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IN TRIBUTE TO COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

Observance of the Fifth of August, for the vanguard detachment of the Indian working class, is the occasion to rededicate itself to the task handed down to the Party by its leader, while departing from the masses this day twentythree years ago.

Down the streets of towns and villages of this land marched myriads of men and women today to proclaim the message of the life of the great leader of the proletariat. For, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was the epitome of the proletarian revolutionary spirit, who held aloft till his last breath the great banner of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, defending it against all deviations and distortions and waging an unrelenting struggle against every shade of bourgeois ideology.

Foremost, he embraced Marxism-Leninism as the philosophy of life, the science of all sciences, the guide to action, which he practised all his life in all its spheres. So applying Marxism-Leninism consciously and ceaselessly in every sphere, he concretised it on the Indian soil and cultivated it in the contemporary international situation, elaborating, enriching and elevating its understanding to a newer height. In the process, he himself emerged

as the living symbol of the noblest heights of communist character and culture. So, exhorting the working class to imbue revolutionary struggles with the higher proletarian culture and ethics, he taught: "The kernel, the living soul of any lofty ideal, any philosophy or any worthy ideology lies in its cultural, ethical and aesthetic standard. Marxism is a lofty revolutionary ideal. Its kernel, the noble soul of this noblest revolutionary ideal also is ingrained in its cultural and moral values."



No problem at the international and national level in his lifetime remained unilluminated by the light of his revolutionary wisdom. No sphere of life is there, including philosophy, science, art and literature, which remained outside of his easy access.

Fighting against economism, opportunism and every brand of social democracy which have deeply infiltrated the working class movement in this country and abroad, he shed light on its course and provided the correct base political line for its progress to the revolutionary goal. In doing so, he concretely and decisively pointed out that modern revisionism-reformism was the main danger confronting the world communist movement in the post-Second World War period.

Pointing to its root, he had cautioned in 1948 itself that the lowering of the ideological standard in the then international communist movement, unless checked in time, might lead to unimaginable consequences. He warned, while analysing the documents of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, that it

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Election and the Revolutionary Party : From the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

"...remember, this government is not very powerful or all powerful today. It will be a travesty of truth to say that if a party is returned at an election with mandate to form government, that vests in it enough power to change laws at will and solve everything ...the power is the state. The real power is in the hands of those who control the economy, who control the banking system, the mills and factories and all industries; the real power is in the permanent staff of the state, that is in the state structure, in a word.

The state and the government are two different entities. There are two different names for them, both in English and in Bengali—in any language for that matter ...The state denotes a system, a concept of law and order, a concept of principles, a concept of some fundamental rights, and on this basis a structure made of bureaucracy and administration, judiciary and the military to protect all these ...The state power protects the capitalist social system with the help of these three main organs or pillars ...Remember, with the change of government, these three organs of the state do not change their character. Whether the government changes through election, through a coup, or through any other process by crossing over from one party to another on the floor of parliament — these three organs of the state which are moulded in a particular mould, in a particular way, in a particular manner like a machine, remain unchanged. It is just like a machine with different parts which has been built in a particular way so as to perform a particular type of work. In whichever way the operator, the engineer, the mechanic operates the machine, skillfully or badly—the machine will perform only that type of work for which it has been designed. In the same way the mental makeup, the norms and the structure of the capitalist state machine — its legal—juridical concepts, its concepts about democracy, about the nation, about the people — are all moulded in a particular way to protect capitalism, the capitalist system and the rule of the capitalist class...the capitalist state is a machine — which continuously gives rise to exploitation, creates unemployment, generates speculation, anarchy, crisis in production, crisis of market,

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee bidding Red Salute to the revolutionary memory of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh after garlanding his portrait, on 5th August '99 at Salt Lake Commune, Calcutta

Indian steel industry hit by US protectionism

A Bird's Eye View of the Global Market of Steel

Steel is one of the major commodities of bulk international trade. With the protracted Asian crisis, the year 1998 brought a recessionary phase for the steel industry. For the year 1998, world crude steel output declined by 2.5%. Production in Japan was adversely affected [down by 10.5%] by the slow down in the economy and the Asian currency crisis. US crude steel production dropped by more than 10% while production in India declined marginally [Source : *International Iron & Steel Institute (IISI)*]

That the recession sweeping the global capitalist market is the real cause of crisis in iron & steel industry is amply proved by the fact that while the production capacity has increased, the consumption level has either gone down or remained stagnant. Just to mention concrete facts we cite, "...since 1996, the rise in capacity to supply the market in most of the countries with ambitious expansion plans has outstripped the growth of demand in certain regions. This is particularly true for the Asian countries and North America."

Problems of Indian Iron & Steel Industry

Pressed by squeezed demand for steel in world market, competition is becoming sharper for lowering the prices of steel. In this context, it is seen that the Indian steel industry suffers from high cost of basic inputs. The cost of fluxes and ferro-alloys and electricity is high. The high cost of inland transportation is a further problem. The continual rise in railway freight increases the cost of steel to the ultimate consumer.

In the context of the world-wide recession, the Indian iron and steel industry has been hard hit by US protectionism. Increased capacity coupled with slackening demand poses serious problem before the industry of different countries, more so of India. The problem is compounded by the US decision not only to raise tariff but also to levy anti-dumping duty. This makes export of Indian steel to the American market almost impossible.

The US Protectionism

From a news item (*The Statesman*, July 22, '99) it is clear that the USA, to protect its own industry, has clamped down a high tariff rise from 4 p.c. to 59 p.c. against six countries exporting steel products to that country. Added to this is the whopping anti-dumping duty of 58.6 p.c. levied on Indian steel plates. These tariffs have come on the top of the tariffs of 1 pc. to 23 p.c. proposed only sometime back. The countries targeted are India, Japan, France, Indonesia, Italy and South Korea.

