



".....the principal struggle to become a revolutionary proletariat or a communist is the struggle to acquire the cultural and ethical standard which enables one to submit his individual interest most happily, voluntarily and unhesitatingly to the cause of the class, revolution and party by participating first of all, directly and actively, in the revolutionary movements of the toiling people and thereby grasping the revolutionary politics of the proletariat."

—Shibdas Ghosh

Red Salute Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

*Proletarian
Era*

Organ of SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA

Some Aspects of United Front Politics and Party Organisation

(On 30th July, 1969, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our most beloved departed leader, teacher, guide and an outstanding Marxist thinker of the era, addressed a study class at the Muslim Institute Hall, Calcutta, under the auspices of the Calcutta District Committee of the party. The second United Front Ministry of which our party was a constituent was in power in West Bengal at that time. Comrades had raised a number of issues agitating them, particularly relating to the United Front politics, democratic mass movements and the day-to-day party work.

An English version *in synopsis* of the discussion Comrade Ghosh made at the class is given below.

For any inaccuracy or inadequacy of expression the responsibility lies with the Editorial Board, *Proletarian Era*.)

Comrades,

Requests have been made to discuss the present political situation, especially in the background of the situation developing within the United Front, and certain questions have been raised as to what should be our mode of functioning within the United Front as well as outside. There are also some other questions relating to the day-to-day organisational activities. I shall dwell on this second type of questions later.

HISTORIC NECESSITY OF UNITED FRONT AND OUR APPROACH

As regards our attitude towards the United Front and our role therein, comrades are to always keep in mind one fundamental point, that the purpose and outlook of a Marxist-Leninist party is basically different from that of the petty bourgeois social democratic parties on the question of united front politics and consequently, on the question of the conduction of the united front and the United Front Government too. The Marxist-Leninists view united front as a historic necessity, indispensable at a given stage of democratic mass movements in order to further the cause of the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Whereas to the petty bourgeois social democratic parties of all varieties, whatsoever, it is a mere exigency, a privilege, a screen for fulfilling their petty parliamentary ambitions. This explains why, on questions of principle, a revolutionary party has to encounter, on almost every occasion, continuous tussle and conflict with the other petty bourgeois parties, even while fighting together from a common platform and with a common programme of action. Now see the situation within the United Front and also outside. From the CPI(M) to the Naxalites, all these parties sometimes support forming the United Front Government, sometimes oppose it. Within the United Front the CPI(M), and others, occasionally though, support our party's stand, at other times oppose us. Most of the time they all oppose us although occasionally on some issues some of them support us. Say, at some stage, on some particular issue, the CPI(M) supports us whereas others oppose. Then, maybe at some other stage, on some other issues, parties like the Bangla Congress, the Forward Bloc, the CPI, or the RSP support us and all others oppose us. In any case, opposition to us is the dominating feature. In the background of this opposition, all the parties within the United Front are one against us.

They all oppose us from a common class interest. So, they are all united against us, even though we are a small

party. We are smaller than many of them, but on the question of opposition to us they are all determined and they do it zealously. Actually it is class opposition. Not only our conflict with the Congress, the capitalists and the jotedars, but even the conflict between us and the CPI(M), between us and the Bangla Congress, between us and the CPI and also other parties are all expressions of class struggle in the ideological sphere. But it is also a reality that at the same time a struggle for unity with these forces is going on to wage a relentless battle against the most reactionary section of the ruling class and orient the main direction of class struggle against that section with a view to ultimately overthrowing the bourgeoisie from state power. This process of unity and struggle within the united front centring round ideological questions will go on till the task of isolating these forces from the masses by developing revolutionary consciousness among them is complete. At least on our part, we must try to maintain unity with them till then for the necessity of revolution. You know that at the time of installation of the second United Front ministry I had warned that it would not be an easygoing affair this time. They have already started attacking us. During the first United Front Government which lasted only nine months, we lost four comrades in their attacks. This time we have lost four already. Another four have survived, and about fifty have been seriously injured. In most cases it resulted from clashes with the jotedars in league with other parties and the police.

But we are to realise that for that we cannot take an extreme approach and entertain the idea of leaving the United Front. Because, the United Front is a historic necessity in the present condition. In view of the present inadequate strength of every opposition party to provide singlehandedly political and organisational leadership, a United Front of Left and democratic parties and forces against the reactionary parties and forces is the only alternative. In other words, till a party emerges in the course of conducting democratic mass movement which, along with its mass fronts, is capable of coordinating and leading singlehandedly all mass movements towards their historical goal of anti-capitalist socialist revolution, the United Front is not an exigency, but an indispensable instrument of democratic mass movement. For those who think that in the process of organising revolution the present stage of democratic mass movement cannot but continue for quite a period, the United Front is the only effective instrument to conduct democratic mass movements in the present condition.

'UNITY-STRUGGLE-UNITY'—BASIS OF UNITED FRONT POLITICS

We should try to understand the real necessity of a United Front. In fact, it is a historic and objective necessity to free the mass mind from the ideological and organisational influence of different bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties which is still there over the people. A United Front acts on the one hand as an instrument of struggle to organise and mobilise the struggling section of those people who suffer from illusion and are still under the spell and influence of social democratic politics of different parties on the arena of united mass movement, it at the same time offers an opportunity to the vast masses drawn in the vortex of united movement to get acquainted and imbued with the revolutionary politics and ideology more and more on the other. Of course, coming in close proximity and contact with the higher cultural, ethical and moral standard reflected by the

revolutionary leaders and even general workers of the revolutionary party contributes a lot in this process. The pernicious influence of different varieties of reactionary bourgeois thinking operating inside the society acts as a stumbling block in the way to their joining hands with revolutionary politics. This is the only objective way to make people free from this pernicious bourgeois influence and attract them to the noble ideology of communism. Therefore, although United Front is merely an exigency to all other bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties, but to the real revolutionary party, United Front is an indispensable and invincible instrument to further the interest of revolution. This is the reason why does a revolutionary party attach so much importance to keeping the unity of the United Front intact like the apple of one's eye, while conducting at the same time fierce and intense ideological battle against the non-revolutionary politics of other constituents of the front. Conducting struggle against the common and main enemy on a common minimum programme and a code of conduct while unleashing at the same time an uncompromising struggle in the ideological field is what we call the principle of "unity-struggle-unity", the essential revolutionary principle of United Front politics.

So, we need this instrument till it has completely exhausted itself in so far as the consciousness of the broader masses of the people is concerned. But then we should also realise that some criticism or expression of grievance by the people here and there does not mean that this historic necessity has been completely exhausted. We have pointed it out on many occasions that whether this necessity has really been exhausted or not has to be assessed by critical and concrete analysis of the concrete situation, from historical experience, and in the background of objective reality. Only by this method may we conclude that the United Front is no longer an instrument of struggle for the people, and has become the object of people's hatred. When that becomes the objective reality, then we will be backed by the broader masses of the people if we oppose the anti-people policies of the United Front. That is something completely different from the support of a handful of frustrated people and youth who may be hailing us if we leave and oppose the United Front at this moment. Therefore the question of coming out of the United Front does not arise at present. Whereas it is true that by staying in the Front we shall have to face the assaults by other constituents, something we did not have to suffer, ironically though, on such a scale even during the regime of the Congress. Because, when the Congress perpetrated police atrocity, all the opposition parties condemned it in a voice. That was the disadvantage of the Congress. But now, since it is done by the so-called left parties, perpetrating police atrocity has become almost a privilege. This much the difference between then and now. Now, under U.F. regime if the police opens fire on the people, one section of the people defends that police action while another section condemns it. This passive attitude of the people poses danger for democratic mass movement. See the situation. If we criticise some anti-people acts of the U.F. Government and if the Congress supports the criticism from its petty consideration then the so-called Marxist and Leftist parties raise a hue and cry as if we are opposing the United Front itself. These are all gimmicks which these parties resort to taking advantage of the inadequacy of the people's level of consciousness.

