

Soviet Military Intervention in Czechoslovakia and Revisionism

The commotion over the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 had brought in its wake open controversies within the communist parties in different countries, while the imperialists did not fail to utilize the issue to step up their tirade against communism. Confusion had swamped the rank and file communists in our country, too, as elsewhere.

Comrade Ghosh, in this discussion, answered a host of questions raised by comrades and showed the root cause behind this incident.

Comrades,

I have for long been listening to many a question that have come up at this meeting of the party workers convened to discuss the issue of the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia. So, it may be that while I discuss, some important questions are left out inadvertently. If that happens, please do point it out.

I want to emphasize a point at the very outset. While examining this issue, if we do not keep in mind the analysis and the stand of our party on the communist movement in the present international situation, especially the party's analysis in its totality regarding the problems and complexities arising in the communist movement at present as also the danger of modern revisionism, somehow or other, we are apt to commit mistakes. That is, even if our analysis is correct in the main, the possibility remains of our committing some mistakes while examining the issue, or of emphasis being misplaced while assessing the importance of a particular aspect of it. I think, in one sense, the issue has come up in a quite simple and straightforward way. There is not much complexity about it, although a world-wide furore has been raised. If you note critically, you would realize that this commotion has been created largely in the capitalist-imperialist world. Also, this issue as an important question has created a considerable stir among those who are called revisionists in the communist movement, whom we, too, consider revisionists. The Communist Party of China, the Albanian Party of Labour, and I think those who are still guarding the bastion of the basic revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism in different countries and have been carrying the basic revolutionary fervour and tuning — whatever be their shortcomings and limitations — to them the issue has not been a matter of great concern, nor does it appear as a very surprising development so as to cause a tremendous stir.

Soviet revisionism basically responsible

In fact, it is essential to understand clearly the revisionist outlook of the present Soviet leadership which is the basic problem as also the basic factor behind the Czechoslovak incident. All of you present here have heard our party's stand many a time, and yourselves know that the present Soviet leadership has been treading the revisionist path. What do we mean by this? We mean that, by disregarding the law of socialist economic development in their bid to anyhow increase production, they are virtually fostering the capitalist trend and tendency and have thereby not only given the scope of revival to the social force which sustains capitalism, but have actually walked into its trap, although this social force had not totally died out there but had diminished almost to the stage of elimination. How far alignment or conscious

agreement with the imperialists outside or their machinations have been operative or active in this regard — our party has never shown any interest in it. Our party has, however, shown that so long as correct implementation of the law of socialist economic development had not allowed any impairment of the fundamental revolutionary role of the Soviet Union, despite some mistakes and shortcomings here and there, the political structure, the character of the Soviet state and of the party, its basic international revolutionary role, everything stood on a firm footing; but now, this economic outlook and approach which is unscientific and has come about disregarding the law of socialist economic development, has in effect struck at the very roots. This tendency is the basis of the theory behind the political practice now prevailing in the Soviet Union.

Root of tendency of capitalist restoration

Why has this come about ? The seeds of capitalism which had lost effectiveness and were dying — how did these get revived and sprout up ? Not only have these sprouted up at present and appeared as a tendency, may not be a dominant tendency, but all this reflects a powerful trend tarnishing the image of the whole party and socialism itself. In fact, in the political analysis of the world situation, economic condition and economic relations by the Soviet leadership, this very thing has happened to some extent. They are denigrating Marxism, and the thinking they are reflecting in the name of Marxism is wrong. Our party had come to a conclusion about the root cause of these mistakes. We had observed that the role of the present immature political leadership there was acting as a cause behind all this and had brought about all this. This economic force did not grow and develop just by its own law. This tendency, which I call the capitalist tendency, had been suppressed and was almost on the verge of elimination in the Soviet Union, but still it was there. For instance, the system of collective farming is there and also production of commodities and commodity circulation and the existence of individual property like houses, money, bank deposits, etc. The law of value is operative there. All this shows that the seeds of private property have not been destroyed there. And so long as these seeds remain, the tendency of capitalist restoration in the economy would also be there. But the present Soviet leadership does not accept this. They think that since the state ownership over industry still holds sway, the capitalistic tendency cannot come back in any way. But all those acquainted with the theory of scientific socialism and its economic principles know that this is nothing but hollow logic. On this, Lenin has repeatedly cautioned that even after the socialist revolution and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, so long as small production is not totally eliminated, so long as private property exists in any form without complete transformation into social ownership, and commodity production and circulation are also there, the seeds of capitalism remain embedded within society. And as long as these remain, the tendency of restoration of capitalism remains. But the more the consolidation and victories of socialism, the more this tendency loses its strength, the more cornered it becomes in the economic sphere and loses its power to attack, resist and bring about counter-revolution, although the class struggle becomes more intense and acute and assumes a more subtle form in the superstructure, that is, in the ideological and cultural spheres. The significance of Lenin's observation that the attacks of the bourgeoisie increase tenfold after they are thrown out of power lies precisely here. People all over the world and we, too, believe that the counter-revolutionary forces were almost totally routed in the economic sphere in the Soviet Union. Even those criticizing socialism today believe this. The political strength on the side of

revolution, the strength of human endeavour, the strength of organization and ideology — through all this the socialist society was built up on the basis of the correct realization of the economic laws during Stalin's time so that although the seeds of capitalism still remained embedded in the economic relationship, their power of resistance had become nearly insignificant. A time had come when the Soviet Union was contemplating attainment of a classless society, at least economically, in the internal sphere by completing the process of establishing social ownership over the whole economy and by totally eliminating the system of commodity production and distribution. That is, plans were being contemplated in order that the Soviet Union could be taken along to what Stalin termed 'the first stage of communism'. At such a time, just because of a loophole, the tiny seed of capitalism which was the negative aspect in the economic sphere, which existed with contradiction not fully resolved — what a calamity came about through it !

Collective farming is not necessarily social ownership

I want to emphasize another point here. Many comrades bear a notion that collective farming is perhaps social ownership. In some earlier discussions, although I had not the occasion to discuss with all comrades, I found even many leading comrades suffering from this confusion. No, collective farming is not social ownership. The collective farm represents an admixture of two types of ownership in the transitional phase before attaining total social ownership — an admixture where there is socialist ownership to some extent but there is also some continuity of and hangover from the erstwhile private ownership. State farming denotes total transformation into social ownership. The process of this transformation in agriculture is to pass from individual farming to co-operative farming, from co-operative farming to collective farming and then from collective farming to state farming. The characteristic feature of collective farming is that the peasants are not owners of the land, nor do they own the implements and machineries, the fertilizers and seeds which they use to grow crops or increase the yield but they own the crops produced. Besides, there are other properties owned by some collective farms — poultry, livestock and such like — which are their own properties. So, collective farming was there in the Soviet Union and even co-operative farming had not been totally abolished in all the republics there. That is why, in the historic booklet *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* which Stalin wrote before his death and on the eve of the 19th Congress of the CPSU, he discussed in detail about setting in motion an economic process to bring up the co-operative farms totally to the stage of collective farms and then to transform the collective farms totally to the stage of state farms.

This document was being viewed as the guideline for the period of transition from socialism to the first stage of communism, that is, as charting the path to attain communism. In this, by explaining lucidly and elaborately from the theoretical standpoint, Stalin showed the then economic problems in the Soviet Union, the inherent contradictions in the Soviet economy, the socialist production relation that had been established there at the outset and how, where and in which condition it was now acting as a break upon subsequent development and advancement of the socialist economic production. The main point is not whether there are slight errors here and there or whether inadequacies are there in the terminology of this document. We have supported this document, praised it wholeheartedly and hailed it as a brilliant and magnificent piece of analysis of the economic system of the then Soviet society.

Why revisionism came in

Now, if anybody thinks from this that revisionism came about in the Soviet Union all of a sudden just because the seeds of capitalism were there, then that would be a one-sided analysis, that would be subscribing to sheer economic determinism. Much harm has been done by such analysis in the name of Marxism and the same will continue if this approach persists. It is true that the economic base reflects the reality of the situation in priority. But we should always keep in view the contradiction between and the mutual disposition of the economic base and the superstructure, that is, the realm of ideas of society. While proceeding to analyse, we consider the material condition prior and so consider the economic system as the base. But it is not that the economic base alone and automatically determines everything. The Marxist conception is not like this. As the socialist productive system and production relation keep on changing qualitatively and advance, as the productive forces go on increasing and the distribution system improves, as people's living standard improves and the disparity of income between the high income and low income groups of people diminishes, it does not happen that all this automatically moulds the spiritual world, that is, the realm of idea and culture. Had it been so, then at this advanced stage of socialism, the level of consciousness of the Soviet leadership and the party rank and file, that is, of the whole party, would have risen automatically. So, the Marxist theory is not that the intellectual faculty automatically changes with the advancement of the economic system and with the change in the material conditions. The theory means that it is the material condition which is prior ; unless the material condition is changed, or in the absence of a congenial material condition, an intellectual faculty does not make its appearance. But it should be borne in mind that the intellectual faculty has a role to play in moulding the objective situation, because the intellectual faculty influences the material condition as well. This is why, as the material condition changes, the struggle to advance the intellectual faculty in conformity with the changing condition is to be conducted. Otherwise, a total reversal may take place, as we witness in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union which was to have passed on from the socialist economy to the first stage of the communist economy, that is, to have adopted the programme of completing the socialist transformation, has gone back today and introduced the capitalist incentive system, has opened the door of capitalist tendency and speculation, expanded the orbit of private property and commodity circulation and enhanced the influence of private ownership even more. Had it been that the intellectual faculty automatically grows in conformity with the material conditions then how could such ideological degeneration, retrogression and low standard of consciousness, which we have marked from another angle as the root cause of revisionism, have come about even after such advancement of the socialist economy there ? It has happened because thought or idea is playing a role here and this reacts on the material condition. It is not that ideas are changing automatically along with changes in the economic base. If ideas remain at a low standard then that low standard of thought must react dialectically with its base. As a result, it influences the environment and degenerates the system and this is what is happening in the Soviet Union.

It should also be borne in mind that this revisionism could appear because the economic ingredients conducive to breeding of revisionism were there. Had there been no such economic elements in the society, this phenomenon could not have appeared there. But just the economic ingredients by themselves could not have brought it about automatically ; revisionism did not have the ability to come about this way. It is the low level of consciousness that increased this tendency. Such a serious development which could not occur earlier in the Soviet Union despite this

low level could now occur just because of the absence of a particular leadership. There have been many a mistake even in Stalin's time because of the general low level of consciousness, but these could not strike at the very roots. In the absence of that particular leadership, however, this tendency went on gaining in strength gradually because of the low level of consciousness, culminating in such a situation. But even the fact that it was increasing could not be detected owing, again, to that low level of consciousness. So, the point is not just that this tendency increases if the level of consciousness goes down. One more thing is associated — even this aggravation cannot be detected until it reveals itself in a naked, ugly form.

What do I want to indicate by 'naked' ? It is that individualism, by its slogans and activities, is not revealing itself in such a manner that those who understand revolution and revolutionary theories in terms of the old Marxist vocabulary can detect it. Therefore, so long as its ugly form has not been revealed in such a manner that it can be easily recognized as revisionism, even the communists the world over could not detect its character. We are talking of it so much today, but how far had we ourselves been able to detect it ? We must admit that we, too, could not detect it, although we had earlier observed the low ideological standard in the international communist movement. But to realize correctly the mental make-up pervading the CPSU, even at the level of its Central Committee, was beyond our comprehension too.

And so long as Khrushchev did not come out in the open in all his manifestations, we could not realize it. It was very difficult for us to understand it before that. We could sense nothing in fact. But it is not true that our party, while projecting Stalin as a great leader, did not refer to his mistakes and shortcomings even amidst the great victories of socialism during his time and the shouts of hurrah and eulogy by others. By referring to the prevailing mechanical process of thinking and the low standard of consciousness in the communist movement, we have been repeatedly sounding notes of caution for long. We have observed that the communist movement and the socialist economy were advancing and so also science, technology and production, and the Soviet society was economically advancing towards socialism but simultaneously with these the ideological and cultural standard of consciousness was going down instead.

Need to enrich Marxism

So we see that all this happens because of the low level of consciousness and herein lies the root cause of the present developments in the Soviet Union. In order to prevent this, it was necessary to maintain a high and adequate ideological and cultural standard of consciousness by conducting cultural revolution and ideological struggle ceaselessly within the party, on the one hand, while on the other, it was necessary to develop and enrich Marxism continually, not only in the economic and political sphere but also for confronting the newer and newer problems arising in the changed condition in human life. The Marxist theories were once developed on the basis of the understanding of the then problems. But many new developments have taken place after the revolution which were unknown earlier. Although these could be grasped through logic of probability, the content, form and character of these had not been known earlier. So, there comes the question of knowing all these correctly. Nobody can understand the character of problems for all time to come. After the revolution, the communist movement and its ideological struggle were confronted with a number of new and complex situations centring round the social problems, problems in human life, economic problems and the like. If answers are sought only from quotations and

views of the old leadership danger arises. This is one of the reasons behind the disconcerting developments in the Soviet Union although it is not the only reason. This is the nature of the pedants, of the quotation-mongers who cannot see anything beyond this. They judge the new situation on the basis of old statements and old quotations. They forget that despite being tested through movements for long, the understanding of a quotation formulated in the context of the concrete analysis of a concrete situation of the past cannot remain as it was earlier. So, its understanding may undergo lots of change. Therefore, in order to evolve a generalized concept about this quotation even, Marxism should be enriched further, and the theoretical understanding should be heightened too. Otherwise, this danger is bound to arise, and it cannot be left to the personal ability of an individual, that is, to how he argued or how he understood it through his subjective reasoning. The Marxist philosophy is not such a system of logic in which an individual adduces logic and lays down things as he feels, because it is often found that a reasoning or mode of reasoning, although apparently sounding very logical, does not in reality reflect the truth. But search for truth is the very basis of Marxism. So the Marxist reasoning is a dialectical one which examines every phenomenon in the midst of contradictions following the dialectical law. No conclusion arrived at through reasoning, nor the methodology of reasoning can run counter to these laws although there may be a contradiction between the general truth and the particular truth arising out of a particular concrete situation. Such contradiction is mutually conducive and never assumes an antagonistic character. If we guide reasoning through this process, our conception is bound to advance continually. So, we have to judge matter or any phenomenon not in isolation but in the midst of contradictions, that is unity and struggle or twists and turns through which all events are taking place, because existence of any entity means it exists in contradiction.