The anti-dumping duty imposed is to exploit temporarily the provision allowed under WTO rules where the government concerned considers that the products imported bear artificially fixed low prices. Although this provision is meant to be a short term measure as a warning to the domestic industry that protection is not for an indefinite period, the anti-dumping duty can be stretched as far into future as the administration deems fit. The US order has come as a sequel to feverish lobbying by the US steel industry which found

itself at a disadvantage in competition with steel products of these countries, particularly vis-a-vis Indian export of steel plates.

As the Presidential election in the USA is approaching, the steel majors of that country who contribute a big part of the election funds could presumably carry the government with them on their demand.

The US government obviously taking recourse to protectionism, will not allow other governments to do the same against US exports. This double standard exposes the hollowness of free and fair trade assured in the GATT of 1994. And protectionism, if universally followed, may turn global recession into global depression in no time endangering world peace which has already become conditional on US terms and dictates. The so-called unipolar world reflects nothing but the brazen faced arrogance of US imperialist overlordship based on its military.

Viewpoint of Indian Steel Industry

It has been explained by a senior Indian official : "By imposing such a duty the Commerce Department (of USA - Ed. *P. Era*) has virtually put an end to any future exports by SAIL, because the US company importing steel from India will now have to give a declaration that it would pay all the accumulated dues once the final ruling (from WTO-Ed. *P. Era*) comes into effect. After all, this is a preliminary duty". (*The Statesman*, July 22, 99)

Further, "why should any company take the risk of importing steel from SAIL knowing fully that such import would be fraught with risk. It would only make SAIL uncompetitive in the US market. Not only against exports from other countries but also against domestic players."

India Government Reaction

It is palpable that the US imperialist rulers are resorting to protectionist policy to give shelter to US steel lobby in flagrant violation of the stated norms and principles of the GATT. The US imperialist rulers want to expand their markets abroad and not to face competition in the domestic market. They are showing this arrogance in trade war because of their advantage in having the WTO in their grip and control. They can make use of the WTO rules as they like while they demand the developing countries to make their markets open hunting ground for US multinational companies. This is why the demand raised by the UTUC-Lenin Sarani at its recently held general council meeting that India should come out of WTO is fully justified.

In this background, the BJP, now in the government at the Centre, though it chants the mantra of Swadeshi, is actually conceding to the neo-colonial exploitative demands of the multinationals, mostly of US and European origin.

Of course, the government at the Centre, facing the inflow of low priced imports of steel from Korea, Japan etc., has by a notification banned all such imports below a certain floor price in order to protect the domestic producers.

Besides, it has complained to a visiting WTO team against discriminatory policy being pursued by certain member countries, particularly USA, which slapped on Indian steel exports the anti-dumping penal duties.

Notwithstanding these measures, how the BJP government is outbidding the parliamentary rivals in giving effect to globalisation policy that gives a free hand to the strong finance capital of America and Europe is best illustrated in an article, published in *The Statesman*, captioned "Big boys like to play alone". While the BJP government should have responded by counter measures to defend the domestic industries against the neo-colonial attacks of powerful multinationals, not in the interest of the capitalists alone but also of bank and financial institutions, small investors and what is more important, of thousands of job holders, it is doing just the opposite.

The upshot is that the foreign MNCs who are partners in 1,300 joint ventures in India, now want to withdraw from those in order to float subsidiaries with 100 p.c equity control or new joint ventures with their majority equity participation to produce the very products the domestic industries produce.

That is to say, the foreign multinationals which refused so long to give the green signal to upgradation in technology to the joint ventures, will now provide it to their subsidiaries and new joint ventures to snatch the domestic market from domestic players to emerge as strong competitors to domestic industries in a bid to expand market.

The tragic consequence of the Central government's plan to allow a free hand to the multinationals will be lakhs of employees losing jobs and banks as also financial institutions going sick.

Kargil Provides Artificial Stimulation

Faced with the endemic crises of capitalist economy, what do the capitalists and their subservient governments do in remedy? They try to provide artificial stimulation to the market by militarising the economy. Long back, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader, teacher and guide and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, analysed this growing feature in capitalist economies. Comrade Ghosh showed : "What do we mean by artificial stimulation of market? It means, when there is lack of demand in the market in the normal course, to keep the factories that are running to whatever extent, operative, at least at the minimum level, through government expenditure without depending on the purchasing power of the people. The only way to ensure this is to increase industrial effort for defence, increase the military budget. This defence production is financed by the government, and the government itself is the buyer too. There is no necessity to depend on the people's purchasing power. So, in this era of market crisis, defence industry is of great value to Indian capitalism also. The capitalists cannot backtrack on this. Whether the people receive the bare minimum sustenance or not, they have to go on augmenting the defence

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Human Rights Commission indicts West Bengal Government

Jyoti Basu, the CPI(M) chief minister of the Left Front Government in West Bengal, often accuses the BJP leaders of running a government at the Centre which is "uncivilised", "barbarous". While no sane person will doubt the incivility and barbarity of the BJP government reflected in the dastardly acts of crime committed especially in Orissa and Gujarat in Christian bashing to the extent of burning alive an Australian missionary along with his minor sons as also in torching churches and the Bible and torture on poor Christian people in Gujarat, the pertinent question remains: can his own government be called a "civilised" one? The West Bengal Human Rights Commission, in its annual report for 1997-98 disclosing frequent custodial deaths in prisons in West Bengal proves that the West Bengal government has no difference with the BJP government in Delhi so far as trampling the inalienable right to life of a citizen is concerned. The direction of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Inspector General of Prison, West Bengal, to submit a detailed report on this, published in the dailies, surely puts the Left Front Government on the dock.

Inhuman treatment to prisoners

The West Bengal Human Rights Commission has revealed in its report for the year 1997-98 that 46 deaths occurred in 54 West Bengal jails in the first six months of 1999, almost two per week on the average. The deaths, according to the findings of the Commission, were caused due to criminal negligence by the jail authority and the rampant corruption and sickening conditions prevailing in these jails despite repeated public assurances by the ministers that corrective steps were being taken to remove these.