No doubt it is a very difficult position, but we have to move ahead in this difficult situation. Even amidst so many difficulties there is some advantage too in this position—that is in remaining within the U.F. What is that? By

remaining within the Front we can at least try to curb excesses committed by the other constituents. Being in the Government along with them we can try to exercise a restraining effect on them, although we are fully aware that given an opportunity they will combinedly bear pressure on us. Maybe we shall not succeed in stopping repressive measures on the people, but yet if we can curb it even to an extent we can advance the people's struggle somewhat. That little opportunity even should not be missed by us. The revolutionary struggle of the masses which we are trying to build up is totally different from the parliamentary opportunist tactics resorted to by the CPI(M) to expand its party under police protection and behind smokescreen of revolutionary jargons.

Our strategy in the parliamentary forum is to uphold the principle that police shall not intervene in the legitimate democratic mass movement and implement this policy in the interest of advancing the mass movements outside. This is one aspect of the revolutionary struggle. While it shall be the task of comrades to simultaneously organise movements in the extra-parliamentary sphere, to consolidate the pro-UF mentality of the people and isolate the jotedars and capitalists and build up popular resistance against the police repression to ensure onward march of democratic mass movement. The people are to be educated on the strategy and tactics of revolution, the revolutionary consciousness has to be developed in them and the revolutionary organisations of the masses are to be built up. The revolutionary party is not afraid of conflicts. It only keeps vigil not to slip into adventurism and so educates its cadres to acquire correct revolutionary consciousness so that in any eventuality the entire party can work just like one man, so that even at the time of a tremendous emotional upheaval, or even during the peak of an agitational outburst the cadres will keep their heads, take instructions from the leaders and work just like soldiers in a planned way.

Because the essence of the revolutionary purposiveness is that the revolutionaries do not, under any circumstance, lose sight of their ultimate aim and object of struggle, they are never caught unawares. Remember, the ruling class, the vested interests and all the reactionary forces which are the social support of this capitalist state structure are against us. Do not forget, no matter whether the CPI(M) and the Naxalites doubt the revolutionary character of our party, the State and its intelligence have not made any mistake in realising the real character of our party. In fact, since long they were gradually realising it and, therefore, keeping watch on us. After 1967 elections they have realised very clearly where lies the real danger. They give publicity and try to pose some parties or forces as 'danger' but they do not really consider these forces to be dangerous. But they do not give any publicity of those forces whom they really consider 'dangerous' lest widespread attraction grows among the people towards them. Bourgeois tactics is to keep the people in complete darkness, as far as possible, about that party, that ideology and that course of struggle which pose the greatest danger to it—till it becomes a real headache for them, a force of movement to reckon with. Because, once it is revealed that this party is the real danger to the bourgeoisie, it will have an electrifying effect on the people, and when the people will start rallying round this party there will be no way stopping it. Unless forced by circumstances, it will not allow any publicity about this party and even when it has to, it so manipulates the news as to confuse the people. This is the bourgeois tactics. But the bourgeoisie gives full publicity to the fake revolutionaries whom they need to run their repressive machinery. There is no real danger of revolution from them, but because of their mock postures for revolution they are given full publicity as 'dan-

gerous', and a hue and cry is raised over them making it an alibi for maintaining so-called law and order. Repressive measures are thus tightened more and more to crush the preparations of the genuine revolutionaries.

You should be aware of this particular aspect of bourgeois class conspiracy. It is not to say that the revolutionary party at no time gets publicity. But even when it gets, it does so by forcing the unwilling hands of the bourgeoisie through the impact of its revolutionary activity. The bourgeoisie cannot but give this little when the activity of the revolutionary party stands out as a glaring fact in the eye of the people. But even when the ruling class and its publicity media have no way to deny this glaring fact they employ every means to minimise its importance, to give it such a twist and distort it in such a way as to confuse the people. From class instinct the bourgeoisie consciously works in this way.

In this situation, our party stands alone in relation to these forces both within the United Front and outside it. That is to say, in relation to these parties and forces subserving the bourgeoisie and in relation to the bourgeois propaganda machinery we stand in isolation. But in relation to the people we do not stand in isolation, though we do not as yet command much public support. We are with the masses. But the vast masses do not know us enough, even, they have wrong ideas about us. Gradually they are coming to know us and getting attracted to us to an extent, but there is confusion too at the same time. They do not have a clear perception. For instance, on the issue of *gherao*, there is both appreciation and confusion. The appreciation, too, has not stemmed from a correct understanding of the stand of our party. Many of those who appreciate it are not acquainted with our stand.

Because, taking advantage of the low level of consciousness of the people, the bourgeois Press has raised a hue and cry over *gherao* with the sole intention of confusing the people and maligning the progressive labour policy of the U.F. Government, which was enunciated by our party at the time of the first U.F. Government of 1967. At that time I had repeatedly explained that we shall not indulge in ultra steps. We were aware that the U.F. Government shall have to move within the constitutional framework of the capitalist system. But then the question is : How should revolutionaries approach the question of constitutionality or legality. Of course they can only approach it from the point of view of people's interest. I had then explained that every student of ethics and jurisprudence knows that in this exploitative social system what is legal may not always be legitimate and moral. Similarly, everything illegal in the eye of law need not necessarily be unjustified, illegitimate and immoral. On the basis of this outlook, we showed, the task of the U.F. Government will be to encourage all legitimate and democratic movements of the people. With this aim in view, the U.F. Government will, on the one hand, ensure that the police do not intervene in the legitimate and democratic movements of the people. This will give a breathing space to the legitimate struggles of the people which were always ruthlessly crushed by the erstwhile Congress regime. On the other hand, along with this struggle and with the backing of this struggle, we shall courageously try to bring in new legislations and amend old laws in conformity with the interest of the people. It will be indeed an achievement if the U.F. Government can thus bring in reforms achievable within this constitutional framework, eradicate corruption, control bureaucracy and create a congenial atmosphere for the growth and development of legitimate democratic mass movements with courage, conviction and firmness. But taking advantage of the excesses committed by the other constitu-

ents in the name of *gherao* this policy was wrongly interpreted and wilfully distorted by the interested circles.

In fact, what have been taken by most people to be our stand on *gherao* is not what the party has said but what they have come to learn from the bourgeois propaganda media. This was so because we have not yet been able to build up the organisational network and propaganda machinery needed for massive public contact. We have not as yet been able to sufficiently expand so as to maintain contact with the vast masses of the people. Compared to that need we are still a microscopic force. This lack of required strength is the main problem before the revolutionary working class movement and the democratic mass movements in India. This lack of strength relates to the need of the revolutionary leadership—it is the comparative lack of strength of the instrument of revolution, that is the revolutionary party of the proletariat. Whether we are stronger than this party, or we possess a greater mobilising power than that party or we have conducted militant class struggles in such and such places—all this is not so relevant here. The reality is that even in West Bengal we lack the necessary strength. We have no reason to be complacent, therefore. Like philistine social democrat leaders we cannot take pride in being a Minister in the Government. Our pride is that we are revolutionaries. We shall have to keep in mind constantly that we are very much short of the strength needed to guide the mass organisations all over the country on a revolutionary course. We are still far from realizing our task to establish the hegemony of the revolutionary ideology. Should it not torment us constantly that compared to our task we are still small, that we still lack the necessary strength? This torment shall not lead us to despair, it shall motivate us to speedily overcome the difficulties within the limits of the objective situation. We cannot perform miracles but we can and must speed up our effort within our limits. If, even after doing that we fail to accomplish revolution, then it will be a historical defeat—that is, historically the failure was inevitable. We may not be blamed for that. History will be witness that on our part we have spared no effort. But revolution does not break out just because we desire it or we try for it; many factors, many developments contribute to the success of revolution. But we are to see that there are no defects in our effort.

To free our efforts from shortcomings and defects we ought to have a clear perception of the complex situation of today. We are often guided by a casual and stereotyped attitude. There must be contemplation, planning and speed in our public contact and routine day-to-day programmes.

We must learn to work in a planned way to carry our distinct political line to the masses in order to educate and organise them and elevate in this way our own ideological-political-cultural standard and revolutionary character too. Keeping this in view, let me now pass over to the concrete organisational questions.

