

December 22, 1967.

Accusing the Government of a tendency to lean over backwards to please the Soviet Government, Mr. M.R. Masani, Deputy Leader of the Swatantra Party, expressed the hope that no encouragement would be given to any attempt on the part of the Soviet Embassy to force Aziz Oulong-Zade to go back to the Soviet Union and that the Indian Government would follow the practice of all civilized countries and allow him full freedom of choice in regard to his future domicile.

Mr. Masani called for the revocation of the recent Novosti deal which he described as the latest act of appeasement of the Soviets and asked for an enquiry into the mysterious circumstances leading to its signature without the approval of the Cabinet or the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Novosti was an official information outfit of the Soviet dictatorship and was a cover for intelligence and espionage activities for which its representatives had been expelled from several countries including Kenya, Ghana, the Congo and Columbia. Novosti was one of the founders in July 1964 of a Radio Peace and Progress which had been carrying on offensive propaganda against leading political figures in India, including some Members of the Congress Government. Radio Peace and Progress had announced in their Swedish broadcast of 26th January, 1967 and the German broadcast of 19th October 1967 that Novosti was among the founders of their station. It was this disreputable outfit which the Agreement now sought to make respectable by agreeing to make available its effusions to the Indian press.

The Indian Press had performed a service in vigorously denouncing this agreement as a scandalous and dubious deal. It was a shame that the Indian Government agreed to become a broker of Soviet propaganda in this country.

Asking who authorised a junior official to go to Moscow and sign the agreement, Mr. Masani expressed his apprehension that certain pro-Soviet elements had infiltrated into the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of External Affairs and demanded an investigation. He recalled how the Voice of America deal had been scrapped under the plea that the Cabinet and the Prime Minister had not been consulted about it and how Minister and Secretary to Government were made scapegoats. The least the Government could do was to cancel the agreement. Otherwise, they would open themselves to the charge of reducing India to the level of the 13th Soviet satellite.

Mr. Masani next mentioned the visit paid to Moscow by the Prime Minister for the Soviet Anniversary celebrations for the second time within a month, while turning her back on the victims of Orissa cyclone. He and two of his colleagues had cautioned the Prime Minister against this step, warning that she might find herself in the company of Soviet satellites. This is precisely what actually happened later. By her act, the Prime Minister had lowered the prestige of her country and herself.

Mr. Masani then referred to the appointment of Mr. S.S. Dhawan as High Commissioner-designate in London and said, the Prime Minister was obviously ignorant of the facts when she told the Lok Sabha on November 27 that Mr. Dhawan's anti-British tirade had been made in the context of the Indo-Pakistan conflict in a moment of

excitement and that this was an isolated statement. The article was published in Blitz on 29th January, 1966, six months after the conflict and after the Tashkent Agreement had been signed. In the whole article, there was no reference to the Indo-Pak conflict, but only friendly words for Pakistan and the Tashkent Agreement. The fact was that Mr. Dhawan had been a consistent Communist fellow-traveller for the last two decades. His numerous articles written in the National Herald under the pseudonym of "Sanjaya" showed that he never deviated from the Russian line nor stopped his attacks on "British imperialism". He had even welcomed the Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet as the liberation of the Tibetan people and had objected to India making any protest. Last year, when he visited Moscow, he wrote an article in Blitz praising the Soviet judicial system and saying that the Soviet concept of Rule of Law was superior to the Indian because there was no Preventive Detention Act in that country! Who advised the Prime Minister to make such an appointment offensive to our British friends?

All this, according to Mr. Masani, showed the failure of the Government to understand the changing Moscow's attitude to India since 1965. Under pressure from Peking, Moscow was reverting to its subversive international role under Stalin. In its anxiety to accommodate Pakistan, which was leaning towards China, the Soviets were now edging away from this country. This explained the broadcasts over Radio Peace and Progress, the John Smith story and a great deal of dangerous and hostile propaganda against India in recent months.

Mr. Masani said this shift in Moscow's attitude was further to be discerned in the attitude of the Communist Parties in this country. The C.P(M), at its meeting in Calicut at the end of October, had accepted the charge of revisionism from its Naxa bari rebels and agreed to move further in the insurrectionary direction as reported by Mr. Sundariayya, its Secretary to the Press at the end of October. Both in Bengal and in Kerala, Naxalbari elements were taking over the CP(M). The Right Communist Party, in its desire not to have the ground slip from under its feet was moving in the same direction. At its recent meeting in Delhi, as the Left Communists, the CPI had reconsidered its attitude to parliamentary democracy and had sounded a warning that the normal ways of bourgeois parliamentary democracy would not be adequate for the coming phase in our national life. It had in consequence repudiated its hopeful friendship towards the Leftists among Congressmen and the Jan Sangh. The CPI organ, the New Age, was at pains to defend the CPI from the charge of following the peaceful and parliamentary path levelled against it by the CP(M) and had quoted from its Programme to show that Party was not wedded to the peaceful and parliamentary path. There was thus little to choose between the two Parties, and Rajaji was perfectly justified in demanding that both should be banned as they had become a clear danger to the security of India and its democratic Constitution.

While Mr. Masani ridiculed the objection that the Soviet Government would be antagonised if this step was taken, he pointed out that Nasser had banned the Communist Party in Egypt but the Soviet Union were going out of its way to give him arms and encouragement. The Soviets were to-day wooing Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, all of whom had banned the Communist Party. The decision as to whether this step should be taken was a domestic one and no foreign government could be given a veto in this regard.

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(A.P.J. Jain)