From the report it is obvious that sick prisoners in desperate need of treatment were left to die. Medical facilities are wholly inadequate even in an important jail like the Presidency.

A noted daily has made the editorial comment: 'The paradox is that jail officials who are reluctant to provide medical aid to even terminally sick prisoners are themselves part of a thriving racket in the sale of medicines. What is worse, the bulk of the expenditure on medicines is incurred by jail officials, not prisoners. The report is an indictment of a variety of human rights abuses by the jail administration'. (*The Statesman*, 22.7.99)

It has been alleged by this daily, and is also well known in knowledgeable circles, that intense rivalry between two unions of jail employees controlled by two partners in the Left Front — R.S.P and CPI(M) and the involvement of the leaders of both these contenders in gross corrupt practices have made jails the hunting grounds of the corrupts and evil doers. While the Inspector General of Jails remains dumb, the Jail Secretary has found solution in transfer of ring leaders of unions. This simplistic solution may be a bureaucratic device to feign innocence but in reality it tries to cover up something deeper, something graver in import. We shall revert to this later.

Supreme Court's intervention — Commission's findings — Government's response

The Chief Justice of India directed the Inspector General (Prison) of West Bengal to

submit a detailed report on the factual aspect of news item in a national daily on July 20 that "one prisoner commits suicide every week in the insensitive jails of the State or dies in judicial custody".

The letter addressed to the Inspector General reads: "The news report was placed before the Chief Justice of India. Having considered the same, his lordship has been pleased to direct to call for your report on the factual aspects of the news item. You are also requested to report as to whether any measures relating to jail conditions have been initiated by the State Government and jail authorities pursuant to the submission of the report by the West Bengal Human Rights Commission to the State Government."

Well, the Inspector General will definitely reply with plenty of assurances about jail reforms and the steps contemplated in this regard. The response of the Left Front Government to the concrete proposals of the Human Rights Commission in the State is quite revealing from the news published in *The Statesman* in its July 23 issue. Some excerpts are given below:

"Whether relating to custody deaths, neglected hospitals and patients or rackets run by jail staff, the State Government goes on ignoring vital recommendations of the West Bengal Human Rights Commission. A comparison has been made between report's proposals and the State Government's action taken. Report speaks volume about the criminal apathy to human life and thus the character of the Left Front Government."

Some of the recommendations and the reaction of the State Government may be enough to understand the real character of the government that boasts so often of being in power for more than 22 years, perhaps the longest tenure in India.

The Commission asked for augmentation of daily spending on mental patients from the present rate of Rs10/-, inadequate to meet the caloric requirements, to Rs 25/- as also "afternoon tiffin" besides the two meals for them. The action report is mum on such a trifling issue! The report recommended family rehabilitation for the cured patients. This also has been found to be too insignificant by the State Government to evoke any response. The report also suggested that if the relatives were found to be not interested to take back the cured, government must take up the responsibility for their rehabilitation in government run houses. This too fell on deaf ears.

Being disgusted at the appalling quality of supply and services, the Commission suggested "considering the chronic malaise in jail management, NGO's are to be entrusted with some jail services like supply of meals to prisoners, health care, managing visitors of the inmates, vocational programmes, recreational activities." The action report prefers to be silent on this too, as on the other points.

The Commission has also expressed dissatisfaction at the high number of suicides in the custody. The report says such deaths in custody, suicide or 'unnatural', should be investigated to uncover possible dereliction or negligence of duty but the government has preferred silence even on such a grave matter. Even in such matter like supply of daily items like toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc., to the prisoners'

liking the government does not feel ashamed to keep mum.

Disdainful attitude to the recommendations of Human Rights Commission

The Commission, after repeatedly citing how union leaders are running rackets inside jails, recommends transfer of all jail employees who have served in a particular jail for more than five years. The government merely admits acts of indiscipline because of the rivalry between two unions but keeps mum on the transfer issue. The cynical indifference of the government to the questions of modern diagnostic facilities in jail hospitals where most of the equipments are either missing or defunct or "neglected hospitals, where facilities are poor" as pointed out in the Commission's report, is best expressed by its silence.

Tyranny in jails

Coming to the basics, the people will have to understand that crisis-ridden capitalism failing to solve even a single burning problem in the people's life and faced with growing resentment, is imposing tyrannical rule on the society. Apprehensive of people's organised opposition to decadent capitalist rule which may ultimately lead to the overthrow of the very system, given the revolutionary leadership as the vanguard of their movement, the ruling capitalist class finds no other means than police, jails and hired muscle men to defend itself by injecting fear in people's mind.

Historical experience indicates that once Bastille, the dreaded jail in France, depicted in Victor Hugo's celebrated work, became the very symbol of tyranny during the Bourbon rule. The day of storming and destruction of Bastille has long been celebrated universally. Today, in different context, police and jails, the blots on civilisation, have become so very fearsome as the instruments of tyranny in the hands of the new Bourbons — the parliamentary political parties of different hues in the service of crisis-ridden capitalism. All the parties in power serving the ruling class from government, the pseudo-communist CPI(M), no less than the branded bourgeois parties like the Congress and the BJP, are faithfully resorting to repression of the people, trampling upon human rights.

People must therefore be prepared for a sustained democratic movement in defence of civil liberty, human rights and dignity. From this movement voice should be raised for institution of time-bound Enquiry Commission composed of eminent retired judges, doctors, journalists, etc., with unimpeachable record of commitment of democratic morals and principles. The government must be forced to accept its recommendation without any plea whatsoever. But people must be aware that whether in this country or elsewhere, every jail is becoming Bastille-like, the symbol of burial ground of humanist morals and values and practices. So, uprooting capitalism from society has become essential for destroying the new Bastilles of tyranny today. The French Revolution destroyed the Bastille with the removal of the Bourbon rulers through people's upheaval. In today's perspective, only anti-capitalist socialist revolution can destroy the Bastilles of today.