ANY WORK CONNECTED WITH AND CONDUCTIVE TO REVOLUTION IS ALSO A KIND OF STRUGGLE

A comrade has asked whether stereotyped day-to-day party activities can help us attain revolutionary character. It is not clear, in the first place, what the comrade meant by 'stereotyped activities'. If he meant carrying out everyday routine party programmes like selling party literature, making door-to-door approaches, participating in street collections, pasting posters, attending party classes, visiting party offices and keeping company with other comrades at party centres,

but all this in a stereotyped fashion without an attempt to establish public contacts, that is contact with the democratic movements of the people on individual as well as collective initiative; if all this political-ideological campaign has no clear-cut political objectives, programmes and methods, no contemplation or attempt to build up mass organisations of the people among whom they move, then of course his point is understandable. In that case, attaining a genuine revolutionary character through all such routine stereotyped work is no doubt impossible. But then the day-to-day programmes of political campaign, establishing contacts with the people and intensifying the campaign more and more, chalking out plans to build up mass organisations, participating in each and every democratic mass movement as they grow, making plans and directing every effort towards building up mass movements—all these are routine work all right, but these all are a kind of struggle.

These struggles reflect a level of consciousness at a particular stage of development of democratic mass movements and the revolutionary struggles, they reflect the level of consciousness at a given stage of building up of the organisation. These struggles, too, are revolutionary in character. Revolutionary struggle does not always and necessarily mean a particular form of direct confrontation, say barricade fights or pitched battles. Such struggles do not materialise in a day. And when they come, as they sometimes do at the height of the democratic mass movements, they do not continue for long, but last a few days rather. In order to create a situation when a protracted revolutionary struggle can be transformed into the struggle for seizure of State power, the revolutionaries have to wage a sustained and painstaking struggle, every day at that, by coordinating three tasks—the struggle to build up the party organisation on the one hand and, on the other, the struggle to build up the organisations of democratic mass movements, and, thirdly, propagating the revolutionary ideology. Now, since the situation today is not such that we can start the revolutionary battle right now, or rally people for a direct confrontation, or since there are no daily militant confrontations here and there over, say, an issue like the tram fare rise or a strike call, then how can the revolutionary character develop now? Well, I ask you: Is it possible that the revolutionaries will develop this kind of struggle everyday and continuously at that? Do such struggles really develop everyday during the revolutionary preparation in any country? How do the revolutionaries build up their character then?

We should realise, the revolutionary struggle has so many stages of development. It has different phases of growth. When the thought of revolution strikes the human mind, or in other words, when centring round the class contradiction and conflict in society, the burn of revolution is felt in order to fulfil the yearning for emancipation from exploitation and oppression, this revolutionary thought stirs up the human mind. And under its impact man is inspired to build up the revolutionary party and lead revolution through to success.

When such is the objective situation in a country, does it behove the handful of revolutionaries to start the revolutionary uprising right then? Does it behove them to start direct confrontation in fields and factories? Start along with whom? Are those few to start firing at whosoever may they encounter, or finish their revolutionary programme by shooting down ordinary policemen? No, certainly not. Then, how to begin and carry on the struggle? It has to be built up step by step; this indeed is the difficult struggle. It will be a grave mistake to think that revolutionary struggle means only armed insurrection or barricade fights, and the various forms of struggle that the revolutionaries have to

wage before that in order to build up the revolutionary organisation and pave the way toward armed uprising are not revolutionary struggles. Such a trend of thinking arises from petty bourgeois pessimism, romanticism, frustration and despair. When frustration and despair are widespread, those who are frontrankers among the youth, who are socially aware but lack comprehensive revolutionary consciousness and, therefore, do not understand the complex process and revolution and do not realise how by coordination of countless struggles through a myriad of complex processes the cherished revolutionary struggle develops, suffer from restlessness and desperation, thinking that no advancement is taking place. From this thinking, they confuse a particular form of struggle alone to be revolutionary. It is not correct to think that only a particular form or pattern of struggle is revolutionary and all other struggles are non-revolutionary. All forms of struggle which are conducive to revolution are, in fact, revolutionary struggles. The ideological campaign to build up the party organisation is an arduous revolutionary struggle, because winning this battle is often much more difficult than winning sporadic barricade fights. The patience required to conduct this struggle amid frustration, winning one single individual after another by fighting the alien influence of the reactionary ideas and establishing the hegemony of revolutionary ideology over them, is not easier in any way than conducting an armed struggle. For example, in the post-revolution period, when the principal question is no longer overthrowing the ruling bourgeoisie, or a question of armed uprising against the State apparatus, the military and the police, the struggle becomes no less complex—like you saw in China. To conduct the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution there they had to unleash an intense ideological struggle among themselves. This revolution was not only more painstaking and arduous than when they fought the army of Chiang Kai-Shek, it was much more complex as well. That is why the situation there is so tough today.

What the comrade, who raised the issue, called 'activity' is actually a form of revolutionary struggle. 'Activity' is not the appropriate term here, he should have used 'struggle' instead. Actually, by 'activity' he meant 'struggle'. Now the connotation of the term 'struggle' has become such that when we speak of routine political activity we do not mean 'struggle'. We do not, similarly, consider political-ideological campaign a form of struggle. Likewise, attending a political class is not considered a struggle. Bringing out the party organs and other party literature, conducting campaign, polemics and revolutionary ideological propaganda against alien ideologies—are not all these ideological activities a form of struggle? Are these mere routine work? No wonder that with this approach, this work has come to such a pass! Think of the thousand and one different technical work that have to be attended to daily in order to run the party offices. These are such vitally important functions that had they been left undone even for a single day, the regular activities of the party would be seriously hampered resulting in a gap in communication, a disruption in the systematic daily activities of the party, a general disorder. So too is the case with the running of the party communes and party centres, their regular maintenance, looking after the personal hygiene of their members, attending to their daily chores and a thousand routines each day. Apparently these works look very uninspiring, ordinary and even boring. Apparently there seems to be nothing revolutionary about them. But really it is not so. Take for example, the various routine activities that need doing for the daily running of the party press, for the regular and timely publication and circulation of party literature. Without these, the party would be bereft of a most vital and powerful weapon, its

vehicle of ideological campaign. Such is then the importance of these work. They too are very much party's revolutionary work to be conducted in a way conducive to revolution and revolutionary purposiveness. But viewed isolatedly, all these and other varieties of technical works seem very ordinary, unimportant and mere monotonous routine.

It requires a high degree of revolutionary consciousness to carry on these duties for days and years on with a happy and peaceful mind and with unflagging revolutionary dedication, devotion, seriousness and sense of purpose. Because of lack of adequate revolutionary consciousness, many comrades may have a mistaken notion that the work of these comrades are rather unimportant trifles, nothing that merits as much attention as mass struggle, building up mass movement and all that. Such a notion is absolutely wrong. Indeed it is those who have conducted this so-called trifling work who are sometimes better equipped to carry out party responsibilities at any contingency.

In this connection I would like to add one or two important points. An acid test of a finished communist, beside anything else, is that whenever he takes up any job he does it so devotedly, meticulously and flawlessly that hardly can its parallel be found. This applies in case of all types of work, big or small. He performs each and every work with utmost care, concentration and perfection. Even in doing small things like, say, sweeping a room clean, he does it with a creative mind. Because to a revolutionary, no work is insignificant. I say you, do not take any work in a casual or unserious manner. Because, if you do not perform any work with all seriousness, considering that insignificant, then it not only spoils the work, but obstructs the very process of developing integration in the method of thinking. Such casual attitude to work is detrimental to the development of integrity of character. So, when you have taken up any task, small or big, apply your entire mind to it and try to do it perfectly and meticulously.

Next, we all know that the communes or the party centres are also a kind of party organisation, although having a different character. So running these centres well from all points of view should be a common concern of all the members—both male and female. But most often it is found that unless otherwise compelled in a particular situation the household chores, essential for living, is attended to by the female comrades only, even at times at the cost of unbearable hardship and strain. I am not sure, whether our leaders have yet given any serious thought to this problem for a correct and rational solution.