Stalin an exemplary communist character

But while analysing we often lose sight of this aspect. Incidentally, I want to draw your attention to another point. Probably many of you know that we have our analysis on the Stalin period in the Soviet Union. First, those who are vociferous about the misdeeds, errors and lapses during Stalin's time, and even those who speak of Stalin's mistakes while opposing revisionism, have put the cart before the horse. That is, they have set upon judging mistakes without going into the causes for which a mistake could occur. Or else, they are judging mistakes through fanciful arguments. Even after lots of discussion on this, I have noticed this in bits and snatches of talks of our comrades. They, too, have some hazy, ambiguous ideas regarding either individual worship or personality cult — whatever it is — and personal ideas about what is good or bad which reflects a tendency of fanciful subjective thinking on their part. The manner they label a particular act of Stalin as bad and lay great stress on it at a particular moment is the manifestation of this tendency. But they forget that his merits far outweigh his faults and because of the great preponderance of his good qualities over the bad, on the whole he was truly great. Our party has shown that his shortcomings were practically negligible compared to his overall excellence.

So, there is no question of maligning Stalin. His position in the world communist movement is still that of a giant, powerful and exemplary communist character. He is still our teacher and leader. Yes, he had some demerits. We, the dialectical materialists, know that man is but embodiment of both good and bad qualities. Therefore, we judge a man by the relative disposition of his good and bad qualities. If we call a man faultless, we thereby deny dialectical materialism itself. We, the

dialectical materialists, do not consider any human being faultless. But by this, some may think that a revolutionary, too, has bad qualities. No; the matter cannot be understood in this way, because in a revolutionary the good qualities pattern his total self, even the aspect of his demerits, as a result of which his faults cannot come to the fore. When the demerits overshadow the merits and come to the fore, then there is problem and the revolutionary starts degenerating.

Start from one's merits, not from demerits

So, there are merits as well as demerits even in a revolutionary. But the revolutionary, by dint of good qualities in his character and through ceaseless struggles to augment his good qualities, patterns, channels and changes even his bad qualities in the mould of his good ones. Another thing to be borne in mind in this context is that any two persons, each with his own merits and demerits, constitute two different entities. They are never one and the same in toto and what may be a drawback or demerit in a great man, may be considered a merit in a lesser man. Conversely, what may be a good quality in a lesser man may be considered a demerit in a great man. Be that as it may, within the overall structure of a man with his good and bad sides, we assess his qualities by examining the contradiction of good and bad in him on the basis of the good ones; thus we evaluate him on the basis of his good qualities and act on this basis to ultimately eradicate the bad quality in him. That is, we analyse in detail his character by accepting his merits, but at the same time we do not disregard the aspect of his demerits. Because, if we are to examine the good qualities, we cannot do so properly unless we examine the same in the context of their contradiction with the bad qualities. So, if we want to discuss the good qualities, the question of the demerits comes in automatically. Therefore, there is no need to find out the demerits separately. That is why, dialectical materialists should proceed from the aspect of merits. Otherwise, it serves no purpose and becomes useless. But when the majority of comrades assess others, I find that their main tendency is to discuss the shortcomings of others. We do not usually see the aspect of good qualities. If we do not keep in view the good aspect, then while discussing the bad aspect we should at once remember that our discussion will become purposeless. In that case, we have no right to criticize others. Those who gossip, get satisfaction in criticizing others in aimless discussions, take pleasure in slighting others, show off their own credit by pointing out the faults of others and indirectly seek to show themselves to be a little superior — it is only they who judge a man by his faults alone and discuss only his demerits. What is the use of a discussion based on the bad aspect only? Do we want to take pleasure by showing what fools the others are? Or do we want to establish how wise we are? Otherwise, why do we discuss only the aspect of shortcomings of others? If the object of our discussion is to rectify the shortcomings of others, then we should remember that it is not possible to eradicate the shortcomings by harping on the faults unless we start from the merits. We can remove the faults of someone only by trying to help him flourish his good qualities. So, we should always lay stress on the qualities of a man and not start from his faults. If we do so, no purpose is served by discussing his faults with him.

I elaborated this point a bit because this tendency is often found among the comrades when they talk among themselves. Whenever a comrade has some difference with another comrade or detects a fault in him in some respect, he cannot maintain balance regarding whether the shortcomings of the other comrade, howsoever serious these may seem, constitute his major aspect or his good qualities outweigh his shortcomings; that is, how much is his good aspect and how much the

bad — should not this sense of proportion be there while judging him ? While judging someone's shortcomings, even as we may stress these, we must take into account his good qualities; otherwise, our discussion loses all purpose, no matter whether the shortcoming is minor or major. So, unless we keep the purpose in view and assess the good and bad qualities in one on the basis of the dialectical relationship between the two, we will not be able to evaluate anyone correctly. You will see the significance of this point later in this discussion. What the CPC has been saying about the Soviet role and what I shall say in this discussion — I think they are, in the main, the same. But there will be a difference in the manner of how we place our viewpoints. This difference stems from this specific point, this particular approach — from nothing else. That is, a tendency is there in the CPC's criticism, for which, even if there is a bit of good aspect of the Soviet leadership, it is escaping their attention entirely. As for us, we are taking note of that good aspect also. May be, we are viewing the matter wrongly. If anybody points to any error in our thinking, we shall examine the same. But I feel that there is some positive aspect and it would be a mistake not to take note of it. But to take note, it is necessary to remain free from any bias. Otherwise, the very purpose of our discussion would be defeated, the discussion would be fruitless.

Now, it is not possible to enter here into a critical evaluation of the economic policies adopted by Khrushchev in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. But I have pointed out earlier that the capitalist relation or the private property was there in the Soviet economy as remnants, not as the dominant feature of the economy. These remnants did not have the power to resist or to come to the forefront as a major force by organizing its own political strength. Economically, the Soviet Union had come to the threshold of transformation into total social ownership, that is, the private ownership and the collective farming still existing to an extent, had almost reached a point awaiting their transformation into social ownership. The country which had advanced to this stage got bogged down in revisionism like this. Otherwise, they would have been able to examine properly the great success as well as some shortcomings and mistakes during Stalin's time and correctly evaluate these. Taking this opportunity, revisionism crept in. They reduced the policy of peaceful co-existence to one of peaceful capitulation, turning the policy on war and peace, which is an invincible weapon of struggle for the Marxists in this era, into a bourgeois humanist utopian dream of pacifism; it became a utopian ideology, deceiving the common masses, drawing applause from the not-so-conscious majority of people in the capitalist world to the delight of the reactionaries. Because, the reactionaries are very conscious about their class interest. They notice and correctly assess the dividends they can reap from this Soviet policy. So the reactionaries, too, are adopting various stratagems from behind to make sure that the Soviet Union continues to pursue this policy. The common people — those who are not conscious — cannot grasp the complexities and subtleties of revolution. They aspire for revolution in a general way, but various ideas like liberalism, democracy, individual freedom and individual emancipation jumble up their thinking; in so many ways are they victims of the bourgeois-petty bourgeois so-called liberal thinking and concepts. They do not have the ability to grasp these complex matters. What to say of others, even many in the revolutionary movement have themselves fallen victim to individualism and egocentricism.

Even a revolutionary may fall victim to individualism

You should know that it is always possible, in fact is happening so often that a revolutionary worker in fields and factories, among peasants and workers, himself becomes a total victim of egocentricism, liberalism and ultra-democratic concepts.

There is no reason, therefore, to think that one becomes fully free from the vile influence of the bourgeois ideology just because one believes in revolution, or is in the midst of working class movement and is a member of the communist party. You would often come across comrades amongst us, too, who may be good comrades but are in the habit of making comparisons between one comrade and another, one leader and another, and all that. They advance arguments, too, that they do not do this for establishing their own superiority or for belittling others; that they do not want to slight or puff up anybody, but these are necessary for a correct evaluation. On analysis, however, it would be found that these tall talks or so-called progressive talks are just a cover. What mentality do they reflect really by this? They do not consciously know the nature of competition in capitalism, the desire of each for survival and for going ahead of others; that is, a latent individualism and ego-centricism take them to this course. But they put a coating of progressivism on that mentality. So even when they praise others under the influence of the overall party environment, they do so mechanically. Or else, by invoking progressiveness and democracy and in the name of collective leadership, they even deny the necessity of giving proper recognition to the role of the individual and fail to respond in taking individual initiative. What does all this prove? It proves how subtly a man becomes victim of the bourgeois-petty bourgeois liberal ideology even after he has learnt the revolutionary theory, even as he dreams of revolution and stays honest.

I can cite a lot of instances in this connection. But we don't have the scope here for a detailed discussion on it. Take just a single instance. You would find many leaders who talk big but have not been able to give up many things personal. When asked, they say that they have not given these up since the party has not asked them to. There is no reason to suppose that there is none among us who wants to be a leader but does not think like this. I am very much against concealing anything. I simply fail to understand why the party would have to ask them to give up. If they consider it unethical, an undue privilege, something unfair, if they feel what they practise is not in keeping with what they profess, then why should they wait for others to ask them to give up? On their own they should give up voluntarily.

They should retain these only if the party instructs them to. Why have not they given up on their own? When asked this question, they say that they are willing to give up and will do so as soon as the party asks them to. Maybe, they would give up, but it would be seen then they would be after others elsewhere and harass them if those others had not similarly given up their personal things. They would not stand even the slightest advantage those others enjoyed. What does it prove? It proves that the influence of bourgeois individualism and egocentricism persists even after they have accepted the communist ideology and are in the midst of the revolutionary movement; these may persist very subtly even in men at the higher levels in the party, but does it *ipso facto* prove that they have ceased to be revolutionaries? Or is it the point that if they are revolutionaries then why they are victims of this individualism? Yes, these are their shortcomings. But are we to view these shortcomings only? No, we are also to take note of the good qualities in them; so long as there is hope that they are revolutionaries and will play their roles as revolutionaries, although we cannot totally eradicate the shortcomings, we keep the struggle alive to overcome the defects, encourage and stress the good aspect and judge them on this basis. But when we stress the good aspect, don't we, at the same time also keep in mind their shortcomings? It follows that we do so, no doubt. If at a certain time it is found that someone's demerits have become dominant, spoiling the good qualities, then there

would be no other way and we would have to take some steps against him. But we are to remember that these considerations are there.

Cause of infiltration of bourgeois liberalism in communist movement

So, we see that many fall victim to the bourgeois ideology, even remaining in the midst of the revolutionary movement. With the general lowering of the level of consciousness in the communist movement at present, this influence of diverse bourgeois, petty bourgeois liberal ideas has assumed a serious dimension in the revolutionary movement. Naturally, when the Soviet leadership resorted to the revisionist course, adopted a revisionist theory on the question of war and peace and in effect reduced the policy of peaceful co-existence to a policy of peaceful capitulation, many revolutionaries who really believe in revolution, accepted it as a revolutionary theory. It is not that all of them have supported it from some dishonest motive. But how can the general cadres and the students and youths who are working selflessly day and night for revolution in those parties whose leaderships have turned bureaucratic and have made leadership a privilege, accept this revisionist line as revolutionary? Why do they fail to detect revisionism? All will argue that this is because of the low level of their theoretical understanding. Right, but what is the reason for this low level of theoretical understanding? If somebody thinks that they cannot grasp the phenomenon as they have not memorized quotations from Lenin and Stalin, then that, too, would be a mistake. Because the CPC is upholding the very same teachings before them quite emphatically, and we, too. But still, these teachings do not attract them very much because they carry in them an attraction for the bourgeois-petty bourgeois liberal ideas due to their low level of consciousness. For example, many have hailed the policy of liberalism from devilish mentality, but many democrats and common people, too, have supported it unwittingly. It is not that all welcomed it from an ulterior motive. Such an analysis is wrong. Many of them have accepted it as correct that there should not be infringement of individual liberty. If just this is ensured, then whatever misgivings are there about communism among them and among the common people would be dispelled. Many people have hailed the Czechoslovak incident from this angle, because they do not have the ability or the level of consciousness to analyse the class desire at work behind the questions thrown up over this incident, their true essence and what these reflect. That is why they are viewing the issue in this way.

‘Socialism comes from without’

What do we learn then? It is not enough to be in the revolutionary movement, the working class movement. One should have a clear idea about the aims and objectives of these movements. We are organizing the movements, struggling and raising political slogans. What for all this? The purpose is to uphold the politics of the proletariat, but if we just anyhow conduct economic and democratic movements, will the proletarian politics emerge automatically? It is true that everything develops from struggle but that does not mean that all kinds of things develop from the same type of struggle for establishing the politics of the proletariat too. This does not emerge automatically out of the day-to-day democratic movements. That is why Lenin said: “Socialism comes from without”. ‘Without’ here does not mean ‘without anything’ or ‘out of nothing’. By this ‘without’ he sought to mean a particular category of movement, a political-ideological-cultural movement. Contrasting this with the workers’ movement, the spontaneous movement that develops centring round economic demands, he said that it was a utopia to think that socialist consciousness,

socialist ideology and the conception about the dictatorship of the proletariat or proletarian centralism would develop automatically among the workers through these struggles. This can never happen. This consciousness comes from without and this is a completely different struggle. For example, in science, the struggle to establish a scientific theory and the struggle to develop machineries using the theory — both are struggles of science and both constitute what we call practice. In one, theory is developed through experiments and researches in the laboratories. What do the scientists research on in the laboratory? They research on matter, elements, their properties, etc. The scientists are directly in contact with these, in struggle with these. In doing such research they are sometimes even risking their lives. In the other struggle, various machines are being invented applying these theories, and advancement in technology, production and human life is taking place.