Despite so many parties in politics there are only two sides — one for the revolution, all others opposing it

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recession, crisis in science, etc., and ensures higher and still higher profits for the capitalist class ... And the government, is just the mechanic or operator of this capitalist state machine. So, **the state machine doesn't change its character just through a change in government. Therefore, the capitalist social system remains in force with the help of these main organs. If the people's committees, starting from the lowest to the highest levels that would be formed through the mass movements, are not built up on the basis of political consciousness and on the edifice of higher morality, ethics and culture and developed in such a manner so that they become adequate to perform the work of these three organs - then we cannot give birth to the alternative state power. And unless this is achieved, revolution will never come merely by a change of government through election.**

...By this political power of the people, I mean forming such conscious, fighting people's committees comprising the people and the youth in the villages and different localities in cities and towns as that can themselves perform and take care of every type of work using their own heads, tackle all situations and problems themselves; those who extend influence over the people not through tyranny or hooliganism, nor with the help of the police force but through their intrinsic qualities, ability, personality, thinking and contemplation, through their character and organising capacity. I am urging formation of such effective, politically conscious, powerful people's organisations right from the village level up to the national level as can take care of their work by tackling all adverse situations....

When people get disgusted and resentful against the government, another government steps in through elections. The common people hold some persons to be dishonest, they think that it will bring them good only if the dishonest are removed and honest men are installed in their place. The bourgeois parliamentary politicians resort to this type of propaganda with the object of confusing the people under cover of a 'principle' or 'ideology'. So, I would caution the workers, peasants and the common people not to be swayed by this type of deception. Because, the basic problems of the common people cannot be resolved through a change of government only. Whatever democratic rights may be conferred, whatever laws may be enacted and whatever programmes for distribution of relief to the people are adopted in the parliamentary system, the emancipation of the people cannot come about by that. ...What happens when a change of government is brought about in this way without a radical change of the state structure? If honest men come into government, that creates further complications because common people have faith in them. If they are confused, despite being honest and cannot take to the path of revolution, they have no other option but to objectively act as the lackeys of the capitalist class. It is this capitalist system they have to reform and further consolidate, yet the grievances of the people get subdued at least for some time because the people

trust them. Hence, the bourgeois rule, the capitalist rule only gets the opportunity to further consolidate and build up a firm foundation during the regime of 'honest' administrators. Thus, Indian capitalism, too, became further entrenched and consolidated under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru...

...Therefore, it is self-deception as well as deceiving others to hold that this capitalist social system and state structure would remain intact and we would try to reform it, would try to do planning within this set up and try to bring about people's well being. Struggles for reform may be there and struggles to secure relief in the interest of the people. But that must have a clear-cut objective — that the movements for these reforms and relief programmes should pave the path of anti-capitalist socialist revolution of India and not proved to be hindrances to it, that such movement should not create illusion about the capitalist system and its parliament, rather it would help to dispel the confusions and illusions of the people. Revolutionaries extend support to reform movements only if they are conducted in this manner and our party, too, supports such movements. Reforms which do not help to strengthen the revolutionary struggle constitute a self-deception, a bourgeois device to keep the people's militancy subdued for some time with sugar coated talks....

...Why do we fight against Congress? Is it because of any personal enmity with the Congress? No. I think that at least we are not fighting it for that. Then, are we fighting Congress because it is doing well and enjoying privileges while we are being deprived? No. We think that we have no moral right to oppose Congress for that reason. Why are we anti-Congress then? Because it is the Congress that is trying to anyhow protect the present capitalist rule by all means, tactics and stratagems, cunningly and through weaving various arguments. Congress is a political party of the capitalists, bourgeois class for the purpose of defending the capitalist social system and state. And because we want to overthrow capitalism, it is our bounden duty to fight the Congress politically.

Therefore, I find no difference between the anti-Congressism of Jan Sangh (predecessor of the present BJP - Ed. *P. Era*), SSP, Congress(O), the Swatantra Party or the Pragati and the anti-Congressism of those who are no longer anti-capitalist or have a programme of anti-capitalist revolution even though they talk about Marxism-Leninism. If they oppose Congress not because they are opposed to capitalism and want to overthrow it whereas the Congress is trying to preserve this very capitalism, that is, if they do not profess anti-capitalist revolution, then what is the difference between their anti-Congressism and the anti-Congressism of say the Pragati? I at least fail to understand the difference — you may think it over. We are anti-Congress because Congress is the protector of capitalism. Otherwise, "the Congress is bad while we are good" — I think such talks are meaningless. Whether one is good or bad is no doubt very important, but far more important and pertinent is the question of the

system, the state and the economic system : whether the Indian economic system is capitalist or not and whether the Indian state is trying to consolidate and strengthen Indian capitalism by all means. This is the crux of the matter... (The above portion is an excerpt from Comrade Ghosh's speech delivered on 24th April, 1974. At that time, the Congress was the undisputed trusted political representative of the ruling Indian capitalist class serving its aggregate interest, enjoying an unbroken tenure in the Central Government ever since independence. At present, the BJP is aspirant and trying to move into the position held by the Congress for so long. — Ed. *P. Era*)...

...Although on the surface there are many contending sides in politics and although the big press projects and props up many a side, I think there are in reality only two sides in the perspective of the main movement — one is for revolution while the other is opposing revolution — whether it is on behalf of the Congress through its politics, through various juggleries of "leftism", through the slogan of democratic socialism or through various slogans and catchy political stunts of the right reactionaries.

...Some comrades ask : What's the use of taking part in election when it is rigged? They do not know that within the question itself is hidden their misconception and confusion. The question boils down to this : When despite best of our effort we will not be allowed to win, what is the use of taking part in election? No, we are in election because the fever of parliamentary politics grips people's mind during an election. For how long? So long as a revolutionary party has not acquired adequate strength and been able to educate the masses with minimum political consciousness through various struggles including the elections coming in-between, all conducted complementary and related to the principal political objective.