Another point has also drawn my attention. I am speaking of the leaders, not the general comrades. Some leading comrades, although able-bodied and not so old, have developed a peculiar habit of constantly asking the junior comrades for petty services—things, which the leading comrades could and ought to have done themselves, like, say, bringing a glass of drinking water or so. True, junior comrades in general do not mind. It is their part. But the leaders on their part should not be averse to doing all such work as a matter of habit and practice. Otherwise this bad habit will not only harm them alone, but in course of time it may even cause others to fall easy prey to these harmful habits. Let me now resume the discussion on routine work.

IMPORTANCE OF PAINSTAKING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN EVEN AMIDST DESPAIR ALL AROUND

Yes, certainly these are not mere routine work. To be purposeful and effective they require contemplation, organising ability, theoretical aptitude, determination and dogged-

ness. When a fever of movement has seized the people, when tide of mass movements has soared high, the people get aroused and jump into the struggle against oppression and injustice. The fever seizes even those who generally fight shy of movements. People rally in thousands and there is no dearth of men in the forefront of struggle. Even those completely lacking in revolutionary consciousness rally in such struggles because of that fever. But in the period of lull, when the reactionaries are on the offensive and the real resistance movement of the people is difficult to organise—what should be the form of struggle then and how to build it up? Then the task is to convince the people and organise them, defeating and exposing the class character of the opponents' propaganda and ideology to make it crystal clear to the people, through painstaking discussions and debates, ceaseless campaign and agitation, what lots of confusion they are creating in the mass mind. This struggle is far more difficult. Amidst frustration and despair all around, when there is no ferment of movement, you will have to carry out this task unwaveringly and with own initiative solely on the strength of consciousness, conviction and dedication. Without revolutionary consciousness, it is impossible to perform this task. The type of routine work it demands, the routine attendance to every party programmes it requires, cannot be undertaken and performed without the steadfastness born of this revolutionary consciousness.

On the other hand, in such a situation, if comrades sink into such a state that nothing inspires them, then from this they may desperately wish for something to happen this way or that way. They may want to somehow dispose of the task on hand, working a few days, and then comfort themselves for some days. The thought of painstakingly carrying on routine propaganda work, attending meetings organised by the party, campaigning on each and every issue, selling party literature, making door to door approaches and all that, does not inspire them. These routine work do not interest them. Consequently, their approach, too, becomes unpurposeful and ineffective. They cannot organise movements effectively. They cannot attract and inspire people towards the revolutionary ideology by purposeful discussions and propaganda work. They cannot build up newer organisations, cannot draw the youth into the organisational structure, cannot protect them from the reign of terror unleashed by criminals under political patronage, nor help them from being swayed to political extremism. As a result, they start thinking that no advancement is taking place. They begin to feel that unless they jump into doing something, revolution will not materialise. But what is that 'something' and how is that to be done? Should this handful of comrades, the advanced cadres, who have assembled here, gather some firearms and go out in the open for a confrontation? Suppose they do. But what then? What will they achieve this way? Remember the revolution we cherish and the war we want to wage against the State is a class war, it involves the people—it is the people's struggle. This protracted people's struggle can be organised and led only after a major part of the entire people has been organised under the banner of the revolutionary ideology and political consciousness developed among them. This protracted people's struggle does not grow from sporadic and spontaneous popular outbursts or agitations which flare up from time to time from pent up resentment, but lack the direction and conviction of revolutionary political ideology. It is the task of the revolutionaries to guide these sporadic popular outbursts by giving them a revolutionary orientation and inspiring the people with revolutionary consciousness, establish and consolidate the political leadership on

the organisations, developing the people's instruments of struggle from the grass roots level and finally give birth to their own alternative political power.

Think of a democratic mass movement on some burning issue, say food. A very large number of people may rally and take part in the movement, fighting for the cause. Afterwards, these people get lost. Were they revolutionaries? Did they possess the consciousness, patience, dedication and mental make-up required to pursue the routine day-to-day struggles for painstakingly building up the revolutionary party and bringing about revolution? No, they did not possess all this. But in thousands they came to plunge into the battle. From all walks they streamed into the vortex of movement for a cause. But such movements, as I already told you, do not develop on and off. When resentment builds up in the people continuously, it bursts forth ultimately whether it gets a leadership or not. Because of lack of correct leadership and political consciousness, because the political leadership has not yet been established over them, these spontaneous agitational outbursts subside and peter out after a brief spell. Another period of frustration follows again, the people gasp under oppression; they suffer and gasp until again they burst out in another spell of spontaneous agitation. The democratic mass movements witnessed in this country, except a very few, all had this character. The people, their limits of patience having broken down after they had suffered and suffered under oppression and exploitation, burst forth in a tidal upheaval; but neither under a political organisational leadership, nor with the ideological guidance of a revolutionary party. Nothing whatever. And the political parties who exercise leadership over these movements from above, sitting in their cloistered committees, do not even keep track of these people, do not know anything about from where they came to join the movement and whereto they disappeared. Time and again, on every such occasion our party has repeatedly sought to point out to the United Front leadership which steers these movements from above that 'You give a call for movement from above and then court arrest and go into the prison. You do not act like generals leading a battle! On the contrary, the task should have been to organise people's struggle committees with all those who rallied in the movement and to try to develop these committees into people's own instruments of struggle and conduct the movement in a way that the different political ideologies come into conflict and the people themselves can visualize how far the different constituent parties of the United Front were willing to advance. The people could know then which parties were bungling on the question of guiding the movement. Whereas what happens now is that people suffer the brutality of repression while some parties cash in on it to reap dividends at the hustings. Capitalising on the common people's sentiments for those who were sacrificed in the movement these leaders try to climb on the *gaddi* to be Ministers or grab lucrative portfolios. That is their sole aim.

**NOT SPONTANEOUS, SPORADIC OUTBURSTS,
BUT ORGANISED, CONSCIOUS AND PROTRACTED
PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR**

The genuine revolutionary party, on the other hand, wants these agitational movements to be guided along in such a manner that at least a measure of political consciousness grows and the people's struggle committees develop as the people's instruments of struggle and as precursor of the people's own alternative political power, and thus pave the way to establishing the people's revolutionary leadership. Of course, these committees will not be permanent but they

will help to generate a level of consciousness and then will get exhausted gradually. If the level of consciousness of the masses thus gets elevated stage by stage with every surge of movement, the people will learn how to conduct movements themselves and to evolve their leadership. When people get involved in the struggle, their struggling fervour develops excellently. Maybe they will commit mistakes, because still they may be lacking the revolutionary wisdom, but they will have developed clarity about struggles. The common vices which infiltrate those leaders who try to guide movements from above cannot easily penetrate the struggling revolutionary masses who are in the thick of movements. And as they get equipped gradually with revolutionary consciousness and wisdom they can visualize clearly how far a movement can be advanced, how far should it be pushed ahead, to what extent, and how to conduct it that far. With this realisation, they can also see which of the parties of the United Front who pose to be there to guide movements onward, really stand by their struggle and are truly capable of providing the correct ideological leadership. And when they can realise this, all other parties will get isolated.