But, by struggle, some leaders mean only one type of struggle. These leaders who have reduced leadership to a privilege are encouraging the cadres irrationally in that particular type of struggle only, counting on their sincerity and militant temperament. They are throwing a slogan of movement to the workers and peasants, formulating it from the top. But whether the ideology on which the movement will develop is correct or not — where is the struggle for realization of this? Will it automatically come from these movements, or is there any struggle prior to the development of the theory itself? Just as theory evolves from struggle, so also goes on the struggle to apply theory in practice. Again, as experience is gained through the struggle to apply theory, so grows and intensifies the struggle to improve or change theory and in this way the conception of theory becomes more and more clear. So, whether the base political line is correct or not is to be examined first and foremost. This is the fundamental question. This question of examining theory is fundamental and has priority over what we understand as practice, what we may call objective practice or crude practice to distinguish it from theory. There are teachings of both Lenin and Stalin on this expressed in different forms. Lenin said that without a revolutionary theory, there could not be a revolutionary party. Again, Stalin observed that “Theory without practice is sterile and practice without theory is blind.” That is, if practice is divorced from theory, if it is not founded on revolutionary theory, then it becomes blind practice; again, if the theoretical struggle is divorced from practice, that is, if it is not constantly aimed at application, if it is not implemented or if the masses cannot be enthused by that theory, then that theory becomes sterile. That is, if the struggle to develop or advance the theory becomes isolated from the struggle to apply that theory in practice, then that theory itself becomes sterile.

Ideological struggle neglected

I discuss these points because in the Soviet Union, not only that the same degree of emphasis and same importance as given to the struggle to increase production in the economic field and the struggle for advancement of technology, have not been given to the struggle for ideological, political and cultural advancement, the latter have actually been neglected. Otherwise, remnants of capitalism in the economic field there, which had almost reached the stage of elimination did not have the power of resistance or the capacity to come to the forefront as a major force by organizing its own political strength — I have repeatedly tried to show that behind the degeneration there the role of the political leadership has been the major factor. What I wanted to show was that what came about in the Soviet Union was not economic determinism. Yet those who call themselves Marxists and claim that they do not subscribe to the theory of economic determinism, try to show mechanically even after saying this, that

unless the economic base was like that, how could the ideological standard fall down? If with a view to correctly resolving the contradiction between the economic situation and the ideological standard in keeping with the growth, transformation and change in character of the economy in conformity with and conducive to these, another ideological struggle is not released consciously and immediately, then it is not as if that ideological struggle would grow of its own just because production has been patterned anew. No, what is needed for this is effort and initiative. Intellectual faculty inevitably develops on the base of the material condition — the understanding of this postulate of Marx is not mechanical like this. From such misconception, many pundits have reached the conclusion that Marxism is economic determinism. No, Marxism is not economic determinism. Since Marxism considers the material condition to be prior for emergence of idea, it puts great and the main stress on the analysis of the economic situation. But it does not put that emphasis always and in all conditions. Had it been so, then the October Revolution would not have been a socialist revolution, Lenin could not have concluded the stage of Russian revolution to be socialist and deduced the *April Thesis* in spite of the economic situation and the agricultural system there being in the stage of bourgeois democratic revolution. No genuine Marxist does approach such questions in this way. I dwelt on this aspect because such things do happen.

Had these points been clear, then many comrades could have broadly answered in a few words the questions that have been raised over the Czechoslovak problem. I have already said that the issue is not so much puzzling. Only one aspect is really important, that is the aspect of the difference in approach between our party and the CPC. There are no other really important points involved in this. I have noted the nature of questions many comrades have raised here. They should understand that if we analyse the Czechoslovak incident in isolation, basing ourselves just on the events and information there, we would be simply carried away by this. While analysing the issue, we should understand that it has come about as a consequence of pursuing some definite policies, that is, there is a root cause for it. If we understand the cause leading to the Czechoslovak incident, then the problem becomes clear and there remains no particular need to rack our brains. One point, however, remains after that, which is important and about which there may still be some confusion. It is about whether the Soviet intervention has been appropriate or not, whether there was any necessity for this intervention. But there should not have been any confusion in understanding why the incident occurred and the questions should not have been raised in this manner. The questions have come because the comrades have not been able to properly grasp the different aspects of what gave birth to the Soviet revisionism or what were its underlying causes. They say that revisionism appeared, but they do not properly understand why it has happened so.

So, the seeds of capitalism were there in the social, mental make-up and in the economic sphere, too, in the Soviet Union. But as I have already said, it is not that revisionism came about just because the ingredients of capitalism existed in the economy. You ought to remember that revisionism appeared there through a party with a great history, a party that had worked with a powerful leader like Stalin as the concretized expression of the collective leadership. What a catastrophe befell it in spite of having such a powerful leadership at the top! The emergence of an individual leader like Lenin, Stalin or Mao Zedong in the collective leadership as a cementing and unifying personality, co-ordinating all the particular knowledges, does not happen always. But in Russia, even after the demise of Lenin, one more such leader had emerged. Although many people have misgiving about Stalin, we have none of that.

But we find that during the leadership of Stalin himself, some mistakes and shortcomings began to occur and as no struggle was conducted to uplift the level of consciousness as required, this standard began to slide down gradually. And as the level of consciousness goes down, the seeds of capitalism in the economy get the opportunity to flourish and the capitalist tendency hidden in social life in the superstructure — even among the communists in their cultural realm — goes on increasing. These cannot be detected from the overall socialist construction and programme, support to revolution, strengthening the anti-imperialist struggle, holding aloft the peace policy, condemning war, advocating class struggle, and phrasemongering against the bourgeoisie. But where the private ownership has not been totally eliminated, many a complication would be generated in the mental make-up if the consciousness is at a low level. The influence of individualism would go on increasing surreptitiously. This influence of individualism, individualistic mentality which grows in the socialist environment, although not exactly the rank egocentricism of the bourgeois society, is nevertheless the cult of individualism. The hangover of individualism from the old society still persists within the socialist society. It has certain differences in form and character with the bourgeois individualism, but it is individualism, a continuation of the old one. In adjusting to the new environment, it has merely changed its outer shell, expression, phraseology and mode of existence.

On theory and practice

So, Marxism is not economic determinism. It is due to the mechanical way in which theory and practice have been understood that such a catastrophe as this has come about. Generalization of experiences of such a vast socialist construction and advancement as in the Soviet Union cannot be achieved without an all-out struggle for theoretical advancement which “comes from without”, a struggle of a different type, not just an economic one. By combining these two, that is theory and practice, we get the total human practice, the struggle of a communist party in its totality. This has been neglected in the Soviet Union. Although nobody denies its necessity, no stress was given on this. Why not ? That theory and practice are inextricably linked up with each other, theory without practice is sterile and practice without theory is blind practice — all these are teachings of Stalin. But although so much was known about theory and practice and such a lucid expression by Stalin was there, the understanding was not clear in the Soviet Union that the mutual relationship of theory and practice is such that these two are dependent on each other — one cannot do without the other. The correct realization of this is that these two are two aspects of the same human practice, two aspects of contradictions — contradictions which are conducive to each other. If the contradictions become antagonistic instead of being mutually conducive, then practice would become blind and the theory sterile — they would not help each other. So, we see that these two aspects of human practice are in contradiction with each other, influencing each other and conducive to each other. But a prior condition, that is, a precondition for practice has been laid down. What is it ? It is the advent of consciousness that has been put as prior to practice. And this consciousness which is reflected in the theory, is to be judged by the yardstick of practice. This is what is called criterion of practice. But this practice is not crude practice. It has been viewed as total human practice, comprising both the subjective and the objective practices. Now, while explaining the role of the subject, many people sink into subjectivism. Because they sink into subjectivism or subjective reasoning, they fail to find out the role of the object. But after appearance of consciousness, that is, after contradiction between mind and matter begins, the role of the subject in influencing the object

cannot be denied. Not only that the material condition is shaping the subject, the subject, too, is acting upon the material condition, changing it and causing twists and turns.

It is essential, therefore, to develop the correct understanding of the mutual relationship between theory and practice, enrich Marxism making its understanding up to date in conformity with the changed situation and further develop those theories of Marxism which are still valid. For instance, the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the inevitability of establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat as the culmination of class struggle and its role as the main bulwark till the total transformation into classless society ; the principle of communist party organization and the theory of democratic centralism, the methodology of evaluating the democratic revolutions in different countries in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, that is, how these are to be viewed while applying the general principles of Marxism — the elaboration, development and enrichment of Marxism that Lenin made on these are all still valid. But if the understanding and mode of expression in case of each one of these remain the same today as before, then that would be erroneous and harmful as well. What is the effect if that same old expression is made even today ? It means that the same old realization of theory still persists today. And if the same realization persists the numerous contradictions that have cropped up while applying the theory during all these days, cannot be resolved. That is, while applying the theory in the midst of contradictions, it is not possible to correctly understand the nature of the contradictions continually arising through application of theory at different levels. This is why the mode of expression is important here. By mode of expression I do not mean the individual styles of expression of different persons. Here by expression I wish to mean class expression, the standard of the category of ideological understanding. So, please do not take the word ‘expression’ literally, as what is understood as the individual style of speaking or writing of a person. ‘Expression’ here is to be understood as what we mean by the overall oneness in approach, that is, generalized expression of essential understanding. So, this expression is liable to change. But does this mean that the theories change too ? No, the understanding of the theory today is of a more advanced level than what it was earlier when those who applied the theory, did so on the basis of the then understanding, and it is continually getting clearer and clearer. This is because it has had to resolve newer and newer contradictions confronting it and its knowledge has become enriched from such experiences. Otherwise, theory gets reduced to mere dogma.

Analysis by CPC

At present, when the two sides, the Soviet leadership and the Chinese leadership, are criticizing each other as dogmatist and revisionist respectively, we notice one thing in case of both of them. When either of the two places their viewpoints, arguing that the situation has changed, they quote Lenin and quote such portions and in such a manner as would be advantageous to them.

But we observed a dangerous thing in case of the Soviet revisionist leadership. They seldom quote Lenin verbatim. Actually, what they are doing is paraphrasing Lenin in their own way in the name of quoting Lenin. As a result, what happens is, they have no onus to prove whether Lenin actually said so or if he did, he did under what circumstances. In most of their writings, they put the name of Lenin but do not quote him verbatim. Again, from the other side, China — they either quote Lenin verbatim or else quote Mao Zedong out of context, without relating to the particular

context in which those observations were made. In applying to the new context what had been observed earlier in a different context, although the observation may still be valid as regards the fundamental principle, they are reiterating the old quotation verbatim as the truth and exhorting for its application without referring at all to the new contradictions that have come up and what should be the difference in application in the face of these, or what addition, alteration or developments of the old observations should be there. These practices are legacies from the past. We find that the CPC which is fighting against revisionism today and which, in our party's opinion, has been, in the main, holding aloft the banner of revolution — even that leadership has not been able to get rid of this old habit. They have not been able to develop, as I understand, the dialectical methodological approach comprehensively and enrich its understanding in today's perspective necessary for correct application. They are engaged in struggle, no doubt, but there is still the hangover from the old style and habit in them. Since their mode of expression is of the old type, it appears that their understanding has remained as of old. It means, it is not that adequate. Understanding of Marxism at such old level does not help. Lenin upheld at times the old Marxists, observing that often the old Marxists were better than the new. By this he did not however mean that those old Marxists were still holding on to the old conceptions. Because they are old, the old Marxists possess a lot of experience and so they can acquire the capacity of continually elaborating Marxism. And the new, since they are inexperienced, may show a tendency to swallow the old verbiage and reduce Marxism to dogma. Lenin spoke about the old communists in this sense, not simply because they were old. So, if the old conception persists, it would be of no use.

Involvement of party and masses indispensable

So, these are happening because of the low level of consciousness and herein lies the root cause of the present development in the Soviet Union as well. What is the way out then? The only course is to maintain high level of consciousness in ideological and cultural spheres by ceaselessly waging ideological struggle within the party. Secondly, the problems on the study of which the theories of Marxism once developed, have not remained static. Many new things were cropping up after revolution which had been unknown earlier. Although these could be grasped somewhat with the help of logic of probability, the correct nature and character of these had not been known exactly, whereas there was need for this. Nobody has come to know the character of the problems for all time to come. So, there is necessity of continuously enriching Marxism in consonance with ever new problems cropping up in the changed situation, not only in the economic and political spheres, but covering all aspects of human life as well in totality. Thirdly, the sense of values in social, economic, cultural, ethical and philosophical spheres and the fundamental principles of Leninism that have till now guided the communist movement — it is to be determined which of these are still valid and which have lost validity. The necessity to start on this basis an intense socialist ideological and cultural struggle centring round those principles which are still valid for achieving complete ideological uniformity — first within the party and then involving the party and the masses — is there. Unless this struggle to bring about ideological uniformity and oneness in approach develops within the party and involving the party and the masses, then the seeds of individualism existing in various forms even in the socialist system centring round the private property, commodity production and commodity circulation would inevitably lead to a situation in which the citizens of the socialist society would enjoy the advancement of socialist economy as a privilege and this in turn would give birth to

an opportunist individualism. Consequently, the danger remains of illusion about bourgeois democracy and freedom arising in a new cloak with a new vocabulary. For instance, what is being said in Czechoslovakia about individual liberty is nothing but this.

Wrong analysis by revisionist Soviet leadership

The revisionist theory and practice of the Soviet leadership are basically responsible for what is now happening in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet leadership, for example, is saying that the era of dictatorship of the proletariat is over. But we know that the proletariat has appeared in history as the last revolutionary class, which by eliminating the forces opposing it, will pave the way for its own elimination following the process of 'negation of negation'. That is, through withering away of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it will take the society towards a classless, stateless one. This is the basic Marxist tenet of abolition of the state and the classes. By what theory, material or scientific analysis have they proved this basic Marxist tenet to be wrong? Nobody is interested in their subjective arguments. They will have to show by analysing social science and history on the basis of facts and by applying the dialectical method of analysis to development of class struggle, that the proletariat is not the last class in history. And, according to Marxism, what is meant by abolition of classes? When various strata, sections and categories among the people denote merely the difference in their respective work or profession and do not reflect economic strata or category, we can say that the classes have been abolished. But if these form the superstructure on the base of economic categories then it is to be understood that classes continue to exist. If the law of value operates or private ownership exists, it means that classes exist. These are teachings of Marxism. What has the present Soviet leadership got to say on these? But without as much as discussing these points, the Soviet leadership has declared that they have attained classless society. They are saying that the Soviet society is classless, there are no classes there. Here, they have really followed an old mistake of Stalin. This fault resulted from putting a bit too much emphasis on a point, which Stalin did in his Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU. Without naming Stalin, they have made his mistake their capital. For this theory of theirs they should have shown gratitude to Stalin and remain obliged to his mistake! If Stalin had not committed this mistake, they could not have invented it themselves. They have distorted many a thing, but the theories have all been Lenin's or Stalin's. To start with, there have been wrong applications of these theories because of their low level of consciousness. Continuing the mistakes, they have piled ego, individualism and national chauvinism on top of the mistakes and have now brought the mistakes to such a complicated level through this mix-up that they no longer admit these to be mistakes. They do not admit even if the mistakes are pointed out. They would carry on as they are doing today. At the most, if they feel uneasy under pressure of reasoning, they rationalize a bit and show by counter-argument that they do not mean this way but that way and after all, both ways, the meaning is almost the same. But they would continue doing what they are doing. This has happened in their case because the level of their consciousness is not very high. As a result, they have not been able to grasp the main point. Because of this low level of consciousness, they could say that the Soviet Union is no longer a state of the working class, it is a state of the whole people. Before concluding thus, they ought to have adduced proof to show that in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, it has fully played its role and its necessity has been exhausted there.