This phase of democratic mass movement would not have been there had one revolution been transformed into another averting the path of consolidation of capitalism and the tradition of parliamentary politics as happened in the November Revolution of Russia. The Bolshevik Party was in that position. They could form the Soviets on the morrow of the February Revolution. Could our 'Leftists' accomplish this task in our country during our freedom movement? Let alone isolating the bourgeois leadership — they, these socialists, revolutionary socialists, communists — came into alliance with it in a national front. They had no political strategy to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. As a result, the worker-peasant-people soviets did not appear. The bourgeoisie could easily seize the state power. That is why, it was not possible, as in Russia, to make the bourgeois revolution skip over to and made interwoven with the socialist revolution. We are passing through the phase of parliamentary democracy.

In a situation like this, therefore, where democratic establishment or parliamentary

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In election, go to the people with correct revolutionary line to build up mass movement

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democracy strikes roots, no matter how much resentment grows spontaneously among the people, they do not reject parliamentary politics. And rejection is not for rejection's sake but for doing something positive. If we reject parliamentary politics and confine ourselves within our shell isolated from the masses or pursue our revolutionary line 'illegally' before exhausting this phase of democratic mass movement, that cannot help revolution....

... So long as revolution does not come about, whether the people want election or not, like or dislike it, they are dragged into it, they come into it. Revolution means, when the people have understood that there is no necessity of election, when they have got organised on the basis of this consciousness, are boycotting election in an organised manner and not negatively, when they have arrived at the stage of uprising in a positive manner and say "No, no more elections but capture of power", only then election ceases to be useful. Otherwise, the people get caught in election fever again and again. And revolutionaries as well as non-revolutionaries, all have to participate in election in order to be with the people — even genuine revolutionaries have to do this. Only those who practise sectarian puritanism and not revolutionary politics, keep away from election, spare themselves the bother — all else have to participate. Now, while participating, should the approach be the same for all? Outwardly viewed, all are getting involved in elections — himself, we the revolutionary Leninists, the social democrats, the genuine as also the shams, the bourgeoisie and the pseudo-socialists too. And everybody would take the stand that he is right while the others are wrong. And the argument put up would be that any tactics or stratagem to defeat the opposing parties is justified because my party is right. If you argue like this, then no difference in class approach remains between you and the bourgeoisie, no difference in attitude and outlook. But this is proved to be wrong on close examination.

In fact, the tactics of struggle, style of work,

organisational method, approach to election and the tactics for winning or losing are all determined on the basis of the concrete stage of the revolutionary movement and the level of mass consciousness in the country. The main objective of the bourgeoisie is to win the maximum number of seats in the election by hook or by crook to capture power and being installed in power, to adopt various reform programmes and raise catchy slogans in order to perpetuate the existing system. To adopt a style of speaking that helps them to pose as progressives before the people in order to keep them confused and befooled for some time and thus lengthen the lease of life of this present system — such is their objective. So their main aim becomes to anyhow grab as many seats as possible in the election. Besides, they also present political programmes, immediate programmes of the work, etc. Whatever be such programmes and slogans of theirs, their real purpose is to grab the maximum number of seats.

And when the proletariat has no other option but to enter into election battle from the revolutionary purposiveness of staying with the people, it does so on the basis of the revolutionary mass political line. It too tries its best to win the seats but anyhow capturing the maximum number of seats should never become the central focal point of its objective. The main focal point should be to train the people to fight the election battle on the basis of a mass revolutionary line. If we can win all the seats while doing so, well and good; if we can win not even one seat, so be it; if we can save ten seats this way, we must do; but the central focal point for us would never be to grab some seats by any means, fair or foul.

What is that mass line and mass style of activity that I will carry to the people at the election time? I will go among the masses with the message: since you have to take part in the election, you should do so from the viewpoint of the people, on the basis of revolutionary politics. While doing so, you take utmost care to guard and protect your bases. Win as many seats as you can, the maximum number that you can, if possible even all the seats if you can on this basis,

on the basis of this line. Only on this basis and not by confusing it. If you argue like "do whatever necessary to defeat the enemies anyhow" even while wearing the label of revolutionary, then in reality you would be trying to put into practice, in the name of revolution, the very same tactics and style of work the bourgeoisie adopts to fight elections. Does this make one a revolutionary? Does this advance the cause of revolution? No, this does not make one a revolutionary; nor does it advance the revolutionary work. Does it achieve what we say about exposing bourgeois parliamentary politics through election? Just to mouth such talks and to actually put this into practice - are these two the same thing? ...

... All the parties, even those with labels of Leftism, are united in a conspiracy to isolate the SUCI. They want the SUCI to surrender to their vile election-oriented politics. We can never submit to this combined pressure of such "Left" parties. They have failed to realize that this is not an election-oriented party. True, this party participates in elections while conducting mass movements. But this party gains in strength in spite of electoral defeats. The workers of this party are so trained that when they fight an election, they fight like tigers, but at the same time, they are mentally prepared to face defeat. So I ask them: How dare you raise the bogey of election trying to scare us into surrendering our revolutionary base political line for fear of electoral reverses? ..."

Sources :

The following speeches of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh :

1. Speech on "People's Liberation Pledge Day" (15th August, 1967)
2. Labour Policy of First UF Government - its real significance. (14th May, 1967)
3. Gana Andoloner Samasya Prasange (concerning mass movement) 21st June, 1975)
4. Some aspects of Revolutionary Proletarian Party and the Role of its Workers. (a compilation of speeches)

IN TRIBUTE TO COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

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would open the floodgate of revisionism. While many in the socialist camp attacked the Cultural Revolution in China, he hailed it as magnificent, at the same time sounding a note of caution against the traits of "socialist individualism". On the other, through analysis of the daily and hourly crisis of world imperialism, he revealed how it threatened to engender war.