This is our approach to democratic mass movements. But such movements do not grow at our bidding. It will not grow just because the revolutionaries want it to grow. Think of the Naxalites—exhorting the people for revolutionary struggle, asking them to realise that political power comes out of the barrel of gun, calling upon the peasants to create liberated zones in the countryside. The cry is rending the air that revolution is on the march. But where really is it marching? In barren intellectual exercises. True, a handful of people have spread out to remote countryside and are trying all they can to organise revolution. But that too in how many places, and to what extent? If the Naxalites' claim of popular support were true, if that big indeed were their organisational base, then by now peasant revolution would have swept the whole of West Bengal and large areas of India. Is that the case? Sparks of revolution are coming out from fiery debates in coffee parlours and the fire of peasant revolution is aflame among students, in the university campus, inside the college premises, in the clashes between rival student unions. But the flame of peasant revolution cannot be seen anywhere else. Because, revolution is not such an easy affair. Even if they will try for their peasant revolution, they have to go through prolonged, painstaking work—what the comrade who raised the issue considers boring routine work. On the one hand, you will have to carry out a ceaseless and intense ideological struggle to rid the workers', peasants' and other democratic mass movements of the bourgeois ideological fads and prejudices which tend to lead these movements astray. The people must have not a vague but a clear ideological conception. One may go on chanting 'we want revolution', but that does not mean it reflects a clear conception of the revolutionary ideology. Chanting slogans like 'we want struggle', 'leadership will grow out of struggle' does not ensure that these come from a clear conception of revolutionary struggle. You will have to learn clearly the art and science of developing a movement or struggle, its myriad complex processes—say, when will the struggle take which form, when does it take the form of direct confrontation, when is the time to retreat, when will it take the form of campaign work, when to consolidate organisation and when simultaneously to recruit cadres, bring out party organs, carry out propaganda work, expand organisational activity, build up democratic mass movements and conduct agitational movements. All these indicate a particular stage of organisational development. And in course of carrying out these tasks the revolutionary party steps up the movement to a stage where

direct confrontation can be launched with the ruling bourgeoisie. Through this struggle, the party exposes before the people the real character of the State, the police and the administration—their exploitative and oppressive nature.

The attitudes betrayed by different parties during these struggles — those who indulge constantly in rhetorics on revolution, who wax on socialism and all that—expose their true colours. Let me illustrate. We, the SUCI, stand for socialism. The Bangla Congress, too, talks of socialism. So also the Forward Bloc and the RSP. What to speak of others, even Jawaharlal Nehru had been a protagonist of socialism all through! Again, the CPI(M) advocates People's Democratic Revolution, that is socialism. Another party, the CPI, also talks of People's Democratic Revolution via National Democratic Revolution. Both are called People's Democratic Revolution, yet they argue, the two have little in common. One is the CPI(M) brand, the other is the CPI brand, and there is yet a third brand of People's Democratic Revolution — advocated by some breakaway members of the CPI(M). You see, it is the same People's Democratic Revolution but in three incarnations! Which means, the stage of revolution is one and the same, the thesis is one and the same, yet in three different manifestations! How can one reconcile? When all the three are called People's Democratic Revolution, the question arises: Which of the three is correct? To find out that is the point. The people have to be deeply involved in the debate on what is right and what is wrong. They are to be made, so to say, absorbed, engrossed and immersed in it. Then, as the people get deeply involved in this struggle to find out which is right and which is wrong, as they meditate over it, grapple with it, they gradually acquire the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.

In fact, bypassing ideological struggle our goal can never be achieved. It is not possible to achieve. 'Do something, whatever you can. Our support is with you' — if this be the general attitude then this country faces a bleak prospect no doubt; it cannot but have a bleak prospect. The inevitable consequence of this approach is the kind of struggle you have witnessed in the country from time to time. From as far back as 1919 or so, workers in this country have gone on strike on so many occasions, putting up barricade fights against the owners, embracing death, sacrificing life on the gallows. Surges of democratic mass movement have come. So many times police and military have let loose repression on these movements. So many times Calcutta has experienced blackout. But with what consequences? The situation has remained where it was. Has it moved a step forward? No. And now again a despair is creeping in that nothing goes right. But what about those struggles, those direct confrontations with the police? The army deployment, curfews and blackouts? What about those 'upheavals'? And why this despair again that nothing goes right; no struggle is coming up? All this is so, because those struggles had the same character—they were all spontaneous outbursts of people's resentment, but not organised, not guided by a political party capable of leading them. So, the movements went uncontrolled and fizzled out in the end. But when the correct leadership has been established over the movement, it frees the people from frustration, educates them with the correct tactics of struggle, teaches them how to advance and when to retreat as a strategic manoeuvre. It teaches the people why retreat was necessary at a point of struggle, to avoid the harm revolution would have suffered if it were not resorted to.

At times, retreat becomes necessary to avoid unnecessary losses and to prepare for a bigger struggle. Retreat is also a form of struggle. In military strategy, as you know advancement and retreat are two different forms of battle,

until and unless of course an army has been completely crushed and has suffered utter defeat. When two armies fight each other, no one can make continuous, unilateral advance. That is no warfare. In war, when one side advances, the other has to retreat. Retreat becomes as much a strategic need for war as advancement. So also when it retreats, an army does it in the strategic way, much the same strategic way as when it advances. In the same way, a cold war which often precedes the armed confrontation, is also a kind of war. Likewise, building up the party organisation and mobilising the public opinion are also forms of struggle. For, who will supply the arms, ammunition and food for those engaged in direct confrontation with the State? It is the working class, the common people of the country. So unless the common people can be rallied to the struggle the party vanguards cannot continue it for long. The warmongers, too, understand the importance of rallying the public. So before every war they try to create a war psychosis. Do you think it is necessary for the reactionaries only and the revolutionaries have no concern in this regard? It is a concern with revolutionaries also. Think of a situation when we have been able to rally lakhs of workers and peasants to wage a protracted revolutionary battle. But how many people at best? A few lakhs? A maximum of ten, twenty-five or fifty lakhs of people at most, isn't it? But if the struggle is not backed up by the majority of the millions of people of this country, if the people have not been psychologically prepared to view this struggle as their own and deem it their task to extend all-out help to the struggle, if they look at it as the concern of a particular party which they need not bother about because they have their own problems to look after—then even the lakhs of people who have been rallied to the struggle cannot do anything to shake this capitalist order. Even before they can lay a finger upon it, they will be finished off. One indiscreet act can wipe off the fruits of our hard struggle for years together.

Therefore, we must try to understand the nature of the struggle. The revolutionary is in the midst of struggle wherever he may be. In fact, struggle is his very mode of existence. When I say, I am a revolutionary, I have revolutionary consciousness, the question arises: What do I mean by consciousness? Why have I been a revolutionary? I have been, because I am convinced that the question of my own development, my own emancipation is inalienably linked with the question of social development and social progress.

If social progress gets obstructed, if the reactionary forces raise head in society, then its impact will be felt on self-development; its shadow will be cast on the members of my family, too. My efforts in isolation cannot win my emancipation. Getting divorced from the social struggle, I cannot win the cherished emancipation. To try that way for self-liberation is the road of the spiritualists, not of the revolutionaries, not of those who have taken to the path of struggle.

WHAT IS MEANT BY 'RECOGNITION OF NECESSITY'.

The point is that the understanding of the revolutionary is one step ahead. He understands that it is meaningless to say that the interest of one's individual development, individual upliftment, individual emancipation — the entire gamut of one's interest — is linked with the interest of social progress, social advancement and social revolution, unless it is understood at the same time that in a class divided society the advancement of production, of science, of culture — of the society as a whole — is inalienably linked with the question of emancipation of the leading class of the exploited