Development of concept of individual liberty in history

If the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat has become exhausted, then what for is the state there? Why does the state at all exist there? Khrushchev and his camp followers have not answered these questions. They have opened the door wide to liberalism under cover of the Marxist verbiage. As for Czechoslovakia, it has gone a few more steps even. The Czechoslovak leadership is trying to make parliamentary democracy quite acceptable in the name of liberalism! Under cover of socialism, revolutionary jargon and liberalism, they are trying to revive the parliamentary democracy about which even the people in the parliamentary democratic countries are fast getting disillusioned and fed up. What they are saying boils down to this: The state, the government and other institutions will have an independent role. What does it mean? It means, the party will have no control over the state. In other words, they think that the state is a self-contained entity. This sounds nice and appears very democratic. The technocrats would, of course, opine like this. This was the declared principle of the bourgeois democrats, the essence of bourgeois democracy. The bourgeois democrats hold that there should be separation of power between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary — and the party, of course, is separate. The party should have no control over the state or the other institutions. The party would direct and things would follow — this should not be the case. They say, the party should implement its policy through the majority in Parliament or National Assembly, taking due cognizance of the opinion of the minority and in co-operation with it. They say, the right of freedom of the individual is fundamental, on no account can it be interfered with. John Stuart Mill was a bourgeois humanist. He said: "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." So, as per this, no one, whoever he is, has the right to suppress the opinion of the minority as in that case, the fundamental right, the freedom ceases to exist. This would be sheer vulgarization of the meaning of freedom, would be ultra privilege of liberty in the name of freedom. Such is the bourgeois concept of individual liberty. This happens in the case of the bourgeoisie because of their non-recognition of the fact that individual liberty and the struggle for its development in the history of mankind, too, are governed by definite laws.

During the heyday of bourgeois democracy, in the period of *laissez faire* economy, that is, free competition of capital or competitive capitalism, Mill held aloft in his inimitable style the basic spirit of bourgeois democracy in the interest of uninterrupted development of individual freedom so that the voice of the minority was not gagged making the plea of the majority. The real significance of Mill's observation was that the thought and the opinion of the minority, even if it be a single person, should be given due respect and recognition. But it would be erroneous if we try to understand it just like this in the present era of most reactionary, decadent and monopoly capitalism, that is, imperialism.

Private property made absolute by bourgeoisie

We should remember that the struggle for individual liberty and freedom has not suddenly descended from heaven nor is the fact such that a man called Mill had a sudden brain wave on this issue. Or that Mill was a great man, who on his own trumpeted the glory of man's freedom and individual liberty and none of the great men before him was a genius of his standing and so could not think out these!

Nobody would accept such talks. Actually, this conception of freedom of the bourgeoisie is a reflection of the idea of absolute freedom that was inherent in the capitalist revolution. This very concept of the bourgeoisie brought about revolutionary transformation of production, production relation and of the whole society in course of its fight against feudalism. All this came about on the basis of the right to private property. But the very bourgeoisie who brought about this revolution, fighting against monarchy and absolutism, themselves made this right to private property absolute in the name of democracy through legal and constitutional sanction and sought to make it absolute, sacrosanct and divine. They made absolute the concepts of freedom, individual liberty and sense of individual right which had developed in the era of bourgeois democratic revolution. But today in the era of all-out crisis of capitalism, private ownership the over means of production has become the stumbling block on the path of development of production and productive forces, of all-round advancement of society. The bourgeois concepts about individual freedom and right of the individual have been reduced to utter egocentricism and selfishness, making the individual more and more indifferent to society. Today, all-round development of social production, knowledge, science, culture and civilization can be ensured only through establishing social ownership in place of private ownership over the means of production.

Because they lacked the correct understanding of Marxism and were under the influence of bourgeois liberalism, the revisionists could not grasp that the struggle for merging individual interest with the interest of society as a whole, freeing oneself from the bourgeois concept of the right of the individual and vile individualism is the only correct way of attaining the freedom and emancipation of the individual in the present day. And because they could not do so, they are raising the slogan of ultra sense of freedom in the name of individual liberty and are attempting to make parliamentary democracy more and more acceptable. This is what the intelligentsia of Czechoslovakia are after in the name of socialism. They are aspiring for bourgeois parliamentary democracy with the label of socialism. So those who are after their own property — the very concept which brought about the capitalist revolution — if those individuals, the intellectuals, the technocrats and the bureaucrats have no social consciousness, then the bourgeois democrats and the counter-revolutionaries could not ask for anything better ! Because, it is through these infatuated intellectuals, bureaucrats and technocrats that the counter-revolutionaries infiltrate into the political sphere and the state structure. How can counter-revolutionaries infiltrate through those engaged in manual labour ? They may utilize them to an extent as agents. But they infiltrate through these types of educated persons who are in the higher echelons of administration, politics and other spheres. They infiltrate through them and them only.

How to win emancipation of individual

So, at a glance, the programme and developments in Czechoslovakia prove that they are actually cultivating liberalism through all this. For them, the slogan of socialism was a mere cover. This cover could work only because many members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and a large section of common patriotic people, who had not worked as the agents of imperialism, hailed this move as a sequel to administrative lapses there, and due to weakness emanating from low level of communist consciousness. Because of liberalization, they took bourgeois democracy, individual liberty and bourgeois rights of equality to be synonymous with communism. The people feel they have a right to individual liberty as per the

bourgeois concept. They consider this to be the essence, the main feature of communism. They do not know that this concept of individual liberty and equality of rights that is in vogue is a particular phenomenon, a by-product, a temporary thing and its role has already been exhausted, it has been reduced to a privilege, has become reactionary in character in course of development of society. Today, the struggle for individual liberty is linked up only with resolving the question of the last remnants of social coercion that are there, for putting an end to the contradiction between the individual interest and the social interest in the socialist economy and system. This contradiction has got to be resolved. To resolve this, the antagonistic character of the contradiction between the social interest and the individual interest would have to be turned into a non-antagonistic one so that they be conducive to each other. That means, the struggle for identification of the individual interest with the social interest would have to be started. Emancipation of the individual from social conflict and coercion lies in this struggle. The means of achieving emancipation from the coercion imposed by man upon man which led to the emergence of state, lies in the process of withering away of the state through revolution in culmination of the law of social development.

Material and spiritual production

As Marxists they should know that what they call freedom of thinking — this freedom, too, does not connote freedom in absolute sense, or freedom from any condition. Elsewhere, I have shown that the material condition precedes the emergence of thought and however great a thinker someone may be, he cannot transgress a given category of material condition. Thought changes along with change in the material condition, and again this thought itself acts on the material condition and helps it to change. In this way, both material condition and thought are changing continually. So, no thought, be it religious thought, bourgeois humanist thought or the bourgeois concept of individual liberty or the rights of an individual, is absolute and unchangeable. Although a particular thought or idea may play a progressive role for the development of production in a given material condition, that very thought becomes reactionary judged in the context of the newer need of development of production in a changed condition. Then new thought is born in the new material condition. So, no thought or concept of right is absolute. We should remember that thought develops as a product of the struggle going on everyday between man and nature and between the different classes in society. It is also a kind of production and in the Marxist vocabulary it is called the spiritual production. What man produces through his toils and efforts by struggling against nature is both spiritual and material production. These two together constitute the total human production. So, one aspect of human production is the material production while the other is the spiritual production, the idea, which is nothing but a particular function of the brain which itself is constituted of matter. These two again are inter-dialectically influencing each other. Sometimes matter or the material condition, by taking the predominant role, gains the leading part in forming idea — not that it becomes absolute — while at some other time, the idea or the subject assumes the major role in developing the objective condition by twisting and turning it. The major role is thus being reversed continually. This is another characteristic feature of dialectics, another point which should be borne in mind.

Whence will wither away state

So, they could not grasp these. Due to the low level of consciousness, it was not possible for them to build up the necessary ideological-cultural movement and inspire, under its impact, the mentality of foregoing everything personal and merging the individual interest with the social interest. They could not grasp that merger of the individual interest with the collective interest is in no way a curb on individual liberty; rather, the true emancipation of the individual lies in merging the individual interest with the collective interest. Without this an individual can never be fully free from social coercion, because so long as the antagonistic contradiction between the individual and the social interest remains, the state has to exist as the instrument of coercion, and the social repression of the individual also remains. In this situation, the antagonistic contradiction between the individual interest and the social interest can be put an end to only through totally merging the individual interest with the social interest and only in such a condition would the state cease to exist as an instrument of social coercion; the state would wither away then and then only. This process of struggle is the real struggle of an individual under socialism for his emancipation. Such is its historical destiny, law-governed as this struggle is. Without doing this an individual can never be free from social coercion. To aspire for individual liberty, disregarding this process, is to virtually cripple the individual. You will find that it is people guided by such misconceptions about individual liberty who take advantage over others at one place, while at another they behave as if they are slaves of others just for ensuring their economic interest and advantages and bow down when frowned at, just as the bureaucrats do. There are bureaucrats who browbeat their subordinates very much, consider themselves very powerful *vis-a-vis* others; they think that there is nobody more powerful than they are. On the other hand, they rub their hands before their superior officers submissively. This is because they lack the firmness of character. Their sole concern is power, gaining economic advantages and showing of ego, rotten individualism and vanity.

Sense of national humiliation even among communists

Besides, in the countries of East Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, although the communists came to power through defeat of fascism in the Second World War, the influence of proletarian internationalism was never firmly established. This particularly struck my mind after the Tito episode. Tito was trained in Moscow and was a very loyal and trusted follower of Stalin and his international communist brigade. He was, so to say, a creation of Stalin. I do not know whether looking at such deviation of his own creation, Stalin turned deep attention to the real problem — there were no means of our knowing. But we observed that he was trying to grasp, and did grasp certain things. It is this: even among the communists in the East European socialist countries, the sense of national humiliation of the Balkans was mingled with talks of communism. Even during anti-fascist national revolution there, which was basically bourgeois democratic revolution, it was not detected. But this latent feeling of national humiliation of the Balkans is definitely hidden under cover of all their progressive verbiage. Only through proletarian internationalism which can strike at its very roots, can this narrow nationalist mental make-up be shattered. To do this, it would have to be established beyond question, in the same manner in which once Marxism theoretically established its superiority over all bourgeois ideologies, that true patriotism and proletarian internationalism develop side by side conducive to each other. If this can be done, it would create an impact on the intellectuals because of their power of intellect; it would have an influence on the common people and because of its influence upon the intellectuals, too, it would unleash a social

movement. Only when it turns into a social movement, there comes the opportunity of a cultural revolution and regeneration in the true sense, the opportunity of a widespread mass movement. Stalin had begun this, but before he could proceed much, he died.

Rank populist conduct of Khrushchev

Coming to power, Khrushchev freed those ‘champions’ of liberalism whom Stalin had put in jail before taking up this task in hand. Stalin had arrested them because this task could not be undertaken keeping them at large. They enjoyed a kind of cheap popularity and the populist talks, behaviour and conduct such as theirs always work in the fertile soil of low level of consciousness — the reason why Khrushchev became so popular in no time. Of course, he became popular among the worthless. He was found to be hugging someone all on a sudden, calling him brother or clasping a night club girl to dance with her and seeing all this, many began to say : look how simple he is, he is not at all conceited, he has no vanity. Politics of such cheap stunts is the stock-in-trade of such people. Actually, these reflect ego of the worst form under cover of cheap popularity which cannot but be detected ultimately through critical analysis. A person who is free from the sense of ego has no need to take recourse to such populist postures. The behaviour and conduct of such a person are simple and straightforward. He is free from such trifling and petty considerations. His each action is not calculated to earn popularity or make people believe that there is none else like him. Thoughts and considerations as these do not exist in him at all — he is of different stuff. So while, on the one hand, he makes friends, moulds people, inspires others, shows the correct path and builds up character of people, on the other hand, some people misunderstand and go against him and the reactionaries oppose him. But he does not become everything to everyone, it never happens that he becomes very popular in everything and everybody considers him to be very good. But Khrushchev is a man of such populist gestures and postures, behaviour and conduct.

Khrushchev has brought about a change in the Soviet economy. He has been able to do this because the philosophical understanding of Marxism had not been developing continually in the Soviet Union during Stalin’s time, resulting in a low level of consciousness in the realms of ideology and theory there; or even if it had developed and been enriched somewhat through collection of the technical materials in bits and pieces, the understanding was not adequate *vis-a-vis* the newer and newer problems which kept on continually confronting the socialist economy and the people’s life, the newer and newer problems continually appearing before the international communist movement, the world situation and the mass movements. This is because the level of consciousness does not remain static. The advancement of communist movement and modernization of economy, on the one hand, and the lowering of theoretical standard, on the other — because of this, various deviations start appearing in the spheres of socialist economy and ideology after making some advancement. When the presence of a leadership like that of Stalin, which fundamentally protected Marxism in the political, economic, cultural and philosophical spheres in spite of the lowering of consciousness, was no longer there, no further hindrance remained for the deviations to become all-out.