What he had felt at the tender age of thirteen was that to remove the woes of their life the Indian people needed to win freedom from the British imperialist rule, for which he plunged into the thick of the revolutionary current of the Indian freedom struggle against its compromising trend, never looking back afterwards. This perception gradually matured into the deeper realization that for their emancipation from all exploitations the Indian masses needed to accomplish the anti-

capitalist socialist revolution, waging struggles against the capitalist rule clamped in the aftermath of the Independence. Deeply realising at the same time that the then Communist Party of India had failed to evolve as a real communist party, he embarked, in company of a handful of revolutionary compatriots, on the task of building the genuine communist party on the vast Indian soil, the Socialist Unity Centre of India, conducting a tortuous and ceaseless socialist struggle covering all aspects of life in order to identify the self with the class, the revolution and the party. The party remains the concrete expression and manifestation of his thoughts and his exemplary life struggle for acquiring the noblest communist character.

He was the personified concrete expression of the collective knowledge of the party. In every moment of his existence, he worked, thought,

breathed and lived for the class, the revolution and the party. He taught: "The correct revolutionary consciousness is the correct proletarian class consciousness, and the correct proletarian class consciousness is the correct party consciousness."

He is no more in flesh and blood. But his teachings remain, along with the noblest example of his entire life struggle.

To the memory of our most beloved and departed leader, teacher and guide, founder general secretary of our party and the great leader of the proletariat, we redeem our pledge to bend ourselves fully to carry forward the banner of socialist revolution, proletarian internationalism and great Marxism-Leninism.

(The above tribute to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was sent through e-mail to the fraternal parties and organisations abroad on 5th August itself.)

Kargil provides artificial stimulation to economy

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industry. To rationalize the issue, the people are given to understand that this is being done because the nation is in danger. I say, it is the present economic crisis that is really the more powerful reason than the danger to the country. Otherwise (unless militarisation is resorted to – Ed. P. Era), the total economic structure of India would collapse.

For instance, the steel that is being produced continuously, how can this be sustained if there is no suitable market for it outside India and unless at least some demand can be created in the internal market? There would be a glut in the market, shifts would have to be closed down and the steel plants at Durgapur, Rourkela and Bhilai would become bankrupt. That is why the beating of war drums. Preparation for war is to be made, that is, an artificial boom is to be created in the market through increasing the defence budget. Government would become the buyer, consuming a part of the steel produced. And the government itself would try to sustain the engineering industries to some extent by placing orders on them. The Indian capitalists cannot do without artificially stimulating the economy in this way through increasing military expenditure and defence industry." (free translation from excerpt Comrade Shibdas Ghosh quoted in our Bengali organ *Ganadabi*, issue dated July 24, 1999).

We are once more witnessing a confirmation of this penetrating analysis centring round the present Indo-Pak Kargil conflict. Spurred on by the war-like situation in Kargil the BJP government has started injecting artificial stimulation to the Alloy Steel Plant, a unit of the SAIL, by placing orders for defence materials on it. This loss making unit has just received a huge order for special steel needed to manufacture the shell casings for Bofors howitzers that played an important part in Kargil operations. The Ministry of Defence placed an order for 4,000 tonnes of special steel last month, and has followed it up with a fresh order for another 1000 tonnes. The plant expects a third order for 5,000 tonnes soon. The ASP sources disclose that the work on production of trial armours for some army test vehicles is in the final stage at the ASP mechanical repair shop. ASP has a very good chance of receiving bulk orders for armoured vehicles. The ASP admits that it gets a fair share in the production of steel for defence purpose. For the past few years, it has been supplying particular varieties of steel (Jackle

M and Jackle MI) to the Rourkela plant which manufactures 95 mm thick armour plates for tanks. It also supplies Rs 40 crore worth bullet proof jackets to the army every year. ASP also hopes that this year's increased defence requirement is likely to add at least Rs. 200 crore to its last year's turnover of Rs. 400 crore. (*The Statesman*, July 21, 99)

Burden of Crisis Shifted to the Working Class

It is obvious therefore that in the crisis ridden moribund capitalist economy of India, valuable metal like steel is wasted in defence goods instead of being properly utilised for the building of industrial plants and in other fields that bring wellbeing of the people. Defence build up seems to have become the important market for steel rather than the developmental activities. The latter, however, urgent, call for government funding in substantial measure which is not being found possible because big chunks of revenues extracted from the people go to unproductive expenditure on defence and unproductive top-heavy administration, and is wasted in luxuries of the politicians and the rampant corruption.

However, despite bigger and still bigger use of steel for defence, the loss of the Alloys and Steel plant of the SAIL mounted to Rs. 70 crore in the last year. And the American

Consultancy agency McKinsey prescribed shutting down of the SAIL in its report last April. Pursuing this policy prescription, the Durgapur unit of ASP was closed down on June 15 and the ASP's Calcutta office is likely to be wound up soon. Meanwhile, a hope has arisen that as a direct offshoot of Kargil the increased defence orders will bring SAIL out of the red and so the Kargil conflict, however bloody and murderous, promises to be a boon to the iron and steel industry but not so to the 1500 employees already earmarked by the ASP as surplus. The management will press for Voluntary Retirement Scheme for even more employees than have already come under the scheme. So, Kargil may prove to be a boon to the capitalist economy, the capitalists, traders, the army of bureaucrats and subservient and corrupt politicians of the parliamentary parties but it cannot mitigate the attacks on the living and lives of the workers and employees. Rathr the entire burden of crisis of moribund capitalism and additional expenses of the present stepped up war effort will be passed

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Calcutta, 5th August, 1999 : A portion of the huge gathering at Subodh Mullick Square and beyond to observe the 23rd death anniversary of great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. (above) Comrade Provash Ghosh, member Central Committee addressing the gathering. Central and state leaders are seen sitting on the dais.

'Never compromise in the struggle to identify yourself with the society, class and party

– Comrade Nihar Mukherjee at Bihar Party General Body Meeting

A state level general body meeting of party activists was organised by Bihar State Committee, SUCI from 2nd to 4th July 99 at the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought in Ghatshila. The meeting was conducted by our beloved General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee.