masses, the vanguard class. So the question of emancipation of every individual is linked up with the question of freedom, struggle, leadership and emancipation of that class. This consciousness has impelled the revolutionary to be part and parcel of the class struggle which historically leads the society towards establishment of the hegemony of that very class. So, in the context of present day situation, what is the recognition of necessity? What is the real necessity of today? Is maintaining oneself that real necessity? Is seeking out an employment to meet the needs of family that necessity? Or, is it the necessity to have a decorated home, or to win success in love and get married? Are all these the real necessity of the Marxists, the revolutionaries? To revolutionaries necessity means the true necessity of humanity. It is the real necessity of society, meaning the real necessity of the progressive revolutionary class. Can anyone who wish to be free today — from vulgar individualism, narrowness and self-centred interests — who wish to free himself from the grip of prejudices, passions and impulses of vulgar tendencies and selfish propensities, do so by struggling in isolation on individual capacity? Is he aware of what makes these impact on him? These are the impact of class thinking in a class divided society. These are impact of the prevailing social order. Since, therefore, the question of advancement of the entire society, development of its productive forces, liberation of science-art-literature-culture from the grip and tentacles of the capitalist exploitation is inalienably linked with the question of emancipating the working class—the class historically placed to free the entire society by waging struggle against all these, the question of emancipation of every individual is also historically linked up with the question of emancipation of the working class. So, recognition of the necessity of individual emancipation means the recognition of necessity of the working class emancipation. Recognition of this necessity transforms an individual into a revolutionary. How does the revolutionary exist then? He is a conscious entity existing in society in a material condition, the true nature of the contradictions and conflicts of which he has correctly grasped. He has grasped which contradiction, meaning contradiction of which two opposite forces, determines the course of progress in that given situation. In the period when conflict between imperialism and feudalism on the one hand, and the independence movement on the other was the determining factor for social progress in this country, the question of individual liberty, advancement, real necessity and emancipation was identified with the interest of the independence movement. In that period recognition of the necessity of country's independence was identical with the recognition of his real necessity, correct social consciousness, correct class consciousness. Again, when the course of social progress is determined by the contradiction between capital and labour, between the bourgeoisie and the working class, between the capitalist social system and the exploited classes—the conscious entity of the individual existing as a point of contradiction in the vortex of this struggle—then it assumes the role of the principal contradiction of society. Then the determining factor stipulating social progress is this principal contradiction, that is, the struggle for replacing bourgeois democracy and bourgeois class rule by proletarian democracy and proletarian class rule and establishing working class control in place of capitalist control over production-art-literature-science-culture-morality, in every sphere; an all-out conflict, centring round which the conscious individual entity is continuously revolving. When this conscious individual entity identifies itself with the question of emancipation of the working class, that is when the recognition of individual necessity is identified with the recognition of working class necessity, the revolutionary is born. So the revolutionary exists in revolt against the bourgeoisie, against the exist-

ing social order. This conflict is not confined to the sphere of political and economic struggle only, it relates to every other sphere — at home, outside of home, in culture-morals-tastes and everything else. The tastes, aesthetics, likes and dislikes which are conducive to revolution, conducive to emancipation of the working class, to freeing production-art-science-literature from bourgeois preconception are in total conflict with the bourgeois values, morals, culture, aesthetics, family concept, concept of freedom of sex, likes and dislikes, and everything else. Such is the unique existence of the revolutionary.

Such is, then, the mode of existence of the revolutionary. He exists in the turmoil of struggle. In the course of this struggle there are some routine activities. Only the class conscious workers who have a clear vision of the purpose can happily and voluntarily abide by these routine day-to-day programmes. The revolutionaries have to work over a prolonged period in accordance with a plan in order to realise the purpose. If the style of work is not disciplined, it cannot prove equal to the well-knit bourgeois State apparatus. The people have commonly experienced the police only, but the bourgeois State ultimately deploys its military power against the people. Before that, to rally the necessary people's power and develop the protracted revolutionary struggle to encounter the military, struggle has to be waged at home and outside home, within oneself, in the sphere of ideology, ethics, aesthetics, tastes, etc. science and culture. Let me remind you what Mao Zedong had to say before initiating the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. He emphasized that when one class wanted to overthrow another class or one class wanted to defeat another class, whether it was the revolutionary class or the reactionary class, it had to carry on a protracted ideological-political campaign before it could take up the struggle to overthrow the other class.

This task can never be bypassed. But to one who has not revolutionary consciousness this task will seem boring, and hard at that. When there is no struggle going on, no fever of struggle gripping the people, even then the revolutionary has to remain engaged in the painstaking struggle to build up the organisation. What a burning conviction and dedication must he have to attend to routine work day in day out! Already I have pointed out that how easily people—even those who have never been in this painstaking struggle to acquire the revolutionary consciousness, or those who lack the mentality to undertake this struggle—are drawn into a movement when it takes the form of direct confrontation and while, quite mistakenly, is believed to be the revolutionary struggle while all other forms are not. Just examine the characters of the two kinds and you will realise how painstaking is the struggle which has to be waged so protractedly. It requires strength of character to conduct this struggle, a dedication to ideology and a clear perception of the situation.

So, the appropriate critique of the party work shall be to examine whether these work are guided according to some set pattern or whether they relate to handling contradictions which constantly arise when the programmes are attempted to be carried out through public contact, that is by involving the people, and therefore, they evolve constant innovation and a continuous process of movement. As I have already said, movement does not mean only slogans, processions, meetings, barricade fights, confrontation with the police. These are all forms of movement, pertaining to a particular stage of its development, particular stage of organisational development, particular stage of development of consciousness. Indeed, it is a difficult and complex struggle to work by combining individual initiative with collective effort.

COMBINE INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE WITH COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

What form the movement will take and when a particular form will have to be changed into another depends on a number of factors—the stage of organisational development, the level of consciousness, the character of people's participation, and the nature of assaults by the ruling class. Debates, discussions, dialogues, polemics, organising and conducting unions in various fields, organising party classes, conducting poster campaigns, making door-to-door approaches to the people and carrying on protracted and painstaking discussions and dialogues with them to propagate the revolutionary ideology—all these are different forms of struggle—more diverse, more complex in nature. The revolutionaries engaged in this struggle do not carry out party work according to their individual fascination, mood or whim. They carry out party work in accordance with the collective decision and collective programme happily, voluntarily and on individual initiative along with the collective. The individualistic trends in man, his individuality, which we need to fight, also propel man, when the necessity of revolution is partially realised by him for whatever reasons—to take part in the revolutionary struggle. But then he wants to fight according to his own individualistic trends. On the one hand, he wants to take part in the revolutionary struggle, on the other he cannot free himself from his individualistic trends and ultra-sense of freedom. He is not aware that true recognition of the necessity of revolution enjoins him to free himself from his individualistic trends. Struggles conducted in an individualistic way are doomed to be indisciplined, unpurposeful and fruitless.

This is why revolutionaries approach each and every struggle individually as well as collectively. That is their attitude. Because an individual alone cannot accomplish revolution. So we have to learn how to fight collectively. When one is organising people in a locality, he may work very well with a little fighting zeal and a sacrificing attitude; because, he is the undisputed leader of that locality and there may be none with whom he may come into conflict. Hence his individuality is not wounded there, his ego not injured. He does not, therefore, feel humiliated. On the other hand, when one has to work with a programme along with other party comrades with parallel personalities—and maybe one could not formulate the programme according to one's own plan, but it was a formulation by others—then one has to learn how to work with that programme voluntarily and happily. But to learn it one has to free oneself from individualistic trends and personal whim. Now the question is: How can we free ourselves? How can we learn to do it? We can do it only by developing the habit of working collectively with other comrades—not by-passing it. We sometimes hear a comrade argue: 'I don't like this collective work at all. Just tell me what to do and leave me alone. By myself I will accomplish it in full.' What a claim! As if he is the great champion who can conquer anything you ask for. No one has ever conquered everything by himself. Even God failed, what of others!

So the point is that everyone has to struggle collectively. And the routine work is part and parcel of the revolutionary struggle, it is a form of struggle, an indispensable part which teaches patience. By acquiring the habit to work collectively we can fight our individualistic trends and the ego in us which tends constantly to deceive and mislead us. When our rational judgement direct us to one course, our ego and individualistic tendencies tend to obstruct and misdirect us.

We have to realise that this struggle within ourselves between two opposing forces is also a reflection of the stru-

uggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the present society. We have to abide by the conscience and the rationale which urge us to struggle collectively. Either one convinces the collective to see eye to eye with one's own plans or point of view, or one abides by the collective decision—even if one remains unconvinced of the rationale of this decision. For, one cannot advance, remaining divorced from the collective. If a comrade lacks this mentality to abide by the collective decision voluntarily and happily and follows majority decision with grudge and discontentment, then actually, he is nursing in him this bourgeois trait which manifests itself in the form of his individualistic trends, concept of ultra-freedom, or the so-called independent attitude. He may indulge in subjective reasoning and resolve mentally to free himself from his prejudices, his individualistic trends and ego. But is it possible to free oneself this way, by mere contemplation and daydreaming? Remember, our individuality or conscious entity has emerged and developed through the conflicts and contradictions of society. It exists in the midst of this contradiction and, therefore, the only objective way to free ourselves from these fads is to correctly grasp the character of this contradiction so that this understanding can help pattern our activities in the proper manner, thereby influencing the course of social progress and our self-development. Or else, he will degrade himself.