Concept of equality

We know that we can pass on from the stage of ‘to each according to his ability’ to the stage of ‘to each according to his needs’ by putting an end to the role of money as the medium of exchange and to the system of commodity production and distribution and through building up proper organization of production and distribution. But is it

possible to achieve this by mere subjective planning ? What is the difference between utopian socialism and scientific socialism ? It is that the utopian socialists sought to keep all men in the society at the same level whereas communism never thought like this. Communism has given attention to freeing men from social coercion. Each man's struggle is to flourish through individual initiative but since each has a separate entity, no two persons can be equal. But they would be free from social coercion, economic exploitation and moral depravity. They are free only in a relative sense, they are free only socially and in the social environment, they are free in the context of the contradiction between production and distribution — there is no injustice on them; the factors engendering unfairness and injustice in the society have been eliminated. But their struggle against nature is there, it would continue to be there. Society and civilization would be progressing through continual victories over nature. So, 'socialism means abundance in production' — these words do not mean that the end of commodity production and distribution system, the end of money and private property and abolition of the state would come about automatically. But on coming to power, Khrushchev reduced the meaning of socialism to just abundance in production. By socialism he has meant classless society — because the writings he quoted from, were in the classical language of the early stages. At that time, an idea was prevalent that socialism meant a classless society — I think Trotsky's confusion stemmed from this. Trotsky thought that socialism meant a classless society, and since it was so, how could socialism be established in a single country ? There has been a lot of controversy over this. Khrushchev, too, came with the idea that socialism means abundance in production. So, he started saying that if there were no abundance in production in the Soviet Union, what socialism stood for ? If rationing had still to be enforced and if food could not be distributed to the people free of cost then these were failures of socialism. This idea took him towards economic decentralization, labour incentive schemes and all that.

Labour incentive — a cover for ruthless exploitation

I want to make a point here about this labour incentive. Look at the Naxalites, the CPI and the CPI(M) — all of them are demanding incentives in the labour movement under cover of revolutionary verbiage. I find that even the trade union leaders belonging to our party also raise this demand of 'incentive'. My question is : why should they demand incentives ? It is one thing when it becomes an exigency in the interest of struggle. That is, since incentive is coming anyway, why should not the workers gain a little more advantage and improve the terms and conditions through struggles for that purpose. But along with this, the political and ideological design of the bourgeoisie behind the incentive schemes would have to be unmasked. It would have to be pointed out clearly that the very same bourgeoisie who talk of incentives at one place, close down factories elsewhere. Trade union leaders, too, place these points citing statistics. But unless the basic political and economic causes behind this can be grasped, it is no use putting the thing in terms of statistics only. Why do we need statistics ? We need it for unraveling the truth, for understanding the theory thoroughly. If the trade union leaders cannot understand truth in the real sense on the basis of theory, their understanding would remain at the level of the common people. In that case, I would suggest, they better not take the trouble and strain themselves by dabbling in statistical data. By this, they would continue to plunge the workers' movement in the quagmire of opportunism, as they have done. Unless they can guide the working class movement on the correct course by exposing the bourgeois

conspiracy behind these incentive schemes, they would not be able to lead these movements through to the logical culmination of emancipation from exploitation.

You should remember that not only is the capitalist exploitation becoming more and more ruthless through labour incentives, it is becoming utmost filthy and heinous. By this, the owners are shifting the entire responsibility of declining production on the shoulders of the workers. But the real reason for fall in production is the contradiction between production relation and productive forces in the capitalist system. On scientific analysis it would be found that the surplus value being created in the capitalist system is being misappropriated by the private owners and it is because of this that the unemployment problem is there in the capitalist countries, capitalism cannot today carry out land reform in the true sense and the relative stability is no longer there in the world capitalist market. This is why there is the pressure of intense recession on the economy of the capitalist countries today — the intense crisis in the whole production system. Taking advantage of the fact that the working class movement has, in effect, become ideologically disarmed, crisis ridden capitalism is confusing the workers and shifting the entire burden of its crisis on to their shoulders.

They are trying to show that the fall in production is there because the workers do not want to work. Please remember that even when the workers lose the spirit and willingness to do work in the capitalist countries and become discouraged, it is the capitalist exploitation, social injustice of capitalism that is responsible for all this. But they are putting the onus for the fall in production on the workers. On the one hand, they are increasing the workload on the workers, while on the other, through some charities and philanthropy funded from their bank balances inflated with the money robbed from the workers, they are showing how noble they are, how they care for the country and how keen they are to increase production ! They are trying to show that it is from this desire to increase production that they have introduced the incentive schemes to break the idleness of the workers.

Do you know what sort of thing it is ? The worker is helpless, starving, ignorant and lacks consciousness; he does not know why is his plight of starvation, but since hunger knows no laws, he wants to work more for earning a little bit more. It is these workers that they want to burden with more work holding up the lure of money. To increase production by making the worker work overtime or working more intensively, whether with or without use of machines, ultimately means increasing the workload. This increasing of workload on the workers in the name of giving them some monetary benefit is what is called the labour incentive. By this, they want to 'prove' that production is falling because the worker is callous, selfish and irresponsible. So give him some incentive and he will work more. That is, show him the lure of money so that he would work more. The worker on his part desires to avail of the incentive, wants to gain monetarily because he cannot do without this. My point is that you ask the workers to accept incentive, provided the workers build up side by side the struggle to improve the working condition. And also explain the character of labour incentive, pointing out that it is a bourgeois conspiracy against the workers, an extremely cruel and heinous exploitation and also humiliating to them. None of the other parties in our country who speak of Marxism and claim to be fighting for the workers have put forward these fundamental issues. Only our party is trying to make the workers conscious of it. We are thinking deeply over these and trying to focus these points to some extent. The party cadres who are bringing these home to the workers are raising these points as per their ability, intelligence and level of consciousness. At least a process is at work in the party ; even if a single comrade has a confusion in his mind on this issue, attempts are there to dispel it ; these points are

being impressed upon those connected with the trade union movement, so that they are being educated on the significance of the labour incentive. By this I am not saying that there are no weaknesses or limitations in this effort of ours. But we keep on trying.

Danger of anyhow augmenting production in socialism

So the labour incentive is another thing which Khrushchev brought about in the socialist economy, against which there is necessity of conducting struggle with utmost stress on the basis of revolutionary working class ideology in the capitalist countries themselves. Labour incentive, increase in production, abundance in production — all this is being talked about without correctly understanding the scientific laws of development of production. Production would have to be augmented within the framework of the socialist production relation in conformity with the scientific laws of production in the socialist system, that is, by pursuing correctly and scientifically the laws of development of production while keeping operative the programme of gradual transformation into socialist ownership, by combining and consolidating the strength of the whole people, by drawing together all the sources of production — social, political, economic, material and natural resources, everything, and along with it by patterning technological development of science as far as possible. Since Lenin observed that there cannot be socialism without abundance in production, therefore production would have to be increased anyhow — the matter is not so simple. Khrushchev's contention is: since the Soviet Union is still lagging behind the USA in production, what sort of socialism is this? But he could not understand at all that the appeal with which the communists won over the whole world to the side of socialism even while lagging behind the USA in production and in volume of production, lies elsewhere. He could not grasp the basic point that this deviation in thought occurred because of their low level of consciousness.

Just as low standard of ideological consciousness gives birth to adventurism, it gives birth to revisionism as well. It is this low level of consciousness that has given rise to modern revisionism. So, it is the Soviet Union which started the process of liberalization. As a plea they are saying that there was a ruthless regimentation during Stalin's time; as a result, the individual talent of man did not have the opportunity to flourish. Such was their contention at the beginning. They said that the Soviet citizens did not have the opportunity to give vent to differing viewpoints; internal democracy was non-existent. Whether these are facts or not we need not go into that discussion here. Besides, I think, I should make my discussion short. While introducing the policy of liberalization, they started with the argument that they were fighting against the cult of personality, against this negative aspect of Stalin's time. But ultimately it was found that it was the personal image of Stalin that they were fighting against. They could not grasp the main point, that is, where to strike in order to fight the cult of personality. For, the cult of individual arises from the backward and low level of consciousness, from the antagonistic contradiction that develops due to the absence of cultural revolution in conformity with the changes in the mode of production, when the struggle for the uplift of theoretical consciousness is not there. They could not identify these causes and did not conduct struggle accordingly. That is why they could not grasp that blind allegiance to leadership, be it an individual, a committee or the party itself, would inevitably lead to the cult of individual in some way or other. And to declare with fanfare that they are not blind and are beating the drum of democracy is not the method of eradicating this cult of personality. Today, fascism is appearing in the capitalist countries of the world through drumbeating of this very brand of

democracy. According to us and many others such talks of theirs prove that they have gone against the basic tenets of Marxism which are still valid.

Soviet liberalism, father of Czechoslovak revisionism

All these talks and activities, in fact, provided an opportunity to the suppressed individualism which was not getting a rationale, social backing or protection of the state or the government during Stalin's time to raise its head in the post-Stalin period. When it raised its head in Czechoslovakia, it got the additional opportunity to do so in the social environment created there by such campaigns of the revisionists. And it also got the support of international capital. Due to such revisionist theories, naturally, the international alignment of the Soviet Union also showed a sign of turning. So, Czechoslovakia became subject to pressure from various quarters — intellectuals in other countries and the international capitalist class as well. This, too, is a force to reckon with, favouring the growth of individualism. As a result, individualism which had already been reduced to a privilege among them took an ugly form as rotten individualism. Taking the cue from the Soviet verbiage, they brought about further lowering of culture and ideology and took to the course of decentralization of political and economic power, that is, they sank into the cult of rotten type of aimless petty bourgeois individualism. This led to discomfiture of the Soviet leaders. So, they took recourse to suppressing it with force, because the Soviet Union still had the fundamental socialist characteristics. See, what a peculiar situation ! On the one hand, they are opening the floodgates to the forces of liberalism which are in reality forces of counter-revolution in the name of freedom, democracy and all that, while on the other, they are suppressing these forcibly for securing their own existence. This securing of existence may mean keeping socialism intact internally or protecting the socialist state or just ensuring that they remain in power — any one of these. What really was the Soviet purpose, I shall discuss afterwards. But by all this they have put the whole communist movement into an extremely ridiculous position.

Their conduct is confusing the people over the distinction between the communist ideology and the bourgeois liberal humanist concept of liberty and equality. By doing so, they are destroying the force of communist ideology, the strength of its reasoning, and are disarming the working class and its revolutionary movement. As a result of these bad effects, the individualism which lies latent within the confused masses and even among the good revolutionaries is trying to rear its head. And when this happens the Soviet leaders are crushing it. So, that again is inviting a counter-reaction.

From sometime after the Soviet Union opened the doors to liberalization, one particular point has been striking me. This is what I think — please listen to this part very attentively. Khrushchev had to leave shortly after he had come into the leadership. But why ? He had to leave because he could not reflect the high sense of dignity, the high standard of communist ethics and morality in his personal conduct, behaviour and activities. His inconsistent and whimsical behaviour denigrated him in public eyes. He had come up fighting against Stalin's image. In this fight, what very much charmed people with low level of consciousness, and to some extent influenced the Central Committee, was his explanation of democratic centralism to mean taking decisions collectively as the party and then working accordingly. Any violation of this process meant violation of democratic centralism and collective leadership. Yes, it is true that the democratic form of collective leadership is like this and the guarantee for collective leadership lies in struggling relentlessly through this process. But at particular times, say in some adverse circumstances or when it is not possible to work according to the established norms, this process does not work. Do we hold then that

at such times no collective leadership operates in a genuine Marxist party ? No, the collective leadership operates even then. But it is difficult to preserve it then and there is the danger that it may be polluted. So, since the democratic norms were not operative, therefore, there was no collective leadership — to conclude like that would be sheer oversimplification. Conversely, just because the procedure is there, so the collective leadership exists — this also is not a correct concept. By such concept, collective leadership is reduced to the concept of average democratic leadership. Had collective leadership meant only this procedure, then it would have to be admitted that the bourgeois parties which hold conferences every year, pass resolutions and adopt programmes, have all grown on the basis of the principle of democratic centralism and have collective leadership. No, there cannot be collective leadership in any bourgeois or petty bourgeois party, neither is it possible. It is not possible even if they try for it ; for them the word ‘collective’ would mean something else. It would be a cloak, a confusing slogan, whereas the reality would be different.

Slogan against personality cult, a cover for denigrating Stalin

So, Khrushchev came to the forefront by saying that Stalin had shattered the collective leadership. That is why, Khrushchev argued, Stalin’s personal negative aspects had prevailed so much that there had been no means of preventing what he had done. And others could not do anything as there was no democracy in the party. But having come to power, Khrushchev did the very same through his activities. When he used to speak, he did not care at all for the basic principles, propositions and standing decisions of the party. If the party had not yet taken decision on a point he was discussing, he would not say that the party had not yet decided on it, that he was saying something as his personal opinion and not imposing his opinion on others, that he was placing the point as a matter of discussion to be thought over by everybody and that the party’s stand would follow. Such was never his practice. Even while discussing an opinion of the party, he would contradict it and stray away to wherever he liked. Afterwards, it used to be a task for the Central Committee and the Polit Bureau to support his stand, to recast arguments for the purpose and to marshal facts and figures anew to show that Khrushchev was right, because he was the leader of the party. This put the Soviet leadership into a very awkward position *vis-a-vis* the intellectuals of the communist parties of different countries and created complications in the bilateral relationship with the communist parties of other countries. The bitterness that was created in the relations with China — perhaps the Soviet leadership did not want it like this, and have felt Khrushchev’s personal conduct to be largely responsible for it. Actually, the reason for worsening of relations with China lies elsewhere, but those with low level of consciousness think that this bitterness has come about because his personal behaviour and conduct has been such. Some in the Soviet leadership also thought like this. The present leadership has removed Khrushchev because of all such conduct.

Khrushchev’s slogan against the personality cult was actually to malign Stalin as an individual. But Stalin was a sober man of great personality and integrity, his every step was well thought out. And Khrushchev is a buffoon, an out and out political joker. Mao Zedong has used this word ‘buffoon’ about him, and I, too, am using it. I, too, have felt very bad about it. Many comrades in our party have also felt bad about his conduct, gestures and postures totally incompatible with the long standing communist sense of values, ethics and culture. That man turned popular. Afterwards, the present Soviet leadership removed him due to some difficulties. From practical

experience, they became conscious about the situation. What does this consciousness mean ? Although they could not realize the reason behind, they could experience what pernicious outcome his activities were having. On the one hand, Khrushchev was saying that he was a liberal and would not impose rigorous controls, but when the artists and intellectuals started functioning at will, he sought to impose centralism upon them. Actually, he even failed to understand that recognition of rights and democracy, putting an end to strict and rigorous control or coming out from the Stalin era, could not mean denial or denigration of authority or centralism. At one time, they had even ceased to use the term centralism. Recently they have started using it again, because Lenin used to do so.

