traditions. Such inspiration is often guided by the country's own past experiences for the sake of its own interests and the pursuit of future goals. These interests and goals may not coincide or agree with the interests and goals of Soviet government policy at that particular stage, but they eventually proved to be the most pain-free and constructive way toward independence.

CONCLUSION

Given the present analyses, it is important to note that Soviet Marxism, which influenced history-writing in the USSR, was an ideology, which was presented as a world-view, it was an ideology of motivation rather than legitimization, and was transparent. Legitimacy was limited to official presentations. At the same time, the Soviet Union's own complex and varied historical experience shed quite a different light on the issue of sovereignty from the one that was available within Western historiography. On the whole, Soviet historiography concerning the India's process of state sovereignty formation has exhibited

the principles of a complicated interplay between ruling ideology and history-writing.

In this article, I have tried to place the problem of Indian state formation and sovereignty in the post-colonial period within a Soviet historiographical discourse in order to contribute to a more nuanced and practical understanding of how sovereignty-making processes provide the steps and conditions necessary for effective state building. This paper initially established that under the Soviet regime, the authorities and the historians came to an understanding; the authorities would strive to subordinate everything and the historians would make every effort to submit. This precluded the possibility of creative, independent thinking and fostered self-censorship, which for many historians to this day remains an even greater obstacle than the feudal dependence on party decisions.

The ideas and principles formulated within Soviet historiography had reached a full circle by the early 1960s. State building in a smooth and peaceful way was central to the post-colonial Indian transition. From a constructive point of view, the Indian political leadership had prioritized the peaceful and gradual transfer of power as a means to develop the Indian national identity, state and political status. As the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, observed, "History will fairly render to India and Britain for that Indian independence was achieved under mutually collaborated and friendly conditions". Gradually, even in the USSR, by the time of Stalin's death, further revisions of Soviet historiography had transformed the Soviet interpretation of the formation of the post-colonial Indian state into a new replica of the official Communist interpretation. It was eventually recognized that the transfer of power in the Indian sub-continent from a colonial status to the status of an independent sovereign republic had passed through a series of stages:

- Colony (exploited periphery)
- Dominion (transitional)
- Republic (sovereign and independent).

This allowed India to achieve peaceful transitions, necessary for a newly independent state.

NOTES

1. Soviet historiography perceived itself as a corrective to colonial history on India. For details on this subject, see, Antonova, T. S. (1991). *Otnosheniya mezhdru SSSR i Indiei* (Relationships between the USSR and India). Moscow: Nauka.
2. The Declaration of Independence of India represented an interim constitution, which comprised the British Act of Self-Governance of 1935 and the declaration itself.
3. Shortly before proclaiming independence, India established in April 1947 diplomatic relations with the USSR. On September 28th in Paris, Mr. Krishna Menon, the special envoy of Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mr. Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, reached an agreement on the export of Soviet grain in exchange for Indian tea. Nevertheless, relations between the two countries were far from being friendly. The impetuous growth of relations with India started after Stalin's death. For more details on this subject, see Antonova, T. S. (1991). *Otnosheniya mezhdru SSSR i Indiei* (Relationships between the USSR and India). Moscow: Nauka.
4. RBI: Report on the Survey of India's Foreign Liabilities and Assets as of 31st December 1955 (1958). Bombay: RBI.
5. For a further analysis of India's industrial and trade policies in the post-war period, see A. Kulnazarova (2001). *Indo-British Relations in 1946-1955 and the Formation process of Indian State Sovereignty* (Doctoral dissertation, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, 2001). Dissertation Abstracts Department, National Library of Kazakhstan, 2001. Part II, Chapter 1.

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