CLASS CHARACTER OF EGO AND SUPER EGO

This question of individuality or individual entity brings us to a few more related points. We know that all the mental faculties including ego, instinct, etc., exist in contradiction. In the first place, every given mental make-up manifests the particular principal contradiction of the given period. All mental activities are spiritual production, manifestations of a conscious mental process. In the feudal society, when principal contradiction was the contradiction between the feudal class and the serfs led by the then revolutionary capitalist class, all mental activities including ego, instinct, etc. were reflection of that contradiction. Instincts of the feudal society for instance, are not exactly the same as instincts of the present-day society. Instincts may appear immutable, but indeed they are not. Every instinct of a given age belongs to a given category. It means, every category of instincts reflects a given material condition. Every aspect of mental activity, in fact, thoughts, ideas, concepts, contemplation—all these are reflections of the contradiction and conflict between the human brain and its environment, its material surroundings. Man's thinking faculty has arisen as a result of contradiction and conflict between the human brain and the material world. Animals do not possess this faculty; only man is endowed with it because of a specific feature in the structure of the human brain as distinct from the animal brain. Equipped with this power of translation of his brain, that is the power of thinking, man has been waging battle against nature. Animals, too, are in struggle with nature, but as they lack this power they have remained subjugated to natural laws. All the activities and behaviour of animals belong to the category of reflex action—conditioned reflex and unconditioned reflex—and can be explained in terms of this. What are believed to be intelligence in animals are nothing but conditioned reflex. In the case of man another process occurs in the brain whose potentiality is latent in the very structure of the human brain. This process, operating from sensation to motor action, does not end in mere reflex action. It follows a new track, operated by another signal system, the second signal system, which leads to perception, conception, and then to emotion. While in the case of animals, blind nervous activity is the only possible activity, in the case of human beings it operates on

a still higher plane—from blind emotion to reasoning through a process of translation, then to perceptual knowledge, leading to conceptual knowledge and finally producing a higher kind of emotion. Thus in the case of man we have got two kinds of emotion, one is sort of blind emotion, not tuned or guided by conceptual knowledge. This emotion moves man no doubt, but blindly, and under its influence human behaviour is somewhat similar to animal behaviour in nature, being subjugated as it is to circumstances. This emotion may, sometimes lift a man to magnanimity. On the contrary, it may as well degrade him. It is blind and cannot be depended upon. From this blind emotion you reach perceptual knowledge through translation, but that is also partial and you cannot fully control the emotional curvature with this perceptual knowledge alone. From here you go to conceptual knowledge, that is concrete knowledge, which is capable of guiding you. It patterns blind emotion and tunes it, thereby releasing higher emotion based on knowledge.

Thus you reach another level of emotion which grows over knowledge and consciousness. The emotion of revolutionaries is based on consciousness, so they can exercise control over it and are not misdirected under its impact. It cannot blind their reasoning faculties. You are familiar with episodes from literature which show how emotion blinds reasoning. It is that blind emotion. But the other type of emotion, the latter type that I discussed, is born at a higher level and is much more intense and decisive. Naturally, in the capitalist society also, all mental activities including ego are conditioned and patterned by the principal contradiction of this society, that is the contradiction between the capitalist class and the toiling people led by the working class. This ego always comes in conflict with the consciousness and conscience, the superego, of the individuals living in this capitalist society. His ego is nothing but the reflection of self-centredness born of this social condition, and his superego, or conscience is the reflection of his nationalist and humanist outlook born out of the aggregate interest of capitalism. The contradiction between ego and consciousness within the bourgeois individual is the reflection of the contradiction between the individual interest of the private owner and the social consciousness of the bourgeoisie as a class. When the working class which exists in this society centring round the principal contradiction between capital and labour, is imbued with the revolutionary ideology, its superego takes the form of revolutionary class consciousness. But not in every individual the superego has taken this form. One who has not become a revolutionary has also within him the contradiction between conscience and instincts. He has an understanding of the good and the bad. His conscience tells him what is bad and what should not be done. And the various tendencies in him, instincts which his conscience forbids him to be tempted by, all arise from his ego, from his individualistic trends. On the other side is his social consciousness, as much as he has acquired. Where does this consciousness come from? Analysis of the category of the present-day social consciousness will reveal that both trends of class thinking are entwined in it. Either it is wholly bourgeois class thinking or wholly revolutionary working class thinking, or an admixture of the two, such that the conscience of the individual is patterned partly by bourgeois thinking, partly by working class thinking. Hence, sometimes his conscience urges him to do this, sometimes that. At times his conscience exhorts him to take side with the bourgeoisie, some other time it urges him to stand by the working class movement. But in either case, his conscience comes in conflict with his petty individual interest, forbidding him to do things in narrow individual interest.

There is thus, a constant contradiction between ego and superego in the individual. This phenomenon of the individual psychology cannot be and will not be eliminated so long as the seed of conflict in the unconscious mind or individuality—reflecting the contradiction and conflict between individuals centring round production—cannot be eliminated. In essence, what you should constantly keep in mind is that the individual ego in every case in this society is by and large patterned by the dominating role of either the bourgeois ideology or the working class ideology. Even if there be some feudal elements mixed with it, the character of ego has to be determined by its dominant feature—whether it is dominance of the bourgeois thinking or dominance of the working class thinking. In no way can it be a case of complete feudal domination in the present-day society. Individual ego can no longer have a dominant feudal character today.

Therefore unless the struggle of an individual to rise above petty considerations, narrow inclinations, individualistic tendencies and egoism, is linked with the greater social struggle, unless it is identified with the working class struggle for emancipation, he will not achieve his desired objective, however admirable his intentions may be. So, individual struggle must be integrated with collective. But to guide this collective struggle along with the correct course and keep it free from defects and shortcomings there must be certain scientific methods in it. We must not be hasty without planning. If we try to do something hastily without collective planning and sound ideological basis we will not achieve anything. We shall only waste our time and energy thereby. We shall have to make advancement in a planned way under proper leadership by curbing the individualistic trends and tempering our individual behaviour by social consciousness. Our effort should be directed towards carrying out the party programmes in a planned way by detecting faults and freeing ourselves of these faults. We must not adopt a negative attitude by only criticising the faults and complaining that nothing effective is happening. If we do so, then we are criticising not for doing something concrete but to conceal the fact that we are unable to do anything. You should know, Marxism has laid down certain methods to determine the character of criticism made by one. When criticism is made from a negative approach, that is when there is only grievance in it and nothing concrete and positive is being said to rouse one, nor is it pointed out what has to be accepted in place of what and everything is said in a tone of complaint and grievance—it means that, his own inability to do anything having been known to himself, the critic is after finding faults with others, finding shortcomings, finding the condition difficult. His argument is that, the situation being adverse, he cannot do anything.

Some comrades, when they cannot make a breakthrough in their locality, discover that their locality is something 'special'. They argue that the people of their particular locality are 'unique' in the whole of country. In fact, many such comrades will be found, who complain that theirs is a peculiarly 'difficult' area. They do not try to grasp the basic point, and so lapse into self-deception. They do not make self criticism and do not try to analyse the nature of their own difficulties. They do not try to determine what should have been done but have not been done. Had they stressed thoroughly probing into it, they would have surely found out that even amidst thousands of difficulties, there were at least some avenues to make a breakthrough in their organisational work.