So we see that not only has their policy remained unchanged because they could not correctly discern the basic causes, it is also becoming more complicated and distorted under the influence of their new 'understanding'. Actually, under pressure of circumstances, they are trying to retract by putting forward some subjective reasonings. But they are unable to find the way out. The course they are adopting for this purpose is getting more complicated because of their inability to understanding the character of the problem and due to other vested interests. Their basic outlook being wrong, their reading of the experience is also becoming incorrect. And they are combining this incorrect understanding of experience with their main standpoint under the false impression of gaining from experience. As a result, the expositions that they are presenting by combining such 'experiences' and points with their original revisionist concept are becoming totally ludicrous. They do not speak now in the same manner in which they used to. In this, they have changed a lot in stages. Khrushchev at first began this by saying that there would be peaceful revolution in different capitalist countries through the parliamentary process. Afterwards, in the face of criticism, he started speaking differently. But he did not admit that he had committed a mistake. He said that what he had meant was that socialism could be brought about by transforming Parliament into an instrument of people's will and it was necessary to transform Parliament into that instrument. Why was it necessary ? He could not provide a fitting argument for this. Only trying to provide a rationale through subjective reasoning, he said that relying on the people's consciousness and backed by militant mass movement, Parliament could be transformed into an instrument of the people's will. Communists of the ordinary level thought this statement somewhat better than the earlier one and a genuine attempt at improving the standpoint. But instead of improving, it is deteriorating further. This is happening due to low level of consciousness. But some may argue that had there been no genuine urge for improvement, why did such statements come ?

For example, regarding the law of inevitability of war, Khrushchev first said that it was possible to maintain peace even while imperialism existed and Lenin's thesis about the inevitability of war was no longer valid. Later, he said that the theory was still valid but that did not mean that it was fatalistically inevitable. Yes, the law is still valid, but its understanding is not such that it must happen — that it is fatalistically inevitable. So, peace could be maintained. He further added that when Lenin had termed the present era as the era of imperialism, war and proletarian revolution, it was imperialism that played the major role. But a new era had dawned now, the era of disintegration of imperialism — when imperialism had become very weak and was disintegrating. So, Lenin's era and the present one stood apart with quite different characteristics. Lenin's era was the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution whereas the present era was that of disintegration of imperialism and proletarian revolution. So, there was a great difference between the present era and the era of

Lenin, said Khrushchev. But what does this 'great' difference mean? Where is it 'great'? The reality is that, even now, imperialism exists with its military might, its policy of aggression and its conspiracy to bring about counter-revolution, and continues to exist with all its characteristics as a world system. The main point is whether imperialism still exists as a world system or not. Otherwise, everybody knows that disintegration of imperialism started with the crisis at the time of the First World War — the process began then. Afterwards, only its degree had increased. So we see that by adding a word or two to what Lenin had said on the subject, they are trying to retrace steps, trying to analyse afresh.

In their recent writings also I find that they are trying to shift their stand somewhat. Under pressure of difficulties, there is a tendency to improve the expression a bit, to make it a little more suitable; there is an effort and a tendency to take up a revolutionary stance, if possible. This is what occurs to me; maybe I am incorrect. That is why I say 'it occurs to me' — it is largely an assessment from indicative symptoms. I have noted these in a number of writings. But what their standpoint has become as a result is even worse than the earlier revisionism; it is of a more populist style, even more confusing. It is but natural that it should be so, because this is not where the real problem lies. If they want to retrace their position, they would have to do so at one stroke. Or else, it may happen that, if their level of consciousness and understanding come to the correct position, they may retrace steps in a subtle way so that nobody might understand their earlier mistake; but there is a danger in doing it this way. To retrace steps in this manner would mean that they would be moving along with the mistakes and evil effects of the past. The hangover from the bad things of the past would still persist. So, whatever the CPSU may now be claiming — say, they are fighting against imperialism etc., etc. — the basic thinking behind their claims remains the same as before. It is possible to maintain peace even while imperialism is there — they no longer theorize like this. Such talks have been relegated to the background. No longer they discuss now whether Leninism is still valid or not. Without raising all this, they are now speaking against imperialism in a general way and in a popular style and are also speaking against China. In their futile bid they are trying to prove in so many ways that whereas China is a national chauvinist, they are true internationalists. These writings are very mediocre as if penned by school boys. So no purpose is served and they are plunging into even worse revisionism and confusion.

Counter-revolutionary upsurge — a culmination of liberalism

Such calamity befell Czechoslovakia because of this revisionist policy of the Soviet Union. After the death of Stalin, the Khrushchev leadership, in the name of fighting personality cult of Stalin, set the ball of liberalization rolling in the Soviet Union by capitalizing on the mistakes, mechanical outlook and rude behaviour of the leadership during Stalin's time — if indeed these had been there — and by stressing and highlighting these and fomenting agitation among the people against these and making use of it, which again was possible to some extent due to lack of balance in judgement and the none-too-high level of consciousness of the people. Having done so, the Soviet leadership did not have the capacity to control the situation resulting from this. What was the situation brought about really? It actually opened the doors for the forces of counter-revolution to rear their heads. As a result, a situation was created favourable for the world counter-revolutionary forces. Their opposition to Stalin which was merely in the propaganda stage so far, now, because of liberalizing

cultural exchanges with the capitalist countries and of the continuing lowering of cultural standard, opened the doors to the counter-revolutionary forces in various spheres and even opened up numerous channels to them for infiltrating into the party and the state. That is, a congenial atmosphere was created for mounting an all-out attack on the very base of the party and the state. In reality, it is happening exactly like that. Under cover of this practice of liberalism, attempts are afoot to engineer an all-out counter-revolution. That is why the reactionaries are so highly publicizing all these liberal activities of the Soviet Union and showering fulsome praise upon the Soviet Union, appreciating that it is defending communism ! Due to such activities of the Soviet Union, communism would now become quite palatable to all, even to the counter-revolutionaries. I do not at all understand what is the necessity of making the communist ideology acceptable to the counter-revolutionaries. These days even the reactionaries feel that communism is not that bad, seeing as they do what Dubcek is doing. Observing Dubcek, it strikes even the PSP in our country that given the necessary effort, the Right Communist (i.e. the CPI — Ed.) in our country, too, might be brought to a similar position. So the PSP has changed its attitude towards the Right Communists a bit. The PSP is trying to encourage this trend of liberalism in the CPI. My contention is not that the Right Communists have already become national communists fully.¹ This national communism is really another name for national socialism — it is nothing else. The so-called Communist Party of our country, too, would become like this in future. Long back, in 1957, we had observed that this Communist Party — what the party that has split from it is doing and what would become of it ultimately are altogether different matters — if it moves towards the two-party democracy, then a Leftwing social democratic force like the Labour Party in the UK would emerge centring round them or through some other social democratic forces joining hands with them and, in effect, a rightist stream would be created as a reaction to it. This future awaits the party. But because of the influence small production still has in the economy of our country and because of the importance it still has in the relative sense, this new political trend is yet unable to take shape. Anyway, that is a different matter.

So, after Khrushchev had opened doors to liberalism, now they want to keep it arrested at a certain stage. This is the tragedy. They want the practice of liberalism, to be confined only up to the stage they have specified. But perhaps they are unaware that what they have said is in reality destroying the very living essence and fervour of Marxism-Leninism and its methodology of class struggle. They have opened the doors world-wide for the flood of liberalism, till now suppressed, and have created a golden opportunity for the counter-revolutionary forces everywhere to infiltrate into the communist parties under cover of liberal outlook to pollute the parties. If now this is sought to be arrested at one stage, why should it remain so ? When someone shows a path, there is no guarantee that those who follow in his footsteps would not surpass him in the number of steps taken. They may go ahead by several steps more. It is no use then telling the followers: 'Don't proceed further, stay with me'. It is the Soviet Union that has encouraged them to go ahead. So, the more one can go ahead in practising liberalism and the more one can make rational assessment in justification, the greater one is !

How can they now solve the present problem of Czechoslovakia by fighting shy of this situation of their own creation ? According to Marxism, we know, the problem of a country is to be solved by correctly grasping the internal situation, that is, the internal contradiction, and by relating it to the fundamental principles. What is happening in Czechoslovakia is the manifestation of a particular type of contradiction.

To try to solve this by avoiding or overriding the main general aspects of the contradiction is not dialectical materialism. It is on the basis of the general fundamental principles that the particular contradiction in Czechoslovakia will have to be resolved. Without doing this, to put special emphasis separately on an unusual particular feature, is to reduce the general principles to ifs and buts, making them insignificant, thereby clearing the path for revisionism, liberalism and infiltration of all sorts of perverted reactionary concepts of bourgeois counter-revolution into the party. This is what the revisionist Soviet leadership has done. It is they who are saying all these — namely, the Soviet Union is no longer a dictatorship of the proletariat but a state of the whole people. It is they who have made the analysis that theirs is a state of the whole people, a state without the dictatorship of the proletariat, and they have said all these while remaining in power in the Soviet state. They are no longer repeating these, apprehending further effects on Czechoslovakia. These days, even many fathers, seeing the uncouth and unseemly behaviour of their children on the streets, hide their faces in shame and walk away lest they came face to face with the children. Looking at the appearance of its offspring in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet leadership has become very much scared today. There may be two reasons for this.

It may be that the Soviet leadership is worried about losing hold over the area under its influence. That is, the Soviet leadership is worried about losing control and influence over the member countries of the bloc led by it under the Warsaw Pact. So the Soviet leadership does not want that others should go any further. Whatever Czechoslovakia may do on issues like individual freedom, etc., that country is an important associate of the Soviet Union in its political battle against the imperialists. The Soviet leadership wants at least this position to be maintained — Czechoslovakia should not go beyond this. But pursuing the line Czechoslovakia is following, what guarantee is there that it will not cross that limit ? After all, what basic difference is there between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in this regard ? If Czechoslovakia does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union and conversely, the Soviet Union in the affairs of Czechoslovakia, then there remains no difficulty. It is the Soviet leadership which has frequently been raising the question of non-interference in the internal affairs of others. This talk about interference in the internal affairs of others is very much in the air these days. What it concretely means and how the communists should view it — I have discussed these elsewhere.

This principle has come into the proletarian movement on the question of safeguarding bourgeois national sovereignty against imperialist attack. Its objective is to put a check on activities of the imperialists like blatantly attacking other countries, interfering in their internal affairs, trying to create confusion in the revolutionary movements of different countries and exporting counter-revolution, etc. This principle has no bearing on determining the mutual relationship between communist parties of different countries. The nature of this relationship should be like this : they are mutually consulting one another and through these are enriching the internationally adopted policies and decisions and implementing these and in this way each is advancing towards a world socialist order through united struggle. This is their struggle. Their struggle is not one for protecting its independence against another. They are maintaining the present separate entities and independence in order to accelerate the process of formation of a world socialist federation through voluntary union by isolating the national bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements and forces within each country so that the forces opposed to socialism, democratic centralism and proletarian internationalism cannot raise their heads. So the slogan and question of non-interference in internal affairs is not the major issue in the mutual relationship

between communist parties. This question should never crop up. Again, a big party, as the leading party, should not interfere in the affairs of another party. If this is done, it would inevitably give birth to national jingoism in that country as a reaction and create hindrance to developing close mutual relationship because the national form of socialist revolution has not yet outlived itself. This is our analysis.

So, having opened the doors to liberalism, the Soviet leadership was not being able to arrest it at the stage it would have liked to. What actually happened in Czechoslovakia ? Why did it happen like this ? Czechoslovakia is an industrially advanced country, not a backward one. By polluting its administrative setup and the party and by giving birth to different class parties in this manner, the bourgeois concept of freedom was brought into operation there in the name of individual freedom. They separated the state from the party. They say that it is the state that has the ultimate power — so long as the state is there, it wields the ultimate power and the party, minus the state power, is powerless; the party can at best fight for the people. Being victim of these concepts they created a situation where the bourgeoisie could take control of as powerful an instrument as the state. By this, the ruling clique there actually adopted a line of ultra democracy, ultra freedom. To advocate this even in a bourgeois system means helping to establish surreptitiously worst despotism in the name of ultra democracy and ultra freedom; it means inviting a ruthless and draconian fascist dictatorship under the cloak of ultra democracy and implanting it deeply. The very same points Mill discussed in his treatise *Liberty* are now being parroted by the Czechoslovak leadership. They say that the party should have no control over the state. Should that be so, then what would be the class character of the state ? If the dictatorship of the proletariat is not there, then what would be the consequences ? Taking advantage of that situation, they would totally control the state structure through which capitalism would operate, and while donning the cloak of revolution, they would reduce the party to an instrument of suppressing the people and obstructing the growth of revolutionary thought and consciousness. In other words, in the name of communism, they would reduce the party to an instrument for bringing in fascism in Czechoslovakia.

Undermining dictatorship of proletariat

So, what is happening in Czechoslovakia is in reality a counter-revolutionary upsurge, the path to which has been opened up by Soviet revisionism in different countries. They are reducing the communists to national communists everywhere. This means that under cover of progressive verbiage, the communist party is becoming a parlour of pseudo-democrats, underhand bureaucrats and hypocrites. In such a situation, they are naturally muddling up the basic theory of the leading role of the party and giving preponderance to the authority of the state in those cases where the party ought to play the major role. I consider the Soviet leadership's arguments simply hollow talks. They have not taken note of the leading role of the party. And supposing they recognized the leading role of the party, what tangible gain would come from that ? Would everything be set right simply by that declaration ? By placing the state in the position of real authority in practice, individual freedom in the bourgeois sense has come about anyhow. In China, besides the CPC, other parties operated in the National Consultative Council and the National Consultative Congress for a long time after the new democratic revolution. But they were not placed on a par with the communist party there.

In their case, the right to criticize at will was not accepted, rather their task was to implement the programmes of the National Conference or the communist party. They

had to take the pledge that their duty was to assist in implementing the socialist economic programmes adopted in the state enterprises under the leadership of the communist party and the programme of the party to usher in socialism. Only after this pledge they earned the right to criticize.