Comrade Amriteshwar Chakraborty, Secretary, SUCI, Bihar State Committee hoisted the red flag and paid floral tributes before the statue of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh to mark the commencement of the three day long camp. He also placed before the house the organisational report prepared by the party State Committee in the very first session. The report contained the organisational activities of Bihar State party, its frontal organisations besides various prospects and drawbacks linked with them since the past one year. The report was followed by a short introductory address by Comrade Nihar Mukherjee wherein he outlined the national and international situation, various possibilities before the organisation and urged upon all comrades to speak out openly on all their points.

In the next two sessions, comrades from various districts placed their organisational views, observations and suggestions. They also outlined their experiences, and enriched the entire house on not only the national and international socio-political scenario but also on other serious organisational aspects. They spoke on both prospects and limitations, simultaneously suggesting on how to overcome these shortcomings.

The fourth session was addressed by the leaders of Bihar State Committee. Summing up the deliberations of the comrades they spoke on the tasks before the Bihar state party in the coming days. Their discussions contained the plans and programmes of the party State Committee for the expansion and consolidation of the organisation. They also placed before the house the details regarding the launching of mass movements on burning issues of mass life.

Besides such serious discussions, comrades also participated enthusiastically in daily physical training sessions, cleaning work and games.

Besides these, in between the main sessions, a number of meetings were conducted by various frontal bodies and other party subcommittees to chalk out the future course of action. The entire environment reflected seriousness of the highest degree which is one of the essential features of any revolutionary organisation.

In the last session, our beloved General Secretary, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee in spite of his serious health condition, spoke at length on a number of important issues. He pointed out that all parliamentary political parties including the so-called leftists such as the CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) are engaged in the rat race for power at the Centre and in the various states. Patronised by the bourgeois class these parties have always been hoodwinking the masses to fulfil their own interests. However; today they stand totally exposed. Their anti-people activities, both within the parliament and outside, have revealed their ugly opportunist character. Thus the progressive character of bourgeois parliamentary democracy the heyday of capitalism has faded away. Today in

the era of imperialism, in parliamentary democracy a government is no longer of the people, by the people and for the people; but it is very much a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. Election is nothing but a farce. Money, muscle and media determine the outcome of elections. Being a revolutionary party, we know well that for the masses election can serve no purpose at all. Only to educate the masses, free them of illusion of the parliamentary politics and organise them on the revolutionary line as enunciated by Comrade Lenin and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, we take part in the election. Being a revolutionary political party we have to face the elections with the right revolutionary spirit. If there is any possibility of winning the elections, of course by fair means, we shall definitely seize the opportunity. After winning we can strengthen democratic movements by raising popular issues within the Parliament and various Assemblies. Even if we are in no position of winning, we must fight to consolidate our organisation so that after the elections we shall find ourselves in a better position organisationally. At the same time we must also try to bring before the masses the stand of the party, its ideology and politics.

We must show that even a stable government won't be able to solve the problems of mass life. Under this moribund capitalist regime, they will continue to accentuate. No single party has the required strength to form a government on its own. Mounting capitalist crises has brought into the arena regional capitalists who too are posing as big challenges before the corporate houses.

The bourgeoisie is fanning up national jingoism to divert popular attention from the burning problems of mass life. The Kargil issue is nothing but a product of such attempts of the bourgeois class. Moreover, moribund Indian capitalism is turning towards militarisation of economy to come out of the present crisis. The Pokhran blasts too are a result of such attempts of the bourgeoisie. The entire system is being run by industrialists, bureaucrats and police-military. They are the Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar of the present day Indian polity.

On organisational questions, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee stressed the correct methodology. Besides, he also spoke about the problems often faced by comrades in their personal lives. He laid before the house the examples of Lenin, Mao and Comrade Ghosh to explain his point. He said that those who can devote their entire time for the party shall definitely do so. But those who are unable to devote their full time and who have to lead a family life, must first look after their parents rather than their wives. He said that the party organisation must be a synthesis of veterans, the middle aged and the young. Every comrade has to release his individual and collective initiative to the highest potential. They must never compromise in their struggles to identify personal interests with that of the society, class and the party. Only through such arduous struggles upto the last breath can a person rise to the status of a true communist. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's life struggle will serve as an ideal in this direction.

National and international conditions are developing fast in our favour. Comrade Ghosh's

thoughts are inspiring the toiling masses throughout the land and abroad. Comrades must release their political initiative, go to the masses and educate them. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee stressed on the one hand the need to release mass and class struggle on the burning problems of their life and on the other, give a strong foundation to the organisation starting from the grassroots level by nourishing all with great attention and care by releasing a relentless and intense ideological-political-organisational struggle following the teachings of Comrade Ghosh which will eventually help raising a band of revolutionary cadre in the Bihar state party. Assessing the organisational development through collective exchange, the Bihar State Committee needs to restructure and allot on the comrades newer and newer responsibilities. By following this course they will also have to build up people's struggle committees, enrol volunteers, develop volunteer corps who will conduct the mass movements involving the masses as far as possible to keeping in their mind the task of developing alternate political power of the people in its wake. The success of all this depends on how far and how best we have grasped the teachings and life struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

The *Internationale* marked the end of the three day long camp. All the comrades returned, more determined, more firm and more confident than before.

On Steel Industry

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on to the shoulders of the common man through increased prices and taxes.

The Way Out

Summing up, it may be concluded that iron & steel industry which plays a pivotal role in industrial activities in any economy is suffering today because of deepening crisis in world capitalist market reflected in the economies of different countries. The sharpening of trade war between the important exporting countries is inducing the managements to reduce cost by shutting down departments, closure of units, merger of plants, all of which inevitably lead to downsizing of employees.

In vain will the ruling capitalist class from country to country try to stave off the crises by providing artificial stimulation through militarisation of economy. And in their bid to do so, each time will they be overtaken before long by an even bigger crisis. Endemic crises of capitalist economy and war generated by imperialism-capitalism can be ended only by putting an end to imperialism-capitalism itself.