WHAT SHOULD BE ATTITUDE OF LEADERS TO
FAILURE OF COMRADES AND SOME
CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF TACKLING
ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEMS

Similarly, a section of comrades tends to reason that the young people in their locality are the most incorrigible among the youth of the entire country. Their argument is that organisational progress in other areas has been possible because those areas had a different social background, but the youth of their own locality are different in such and such respect; as if social backgrounds differ basically in different localities. Comrades, however, ought to examine their own style of work, assess whether their programme was appropriate. Or if the party programme were defective then their task would have been to pinpoint the nature of those defects and suggest the correct programme that should have been adopted. But there is no point in feeling dissatisfied or aggrieved, or in expressing grievances. Of course, a comrade may feel that he is not satisfied with his performance—this much. Any other feeling he may have is actually born of his ego, and all this is self-deception. As a matter of fact, for his own failure he is laying the blame on others—either on circumstances, or on party's guidance, or the 'incompetence' of so and so, or on this party executive or that. Yes, in some case, these may be pertinent points but then it must be pointed out in proper spirit and as concrete instances. For instance, a comrade may point out that, say, this was the programme and this was the concrete situation, and the programme should have been instead of this, and it was suggested too by that comrade, but others did not agree with him. Experience shows now that if that programme was accepted then these plans would have been carried out successfully. This kind of argument is purposive. But most of the time, comrades who express grievances or resentment, who criticise others and frequently pass remarks on them, or blame their circumstances, or cite 'difficulties' of their localities—do they participate in discussions with this attitude? They do not. But if we don't do it ourselves—each of us from our own respective position and involving both cadres and leaders—then where does it lead to? The leader, in particular, should start questioning himself first. When a comrade has failed to carry out a task, the leader should examine whether he took all care and assisted that comrade so that the latter could carry out the assignment to the best of his capabilities? The leader should first ascertain whether assistance from his side was adequate or not, and then should examine the limitation of the comrade for which he had failed, and explain to him the nature of the objective difficulties. If even after all this, it is found that the comrade had not done what he could have, then that should be pointed out to him. But sometimes leaders, too, do not conduct themselves properly. When a comrade fails, a poor view is taken of him. He is considered worthless and taken to task. It reflects an unconscious tendency on the part of the leaders too to disown responsibility, which unknowingly works in them when confronted with the failures of comrades. Working in their unconscious psychology this tendency deceives them thus. It is not to say that the failures of the comrades were due to this wrong approach of the leaders. But the leader is also suffering from his own shortcomings. Otherwise why should his approach become such or why should he lose temper from the beginning? Is he not expected to probe into his own role first, to give all assistance to the comrades and help them overcome their limitations?

There are two kinds of people, I may say. There are those comrades who are normally not active in habit. This lack of active habit, again, takes different forms and have to

be tackled in different ways at different levels. So, irrespective of the particularity of cases, if we try to apply the same method in different cases then it will be a denial of the theory of particularity of contradiction. That is, if we fail to understand the particularity of contradiction in a concrete situation then we cannot tackle the situation properly. Think of a comrade who is honest and trying genuinely to discharge his assignment; but he is failing, because he suffers from some genuine confusions or some genuine shortcomings of which either he is not aware, or even if sometimes aware, cannot help himself being victim of certain habits and traits. For a certain period and upto a certain limit we try repeatedly and patiently to help the comrade overcome his shortcomings. Where he is incapable and fails, our task is to treat him sympathetically and afford help and not lose temper for his failure because it was anticipated in a way. But remember, the leaders on their part must not make this task of sympathetic treatment and help a matter of their exclusive concern. They should treat it as a phenomenon to be discussed in study circles, classes, discussions among leaders and also in presence of other comrades. Of course, only before those where it can be discussed; it may not be an issue to be discussed in presence of all. Everything cannot be discussed in presence of everyone. But in the party each and everything can be discussed in presence of some or others. So no problem can be the concern of a leader's exclusive way of tackling it, his personal or individual way of tackling. That must be theoretically substantiated by the party. The method to be adopted in tackling the comrade must not be his exclusive method, but a method theoretically approved, scientifically tested by the party. But definitely the method has something individual on his part, in so far as it was he who tackled the problem. But, as I said, it must never be an exclusive concern of the leader, something divorced from or having no relation with the party's conception or understanding, something which is not theoretically backed up by the party's understanding of how to tackle such a problem. He should not tackle any problem in that manner, even if the results appear good. Because apparently good results do not necessarily mean truly and effectively good results. Experience tells how often such apparently good results turned out to give bad results ultimately. It may be that the comrade whose problems were supposed to have been tackled for the better had also felt satisfied then. But satisfaction does not necessarily prove that the tackling was really proper and good, because people feel satisfied for many a reason. Suppose, a man has done something filthy and I patronise his filthy conduct this way or that. So he is pleased that his problem has been solved. But what will be the result of this satisfaction or happiness of his? It will do him immense harm and may ruin him even. Similarly, dissatisfaction or unhappiness does not prove that tackling has been bad inasmuch as satisfaction or happiness does not automatically ensure that tackling has been good. Anyway, good, successful tackling brings ultimate happiness. Say, a comrade felt dissatisfied at the beginning, but ultimately, at the end of discussion with him, he was satisfied and left in a happy state of mind. This is the symptom that there had been full success in tackling him. In the beginning, he was feeling aggrieved, dissatisfied and was not amenable to reason, because his ego was in conflict with the party understanding. In course of discussion he began to understand by reasoning and in the end, as he understood fully, he felt satisfied and happy. But when understanding is at the level of merely agreeing to logic only, a man accepts a point but does not really feel satisfied. It is a symptom that the tackling has been partially successful, but not fully successful. The reason has been accepted but realisation is yet to come, so the face

is not beaming with smile. He agreed that yes, you are right, it's right; but his face looked grave and sad. He said he agreed, but happiness was not writ large on his face. So, tackling has been only partially successful.

I said all this to emphasize what leaders should keep in mind in order that their method of tackling is perfect. The point is that both leaders and cadres are to work in a planned way, both on individual and collective initiative, widen public contact and take part in democratic mass movements and mass organisations. The teaching of dialectical materialism should be kept in mind that without struggle no advancement is possible in any sphere. If there is no conflict or struggle of ideas between leaders and cadres, between teachers and students then thinking of neither will advance. Comrades should always try to understand by reasoning out things critically. That way they will be able to detect their own mistakes and also point out to leaders if leaders had made any mistake, thereby helping leaders also to rise above mistakes.

This dialectical relationship between leaders and cadres is one important condition for ensuring that granite-like unity, that cohesion which is the characteristic feature of a working class party.

CALL OF THE HOUR

So, comrades, though the situation may seem a little tough for us at the present moment, yet revolutionaries have to work among hundreds of such difficulties. But correct base political line, correct revolutionary leadership and painstaking struggle in the face of all difficulties ultimately lead to the triumph of revolution. This is the lesson of history.

Keeping this lesson in mind, you will have to patiently work in a planned way, individually as well as collectively, continuously perfecting and developing your working style and ability by rectifying errors and shortcomings. You will have to master the revolutionary politics of the party in such a way, critically, that in the face of any situation you are able to represent the party line before the masses so that it can convince them and give them confidence exposing the opportunists and social democratic parties who still confuse the people to a great extent. These social democratic parties are the compromising force between labour and capital. And you all know that 'it is impossible to put an end to capitalism without putting an end to social democracy'. For fulfilling the task of overthrowing capitalism and bringing in socialism—the task historically bestowed on us—it is necessary first of all, to have a correct base political line, a correct revolutionary party and a correct leadership; secondly, the necessary organisational strength capable enough to influence the situation in favour of revolution; and thirdly, to integrate the class and mass struggles on the edifice of higher proletarian culture and ethics and conduct these struggles through people's committees, people's own instruments of struggle, which can eventually give birth to people's alternative political power. As soon as we can achieve this by, on the one hand, remaining within the United Front to advance the cause of united struggle of all sections of the toiling people, while on the other, not relenting for a single moment our struggle in the ideological sphere—so soon, and to that extent, can we help to raise the level of political consciousness of the toiling people, workers and peasants. And the sooner you can accomplish this task, the nearer will approach the day of revolution also. With this I want to conclude today, earnestly hoping that you all will take up this challenge and engage yourselves with all your might in this struggle.

Proletarian Era

Organ of SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA

(fortnightly)

Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

Vol. 22 No. 22 5th August, 1989 Price 1.50 P.

Air Charge 5 P.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF—COMRADE NIHAR MUKHERJEE

Edited and Published by Sakomal Das Gupta from 48, Lenin Sarani, Calcutta-700 013 and printed by him at Ganadabi Printers and Publishers Private Limited 52B, Indian Mirror Street, Calcutta-700 013.