If this were done in Czechoslovakia, there would have been no problem. But the Chinese situation was different. What was the significance of adopting this process in China ? At the stage of organizing political revolution, the CPC had to forge unity with other parties since their role could not be ignored. The National Consultative Council and the National Consultative Congress were the continuation of the erstwhile United Front which had existed there. So long as the role of such parties cannot be thoroughly exhausted and they cannot be isolated from the masses or be fully absorbed in the communist movement, that is, be made insignificant as political parties, this feature continues to exist. That is a process of exhausting the role of other parties. And what is happening in Czechoslovakia is the objective process of exhausting the leading role of the communist party itself ! And all this is being done even while admitting the importance of leadership and the leading role of the party. Likewise, it is happening in the Soviet Union but the Soviet leadership has not admitted it as such. But the revisionist Soviet leadership has in practice made the leading role of the party secondary by undermining the dictatorship of the proletariat and reducing the party of the proletariat to the party of the whole people, and the state of the proletariat to the state of the whole people. And along with this, they have opened the door to ultra-democratic tendency in the name of practising liberalism and fighting the cult of personality. Altogether, they have created a situation where the tendency of liberalism and ultra-democracy is increasing inside the country on the one hand, while, on the other, when the very authority of the state is being virtually flouted by this process, the leadership is stifling and crushing it. In consequence, it is becoming harmful both ways. On the one hand, the forces of counter-revolution and liberalism are being propped up through propaganda and publicity; on the other, brutal repression is going on in the name of safeguarding the interest of communism. When there had been no necessity of applying force, they themselves created a situation which necessitated continued application of such force and these they are doing on the pretext of safeguarding socialism and revolution. They are in fact maligning the nobility of communism and thereby causing damage from both sides. So, the tendency of liberalism and revisionism growing in Czechoslovakia provided an opportunity to the counter-revolutionaries, under cover of liberalism, to stage counter-revolution there by speedily and devilishly confusing the world public opinion and even a large number of the communists. That the Soviet leadership being apprehensive of counter-revolution, has intervened there in such a situation to safeguard revolution could be said only if it was seen that it had itself engaged in the struggle to rectify its fundamental deviations. Because, these very deviations have given birth to this theory in Czechoslovakia and it can be said that they have gone a few steps further than the Soviet leadership in this regard. So, if the Soviet leadership means it seriously, they would have to retrace steps at one stroke. Or else, if they try to do so skilfully without letting others understand, there must be some definite symptoms and signs of it. But it will not help if these symptoms and signs remain hidden or beyond comprehension and in the realm of probability as I can discern through partly psychological and partly methodological analysis. In that case, none can come to a definite conclusion. As for myself, I have that restraint. I never assert something to be correct just because I think it so, for that may reflect my subjective thinking. So, if they retrace steps, there must be some definite signs so that it can be

understood clearly. A concrete expression in the form of ideological manifestation and some definite steps are needed, indicating that they are going to retrace. They can either retract from the present position by directly admitting their mistakes, or else, if they have some ego, they can retract skilfully and not at one stroke. I do not think that if someone wishes to retrace steps, he must do it with a declaration. Either let him come back totally free from blemishes, or else, there is no necessity of his returning if he comes back with a little ego — the point is not like this. The most important thing, I would say, is that they should retrace the steps. If they can come back straightaway, free from ego, then that would be a conduct befitting real communists. But even if they take to a zigzag course and retract through manoeuvres because of their ego, I would say that let them return, at least let the revolution be protected. The manoeuvres can be taken care of later on. If they do return, the communist movement would be largely saved from peril. Even if this return be secret and surreptitious, I would welcome it from one angle. At the same time, however, I would criticize this retracing of steps through manoeuvres. And if it happens that they retract by openly and fully admitting their mistakes and giving full recognition to whatever lessons they have taken from whomsoever then that would signify that these people have been able to hold aloft the communist ethics by freeing themselves anyhow from ego, false sense of prestige and feelings of national jingoism.

Intervention not for safeguarding revolution

So, until the Soviet leadership shows this by their utterances and activities, its contention that it has intervened in Czechoslovakia to protect revolution from the clutches of the new ruling group engaged there in paving the path for counter-revolution, cannot be accepted. This is the first point. Secondly, unless the Soviet leadership changes its own policies, then the pretext it is giving that it intervened in Czechoslovakia because the ruling group there was hobnobbing with the imperialists and getting closer to them, has no leg to stand upon. Because in that case, what could be gained by the Soviet intervention there ? Yes, one could understand the logic, if the Soviet leadership had argued that the Soviet Union, even if called revisionist, had not become out and out imperialist like the USA, exporting counter-revolution to different countries. At least the revisionists are not yet openly playing that role. So, to the revolutionaries the position of the Soviet Union is definitely relatively better than that of imperialists judged in the context of differentiating between one contradiction and the other. If the Soviet leadership's argument had been like this, we would have replied: 'Correct, but even that is not enough justification to support your action'.

It is true that alignment with the Soviet Union is less harmful than that with the USA and as against the USA, the Soviet Union can be supported on this consideration. Even then, the fanfare with which the Soviet leadership is claiming that it is championing and protecting the revolutionary trend cannot be supported any way. To justify its claim, the Soviet leadership would first have to admit openly that the hue and cry they have raised in Czechoslovakia is not for thwarting counter-revolutionary forces there. As a matter of fact, their activities do not prove this. They are saying all these only to confuse the world public opinion. Otherwise, why are they conferring with Dubcek and Svoboda there ? It is under the rule of this group that all this has happened in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet leadership is trying to come to an understanding with this very reactionary group. What does it mean ? Does not this very fact indicate that if this group promised that they would not go beyond the sphere of Soviet influence, then a compromise could be reached and the Soviet troops could return from there ? All this group has to agree to is that they would no longer use

some of their new terms and phrases which might go to help the imperialists, but in practice they could do what they are doing. That is, in pursuing the counter-revolutionary line, the new ruling group in Czechoslovakia has overdone it. If they do not do this, the Soviet leadership has not much to object to. Rather, if Czechoslovakia retracts and goes over to the side of China² along the path of revolutionary Marxism, the Soviet leadership would be much more infuriated with Czechoslovakia.

If you notice the attitude of the Dubcek group, you would find that they have been saying from the beginning that the Soviet intervention would be resisted, but not through violent means. They have instructed their army not to take up arms, that is, it is like a quarrel between brothers; they would resolve it mutually. In that case, fighting with arms would further complicate the situation and then they would perhaps not be able to resolve the matter fraternally. So, they have instructed not to use arms. It is clear from such developments that the Soviet concern is not to protect revolution from the danger of counter-revolution. In reality, pressure has been brought to bear upon the Soviet Union by the conference of the East European countries under Soviet influence so as to save themselves from the crisis in their countries that must inevitably follow the Czechoslovak happenings. Otherwise, the Soviet Union would not perhaps have done all this. Secondly, at joint sittings before this intervention, the Soviet Union did not get the clear-cut assurance from Czechoslovakia or could not understand in its own way that whatever else might happen, Czechoslovakia would not go out of the orbit of the Soviet influence or would not commit any excess or at least would not insist on such conditions as would help rapid spread of the liberalistic outlook in the East European countries — at least, would not press for any such term. If Czechoslovakia had indicated that it would desist from these, then they could practise as much liberalism as they liked under cover of revolutionary talks — there was no harm in that because the Soviet leadership itself was doing the same in their country. In that case, they would have nothing to worry about. But the vocabulary and slogans now being used by Czechoslovakia, the talks and activities it is indulging in, are sure to bring about calamity. What the Soviet Union is really interested in is to prevent Czechoslovakia from indulging in all this. So you see, if Czechoslovakia enters into a pact with the Soviet Union to give this guarantee, and if the Soviet Union understands that Czechoslovakia would not side with the imperialists and would no more complicate matters in adjoining East Germany, Poland and other East European countries, they could then do whatever they liked internally — the Soviet Union would have no objection to that. If such an understanding can be arrived at with Czechoslovakia, then it would be seen that the Soviet Union would withdraw its army and happily work with this very ruling group in Czechoslovakia, keeping them intact in power in spite of their counter-revolutionary talks and postures. So, the fact is not that the Soviet Union has intervened there to resist counter-revolution. From that angle, Zhou Enlai's observation that this conflict between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia is basically a conflict between the internal revisionist ruling clique of a country and an external revisionist ruling clique is correct. But, for the CPC to go so far on this as to say that the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia is comparable to Hitlerite aggression or the US military intervention in Vietnam is, I think, too much and an oversimplification of the issue. I am very much against such statements. But I am of the same opinion as China that the Soviet conduct has nothing to do with safeguarding revolution. But I have already said, there are symptoms that they might retrace steps. The criticism then should be such that it may create a favourable situation for them to retrace and that is what should be attempted. Previously, there have been efforts, time and again, to make them turn round and that attempt can again

be made now. Since they could not take to the correct path earlier, they would not be able to find it this time too — none can predict so beforehand. It is true that the level of consciousness they reflect indicates that there is little chance of their retracing. If someone asks me, I would say that in my assessment there is little chance that they would do so. In their attempt to retrace steps, they would again muddle up and create complications as they did before and create more confusion. But given congenial circumstances, at least some chance is there that they would retrace.

Had China not hit out at the Soviet Union but put forward a rich analysis, had they conducted the criticism in such a way as would have led the internal forces in the Soviet Union to think afresh, they could have helped the Soviet Union to retrace steps, if there had been the slightest possibility of that. In my opinion, the Chinese criticism ought to have pointed out to the Soviet leadership that what is happening in Czechoslovakia is in pursuance of Khrushchev's line, it is the outcome of the Soviet practice of liberalism, of the revisionism whose doors have been opened by the Soviet leadership and none else. The only difference lies in the degree by which they have outstripped the Soviet Union in their revisionist utterances, pattern of activities and magnitude of practice of liberalism.

Otherwise, as regards the basic principle, Czechoslovakia has taken to the same course as the Soviet Union had taken. It is the Soviet Union that had opened the doors. And if the Soviet leadership's contention that they have intervened there militarily to protect communism is to be accepted, then what they are doing now amounts to something like what used to be once branded as Trotskyism: that is, to occupy other countries through military intervention. The communists have never thought of exporting revolution through such means. The communists have advocated helping the internal revolutionary forces of another country by inspiring its people with the revolutionary ideology and in all other ways from the seat of state power in one country. They have declared that if need be they would send volunteers — and in fact have sent volunteers to other countries in support of revolution. Only if a country is militarily attacked by a foreign power and the army of a socialist country goes there to resist it for safeguarding revolution, then it becomes quite a different proposition. That is then needed for protecting the revolution of one country from foreign aggression or intervention. But the communists have never thought of protecting revolution by occupying a country through military intervention.

Purpose of criticism

I think another important point should be kept in mind while criticizing. The revisionism which emerged in the Soviet Union was brought in there motivatedly — it can be said to be the handiwork of a handful of people, but the whole people and the administration cannot be branded like this. It might be that some individual leaders were involved in a conspiracy. I cannot but note that such leaders might enjoy the trust of the Soviet people, may be due to their sense of national pride or chauvinism or for whatever reason.

Either because of the heritage existing for long or confidence or allegiance to the party, they have a respectful attitude towards the leaders. It may be an uncritical, blind regard, but it is there. Whether they are involved in a conspiracy is not a major issue to me here. When steps against an individual would be taken, that should be ascertained through investigation. The main task now is to defeat revisionism, the real basis of which lies in the low level of consciousness of the people; this is being revealed clearly, more so at present, by the wrong planning of the socialist economy. Naturally, in such a situation there ought to be painstaking, patient, concrete and

effective struggle and criticism. But the struggle from the Chinese side has not been like this. Rather, the manner in which they have launched a psychologically inappropriate ideological counter-attack against the Soviet Union in order to curb revisionism has objectively helped the Soviet revisionists to rally the people behind their leadership by utilizing the ultra-nationalist mentality that is there among the masses and the comrades because of their low level of consciousness, detract the people from revolutionary ideas and ultimately make them disinterested in such ideas.

Besides, the polemics China is conducting against Soviet revisionism reflect a somewhat low level of consciousness, but even then, if the Chinese contentions are properly grasped, it would be seen that the points being raised by China regarding the international situation and its contradictions are in the main correct. This does not mean that they have been able to correctly grasp all the particular contradictions in the present-day world and to co-ordinate and integrate each particular contradiction with the general international contradictions. It is not that they have correctly determined the stage of revolution in each particular country, its strategy and tactics. For instance, the people's democratic revolution that they have prescribed for India and all other relatively backward capitalist countries irrespective of specific conditions, is misleading. The particular concept and understanding about strategy and tactics of revolution which they have gathered from the Chinese experience — that particular experience, that model of Chinese revolution they have deemed to be universal and are thinking that revolution everywhere would have to be patterned after that. There are shortcomings in their thinking and their greatest shortcoming which is harming the international communist movement, is their very mechanical, psychologically inappropriate approach and aggressive postures because of which they are not being able to achieve effective result in defeating revisionism in spite of their great contribution in this regard. Even though their analysis on revisionism is in the main correct, the approach and manner in which they put their analysis suffers from mechanical thinking. In which situation and circumstances are they engaged in the polemics, the level of consciousness of those they are fighting against and also of their own supporters the world over — they are not at all taking cognizance of these. Those, too, have to be attracted and drawn to the side of revolution through uplifting the standard of their ideological consciousness, they, too, must be made to grasp the issue through this polemics. Otherwise, what purpose does the criticism serve? This is our criticism about the Chinese approach. Their main contention, their analysis about revisionism is in the main correct. But the way in which they go about it, the manner of placing their arguments, suffer from mechanical approach.