So, the fight of the steel workers in defence of job security is to be interlinked with the wider anti-capitalist movement. For only the end of capitalism can lead to unfettered increase of production capacity and its proper utilization in industrial, developmental and productive activities freeing science, technology, talent and labour power from the tentacles of capitalist profit motive.

You can find true sense of honour only in revolutionary politics

– Nihar Mukherjee

(Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's message on the occasion of the School of Politics of the AIDSO West Bengal State Committee held at the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought at Ghatsila, from 16th to 18th July '99)

Comrades,

First of all, let me convey you all my revolutionary greetings. Overcoming much pain and difficulty you have come in large numbers to attend the School of Politics of the AIDSO. From 16th till today, the 18th July, these three days, you have participated in the school in a very active and lively manner. Although my ill health did not allow me to get to the venue of the school, you should know for sure that my mind had been with you all these three days. Your role in this school has made me very happy.

At the call of a great ideology you, young students, in so large numbers have come here. Not only for AIDSO, you are without doubt a great potential for the students' movement of the whole of West Bengal. And I believe you will put at the fore all your strength and capability to translate into reality this potential.

Certainly this is never an easy task. Instead of treading the beaten track, you have fought against the current and thus have reached the present

higher stage, which too had not been at all easy. Likewise in future, many obstructions, many calamities will befall you in every step. And, that is only natural. Because, nothing great can be acquired without sacrifices.

Remember, one day our dear leader and teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, when quite young, left behind his home, family and his near and dear ones to search for the most precious wealth in human life. And that was lofty ideology and profound sense of honour. You too have to acquire this wealth, giving up a lot.

Study in schools and colleges may bring degrees, and even jobs, one may learn catchy phrases – but one will never know noble ideology and true sense of honour. This can be found only in revolutionary politics, and nowhere else. The song of life sung by young Kshudiram at the gallows is a living inspiration to us still now.

And for this very reason, as the revolutionaries are absorbed deep in creative work, adversity and misery from the outside cannot take away their light. You will have to rouse this consciousness, emotions as well as indomitable spirit among the students. You are building yourselves as revolutionaries with the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh — who else will bear this responsibility? This task is difficult.

But one who will grasp it from within, although difficult, this work to him is of profound joy and honour.

The curse of capitalism has made the students' community forget itself. They do not know how every moment capitalism is degrading and perverting their character, taste and even humanity. But never forget that those students are human beings. Your mission is to rouse the flame of humanity. One who can mingle with them and be one among them, can only rouse them from slumber. He alone can become their true friend and true leader. For that you really need the eye to see inside. Only then you can be their real friend and even leader. For that what is necessary is an eye to really see, an ear to listen, a mind to feel and a wholly dedicated heart.

The strength of revolutionary consciousness coupled with your emotional faculty will certainly rouse their good sense and humane mind. This faith and conviction I do have in you. I hope, you too will prepare yourselves for the future movements in this school as you leave here.

Long Live Revolution !

Red Salute to the great leader of the proletariat, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh!

West Bengal State Committee on Gaisal train accident

On the recent accident due to head-on collision between Awadh-Assam Express and Brahmaputra Mail at Gaisal, West Bengal, Comrade Provash Ghosh, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of the party issued the following statement on 2nd August '99 :

“We are deeply shocked at the death of more than five hundred passengers and injury of over thousand due to the terrible rail accident at Gaisal of West Dinajpur.

Due to the cruel apathy of the railway administration, rail accidents and accompanying deaths have become almost a daily affair. Following each accident ministers, high officials pay customary visit to the spot, routine homage to the deceased and announce departmental enquiry along with a meagre compensation to the victims and finish their duty. But the number of accidents is mounting as usual. The government only issues statement without repairing the tracks, improving the signal system or doing other necessary servicing. We demand :

1. The rail minister should resign admitting the moral responsibility of the accident ;
2. The relative of the deceased and the injured should be given compensation of Rs. 5 lakh and Rs. 2 lakh respectively.
3. The culprits should be given exemplary punishment through judicial enquiry.
4. The injured should be rescued on war footing, provided with proper medical treatment.

On Hiroshima Day People March against US Imperialism in Calcutta

On 6th August, the Hiroshima Day, hundreds of volunteers of the All India Anti-imperialist Forum staged a protest demonstration before the USIS in Calcutta. There the effigy of the US President Bill Clinton was burnt. It was heavily raining when the well decorated fervent procession started from the Subodh Mullick Square and all the participants, drenched to the skin, raising spirited slogans against genocide by imperialism, US imperialism in particular throughout the world; against proliferation of all weapons and specially nuclear weapons, and called upon to develop anti-war militant peace movement, marched the whole distance and gathered before the USIS.

54 years ago, on 6th August US imperialism exploded atom bomb on Japan, resulting in genocide, crippling countless and crippling generation after generation. Even today the US is continuing the genocide in different parts of the world. Hiroshima Day can be truly observed by building up world public opinion against US imperialism, and militant peace movement against experiments on nuclear weapons and all war implements on nuclear weapons, against imperialism and war. This was explained on Hiroshima Day before the USIS by Dr Asok Samanta and Rupan Chowdhury.

Discovery of Mass Grave in Bangladesh

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's letter to the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina

7th August, 1999

Dear Prime Minister,

We are shocked along with all the right-thinking people, at the news of discovery of mass grave at Mirpur, Dhaka on 5th August. No word is strong enough to condemn the US backed Pakistani army which perpetrated barbarity on the liberation fighters and on the artists-intellectuals, who stood for the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971.

We request you to take initiative for trial and just punishment of the murderers through an international tribunal comprising internationally renowned personalities against the genocide.

Sd/ Nihar Mukherjee
General Secretary
Socialist Unity Centre of India

48, Lenin Sarani
Calcutta 700013

Reports on the observance of 5th August in different states will come out in the next issue of the Proletarian Era.

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