

October 26, 1962

**Entry from the Journal of Soviet ambassador to India
Benediktov, Conversation with General Secretary of
the Communist Party of India, E.M. Nambudiripad**

Citation:

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Summary:

Journal entry by Benediktov describing a conversation with General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, E.M. Nambudiripad. The encounter took place a day after the Soviet leadership had dramatically modified its policy on the Sino-Indian dispute (in an October 25 article in Pravda), suddenly taking a pro-China position, evidently due to the danger of global war breaking out as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, then peaking. While taking pains to welcome the Pravda article as helpful in correcting misunderstandings among Indian Communists, the CPI leader acknowledged that the party secretariat had concluded that "this publication in all probability will inaugurate a new period of anti-Soviet hysteria in India," pushing the Indian Government toward the West, and he pleaded with the Soviets to influence China to resolve the border dispute "without damage to the prestige of India and of Nehru himself."

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Today at my own initiative, fulfilling the commission of the CC CPSU, I met with E.M. Nambudiripad and informed him of the statement of the CC CPSU on the Indian-Chinese border conflict. He listened most attentively to the statement of the CC and promised immediately to convey its contents to the members of the secretariat of the National Council of the CPI.

Nambudiripad said that four members of the secretariat, who were in Delhi, today carefully studied and discussed at length the Pravda article of October 25 on the border question. "We ask that you transmit this to the CC CPSU, - he continued, - that the publication of this article and the advice of the CPSU contained in this letter of the CC CPSU, truly will help our party get out of the extremely difficult position it is now in. Before this [help] there were moments when we felt ourselves to be simply helpless, but now the party will be able to remedy this situation. We are grateful to the CC CPSU for this help; you can transmit this personally from me and from Comrade B. Gupta." He pointed out the whole array of difficulties the CPI faces in correcting its earlier positions and statements on the border question. The most typical mistake of many communists, in his words, is that they cannot clearly distinguish [between] patriotism and bourgeois nationalism. Some of the members of the party considered it possible [that there would be] support for the Indian position in this dispute from a number of communist parties of the socialist countries in light of the ideological differences between the CCP PRC and other fraternal parties, although - he continued, - I knew that this was impossible and incorrect. Moreover, it is very difficult in general to sharply reformulate the whole system of views on the border conflict held by members of the party, since these views in many cases were contradictory to those expressed in Pravda and in this letter of the CC CPSU. In particular, the CPI for three years considered the McMahon line the real border between the two states. Many rank and file members of the party and some members of the leading organs, in solidarity with the widespread opinion among the population, hold to the view that the PRC is [the] guilty [party] in the origin and exacerbation of the border conflict." "Undoubtedly the article in Pravda will have an influence on these comrades, he said, it will force them to think through the whole question again." Members of the secretariat Nair and Sharma at today's meeting pointed out that the Pravda article, while in fact criticizing the position of the Indian communists and India's relation to this question as a whole, did not express any critical comments with regard to the PRC and the Chinese comrades.

Nambudiripad reported that the secretariat of the CPI after the discussion of the Pravda article today reached the conclusion that "this publication in all probability will inaugurate a new period of anti-Soviet hysteria in India." The campaign that is going on everywhere against the PRC will, obviously, be extended to the Soviet Union, and then to all countries of the socialist system....He expressed the opinion of the secretariat that in connection with this statement of the Soviet press and in connection with the pressure on India from many neutral countries regarding a more rapid peaceful settlement of this conflict, the Indian government...can reach the conclusion that only western countries are our true friends...

"In this connection we very much would like to find out if Soviet leaders could help the CPI give an understanding to the Chinese comrades that it is extremely desirable to give the possibility to Nehru to move toward peace negotiations and cease military actions without damage to the prestige of India and of Nehru himself, - Nambudiripad stated. The Secretariat has unanimously reached the conclusion that such a step by the PRC would have a huge significance for the cause of world peace, for all progressive forces, for the anti-imperialist struggle..."

[Source: AVPRF, f. 090, op. 24, d. 6, p. 80, ll. 134-139; document obtained by J. Hershberg; translation by K. Weathersby.]