For example, when we speak about socialism, we say it in a concrete way for achieving a concrete objective. We do not speak to the sky. Similarly, when we speak on revisionism, we do so keeping in view the mental make-up of the revisionists in different countries so that it may be possible to develop the struggle against revisionism in a widespread manner by revealing and pinpointing the true character of revisionism. When I am speaking about Soviet revisionism in particular, the object of my discussion is to elevate the level of consciousness of the Soviet masses and by that I aim either at rectifying their leadership, or at helping develop a movement for removal of this revisionist leadership from power. My aim, surely, is one of these two. Otherwise, what is the purpose of my criticism? I aim at one more thing, too, that is, freeing the communist movements of different countries, the people's liberation struggles, the revolutionary movements and the democratic mass movements from the influence of Soviet revisionism. So, while levelling criticism against the Soviet revisionist leadership, it should be kept in mind that those who are in leadership there

enjoy the confidence of the masses. We may lament over why the level of communist consciousness is low the world over, but we all, more or less, are responsible for this. We cannot fight against revisionism by totally disregarding this reality of the situation today. We have to accept the reality that the Soviet appeal still holds sway over most people. You will find that most of the learned and educated people — I cannot consider all of them unwise or unscrupulous — think that it is the dogmatic attitude of China which is standing in the way of maintaining unity in the socialist camp over the issue of the Vietnam liberation struggle. Even many leaders of the CPI(M) — some of them may be unscrupulous, but there are experienced veteran comrades who are unanimous on this point at least — what opinion do they hold on this ? They hold that there should be some kind of unity at least for the sake of Vietnamese liberation movement in order to thwart imperialism, and by opposing the Soviet proposal for unitedly assisting the Vietnamese struggle, China is acting against unity to the detriment of the Vietnamese struggle itself.

Unity and question of leadership

These comrades are not at all able to grasp that this proposal for unity by the Soviet leadership was a mere eyewash. By raising this slogan, their very purpose was to put China in an awkward position *vis-a-vis* those in the communist movement who are not so conscious. I have seen even many veteran revolutionaries trying to put China in a tight corner by raising this issue of unity. They could not grasp at all that some concrete questions were involved in this issue of united struggle. The way in which dialectical materialists should understand the issue of unity is that in any unity there is a question of dominant or leading role. So, in this particular case, who would have the leading role — China or the Soviet Union ? There can be no real unity bypassing this question. Many think that since the need for unity is paramount, why should this question have to be dragged to the forefront and decided first ? If this is done, will there at all be unity ? Or would not this further damage whatever unity is there today ? Because of their low level of consciousness, they think that these two powers, instead of showing interest in fighting in the Vietnamese struggle, are out to solve beforehand who would have dominance within this unity. They fail to understand that this is a concrete and realistic question, because if the Soviet Union has dominance in the united struggle, then it would go in favour of the revisionists. In the name of helping revolution, it would eventually extend the sphere of influence of the revisionist clique and destroy all possibility of the Vietnamese revolution acting as the bulwark of international revolution. This is what the Chinese leadership is saying. One may not agree to this, but the point should be deeply pondered over before criticizing China, going by the catchy slogan raised by the Soviet Union. Secondly, in resolving this issue of unity, it should be examined first as to how the situation that has come about on the question of providing advanced military hardware and technical assistance by the Soviet Union can be handled. This question would not have cropped up if the Soviet Union had unconditionally handed over the armaments to the Chinese experts and the leading comrades in the Vietnam war. But the Soviet Union has not done that. Is there evidence to show that the Soviet Union is handing over its missiles and armaments to the Chinese experts in this struggle against US imperialism in Vietnam and then proposing unity, but the Chinese are still objecting ? In that case, I would have agreed that the continuing objection of China is stemming from dogmatism: just because the Soviet Union is revisionist, China does not want unity with it and is blind to the urgent necessity of unity in this particular case.

So, as I said, during this debate China should have put it to the Soviet Union that if the revisionist policy, as the outcome of which all this is happening in Czechoslovakia, continues, then what solution would be achieved even if an understanding is eventually reached with the ruling group there? For instance, Novotny, who was a supporter of the Soviet line, was also a revisionist. But even he had to go away from the leadership. Those who are in the leadership at present are also supporters of the Soviet leadership. But the possibility cannot be ruled out that just because they are revisionists themselves, even more ultra-revisionist cliques would not topple them and take the country to even worse position. Rather, all have this apprehension, especially East Germany; because, East Germany has a sense of national humiliation which springs from a particular kind of German national pride. Does not the Soviet leadership know it? Do they not know that even in spite of so much reconstruction and such superiority of the socialist system, nobody leaves West Germany to reside in East Germany? Rather, people were fleeing from East Germany to the West and to check this they have sealed the border between East and West Berlin from the side of East Berlin. What does it mean? It means that the people of East Germany are not yet free from the sense of national pride. They suffer still from a sense of national jingoism. This has persisted because of the weakness of the ideological struggle. Towards the end of Stalin's life, a struggle was initiated to get over this weakness in the communist movement. But Stalin could not release this struggle covering all aspects. Even then, the theoretical struggle which Stalin had begun has been destroyed by the present Soviet leadership in all spheres. So, how would they do away with this national jingoism? Where are the instruments of struggle? Can it be fought out simply by raising slogans? The feeling of national jingoism still persists there and these incidents are proof of that.

Maligning nobility of communism

If this continues in Czechoslovakia, it would be difficult for the East German leaders to hold their country together. That means, the unification of Berlin which they have sought to achieve in one way would be attempted to be brought about through an internal counter-revolutionary upsurge and again the Soviet Union would then have to crush it by sending military forces. The same would happen in Poland, too. It has already happened in Rumania. Naturally, East Germany and Poland are putting pressure upon the Soviet Union to nip it in the bud. But would the matter end there? The Chinese analysis should have been like this. Either they may not say anything at all; or else, if they do, they would have to say all these, explaining the issue elaborately. By analysing the negative aspects of this Soviet intervention, it would have to be shown that the counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia should not be allowed to gain ground. If it gains ground, such incidents would happen in other East European countries, in areas under the Soviet influence. This is because the liberalism to which they have opened the doors is all the time paving the way for rise of liberal forces which the Soviet Union cannot control or check because it has no ideological centralism and because it has destroyed the weapon of proletarian internationalism which had guided the world communist movement for a long period. In practice, the term proletarian internationalism has today become reduced to just a hackneyed jargon. There is no reflection of any emotion or deep realization about it. In such a situation, therefore, how can the Soviet Union control it through military intervention? What they crush today may again come back tomorrow. But, on the other side, what reaction is it generating? This suppression is creating a hostile attitude towards communism in general and the Soviet rule in particular, coming as it

does from a fear complex and sense of humiliation. By this, it is helping to malign the nobility of communism in the people's eyes.

So, if this process continues, they would not be able to protect the Soviet revolution and the Soviet Union cannot even protect the countries under its influence just through military intervention. And if the Soviet influence has to be continually protected through military intervention, what are they reducing the socialist state to? What difference remains then between an imperialist country and the Soviet Union? Do they not realize this? All these are in fact following as effects. But are all these fatalistically inevitable? No, these are the outcome of the deviation of the Soviet leadership. It would have to be shown by concrete analysis like this, point by point. Others should be helped to take lesson from these. In that case, what the Soviet leadership has been saying to confuse the world public opinion and its attempt at deception would have been exposed. Even if some communists are now misguided by the Soviet leadership and are made to believe that the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was to protect the revolution, they would have come to realize the truth in no time. Just as the Communist Party of France, although an ally of the Soviet leadership, has opposed the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. They are not allies of China, but of the Soviet Union. They are revisionists and opposed to China. Does not the Soviet Union understand what a situation it has brought about? Has all this fallen from heaven all of a sudden? At such an advanced stage in the onward march of the communist movement when, in the post-Second World War situation, imperialism was almost cornered and the superiority and victory of the socialist system were being revealed continually and it was emerging as a world system of states — what a calamity befell it just at such a time! Wherefrom did capitalism gather this strength to fight against communism? The Soviet leadership surely does not consider capitalism more progressive than communism! If they think so, let them declare that openly. Let the people of the world hear it. At least their stand can be understood then. No, surely they do not think so. All these are therefore following from their revisionist outlook and activities. In the present situation, it was very necessary for the CPC leadership to check the temptation of hitting out in the name of criticism and put the issue in this manner.

It was such a great opportunity, I think, when there was scope for initiating thinking and contemplation anew among the Soviet masses. Whereas there was an opportunity to induce many serious communists, still under illusion about the Soviet Union, into thinking afresh, the CPC straightaway bracketed the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia with the Hitlerite attack! The moment it is put like this, the common people take it as a canard and an overstatement of facts. Consequently, people who could be made to understand and grasp the matter so that it might perhaps have been possible to change the revisionist leadership — that process was set at naught. Even if the revisionist leadership could not be changed through this, there would be no harm, because this struggle would have been twofold. Either the leadership would have rectified itself and returned to the revolutionary course in this way, or else, removal of the revisionist leadership would have been possible by the Soviet people and the communists within — like those in power in Czechoslovakia now have thrown out the earlier ruling group. They rallied the forces of counter-revolution to overthrow the earlier rulers because the latter's politics was conducive to counter-revolution. If we can project the revolutionary politics instead, that politics would help in developing the revolutionary forces against the revisionists and they would one day be able to overthrow the revisionist leadership from power. This is possible and this is the process we are supposed to adopt. So, we should start from the positive, the positive

aspects which I have already referred to. But what China is highlighting is only the negative aspect and the CPC is abusing them as much as possible. This is a very bad and dangerous tendency, and we are noting this with much apprehension because we do not have even an infinitesimal fraction of the capacity to change the world situation and pattern it in favour of revolution which the CPC possesses. But such a giant party is not being able to grasp these points because of inability to correctly understand the issue or because of over zealousness or an inclination for one-sided emphasis and because of mechanical and somewhat faulty approach.

Besides, while judging, we should keep in mind another important point. The tendency that Czechoslovakia has been reflecting is a dangerously counter-revolutionary one. On the other hand, our analysis of the Soviet Union is that in spite of the Soviet leadership being revisionist, the Soviet social system is still basically socialist and the CPSU a communist party in essential characteristics, but its leadership is in the hands of the revisionists. I consider that so long as this analysis remains valid, although the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, in the name of keeping the Soviet influence intact or on whatsoever pretext, represents the wrong aspect of the Soviet approach, it is better, in a relative sense, to remain with the revisionists in case Czechoslovakia has reached the stage of being turned into a bastion, a war-base of imperialism in Europe through counter-revolutionary upsurge. In this sense, the Soviet intervention cannot be called that bad and it can be supported from the legal standpoint and I think that should be done. But there can be no moral sanction behind this. The Soviet Union would have to turn back from the revisionist path if it is to secure the moral support of the genuine communists. Without this, it is an intervention of the worst kind. For keeping under control the very situation it has brought about itself, the Soviet Union has now launched the intervention. This act is without any moral basis. So, the character of this struggle is not that of one between revolution and counter-revolution. This is really a struggle between two revisionist powers, both of which are opening the doors to the counter-revolutionary forces to serve some other exigencies.

Regain revolutionary orientation

But whatever be the reason, we should not speak in the same vein as the bourgeoisie. One more point should be kept in mind here. See, such a serious event took place, but the imperialists who had kicked up a row and had even contemplated counter-intervention in the case of Hungary have not done so this time. This time, President Johnson has tried to reap some political dividends through tall talks. From the very beginning because the Soviet Union has perpetrated this, they have brought up this issue in the Security Council of the UNO, knowing well that it would not be discussed there. The idea prevailed in them that nothing further than this should be done in the matter, anything further attempted would be an excess, and in that case the Soviet Union might perhaps ultimately turn towards China and return to the correct revolutionary line because the Soviet state is still a socialist one. They know that all these are happening really because of the line the Soviet Union is pursuing. That country is still mainly moving within the orbit of the policy of peaceful capitulation to imperialism and what the imperialists need most is that it continues to pursue this policy. Thus the objective of the imperialists has been just to take advantage through propaganda and see how much they can do to malign communism more, how much more can the practice of liberalism be enhanced by applying pressure and how far more can the influence of liberalism be spread within the worldwide communist movement making use of the occasion. Nothing more than this. From this, too, it

follows that had the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia been basically for protecting revolution, then the attitude of the USA would not have been soft like this.

I think the Czechoslovak incident may prompt the Soviet Union to ponder why such signs are being manifested in one country after another. It is not that such a thing has happened in Czechoslovakia alone. It has happened in Rumania previously. There was an incident in Poland. The tendency of the people in East Germany to leave that socialist country proves what extent of discontent is brewing up among the masses of these countries against their rulers, irrespective of what happens outwardly. The Soviet leadership should understand these and realize the matter. So, there is a possibility of rethinking among them. I have observed earlier also that they do not exercise their brains unless forced to do so in the face of adversity. It is for helping the process of their retracing steps that we should criticize in a different manner. Just as it is necessary to expose their revisionist character, so also their pretence that they are after protecting revolution through intervention in Czechoslovakia should be criticized. Again, the difference in outlook between our criticism and the criticism of the imperialist-capitalist countries should be explained and made clear.

The object of our criticism is totally different from that of the imperialist-capitalist countries. They are actually speaking in support of the counter-revolutionaries and for maligning communism. Their motive is very clear. They are denouncing the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. But what is now happening in Czechoslovakia ? The Soviet Union is trying to arrive at a settlement with those who were creating trouble there. And how much has been the damage due to the Soviet intervention on such a big scale in Czechoslovakia ? So much propaganda of the imperialists could cut no ice in the matter. They do not even have the opportunity of concocting stories. Yes, the Soviet Union has militarily intervened in Czechoslovakia, but there have been efforts to keep the losses to the minimum. It has shown the utmost restraint in this regard. And what are the imperialists themselves doing ? They are brutally suppressing the people's movement in their own countries and intervening in other countries one after another. The USA has perpetrated ghastly killings in Vietnam which violate all codes of conduct, not to speak of the humane code of conduct. They have surpassed even the criminal acts perpetrated during the whole of the Second World War. So, what is there for the imperialists to shout about so much against the Soviet intervention when they themselves are committing even more heinous crimes, one after another, all over the world ? So, the imperialists have no right to criticize the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. But we are not saying that this Soviet intervention is justified since the imperialists are interfering in other countries. We consider that the Soviet Union has committed wrong by intervening in Czechoslovakia. But it had to do this in order to get over the damage caused by its deviation and it would have to go on committing mistake after mistake like this till it can free itself from revisionism and regain revolutionary orientation. So, a genuine communist, until he has finally concluded that there is no possibility any more of their retracing should, instead of either supporting their activities totally or continuing just to abuse them from start to finish, try to ensure that they return to the correct course. This is the outlook with which we view the incident of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and this is how I think the matter should be approached.

1. Afterwards, Comrade Ghosh termed this party an out and out national communist party.
2. At that time the revisionists had not usurped the party leadership in China.

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