

Carry Proletarian Culture and Ethics to the Workers

The following address to the first annual Conference of the Durgapur Steel Workers' Coordination Committee in 1974 is an invaluable document against the current spell of pseudo-Marxist trade unionism at work to hold back the workers from the path of the revolutionary struggle for emancipation. Here, Comrade Ghosh lays down the outline of the correct base political line of the anti-capitalist socialist revolution of the country, at the same time indicating that the workers' movements must be developed as an integral part of the revolutionary movement against capitalism. He further emphasizes the importance of cultural-ethical struggles in the workers' movements to free the working people from the pernicious influence of modern revisionism-reformism and bourgeois-petty bourgeois vices, deviations and aberrations.

Comrade President and Friends,

At this Conference of Durgapur Steel Workers I have been requested to discuss the present political situation in India and the tasks before the workers and toiling people. I offer my sincere thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak at this open session of the First Annual Conference of the Durgapur Steel Workers' Co-ordination Committee.

I would take up at the beginning what you all have been feeling, what has been agitating you, what you all have been thinking — whatever the differences in understanding — as to the reason for this all-encompassing degeneration of such magnitude in the country. As Comrade Banerjee¹ pointed out, not in the economic sphere alone, but looking at the social-cultural, and more particularly, the ethical-moral spheres in the country we find that the situation is really alarming.

I cannot but emphasize here that a nation going without food, suffering the worst kind of oppression and exploitation, and half-fed and half-clad for days together can also stand up, fight, acquire the power to combat, organize itself and rise up holding its head high, provided its moral strength remains intact and the people have a correct ideology before them. Look at Vietnam. Go through the history of the Chinese Revolution. Recall the extreme level of economic misery, exploitation and oppression the people in pre-revolution China had to suffer from. Yet the masses and the organized power of people in all these countries were able to rise up. They were able to do this on the strength of one thing. And that is, in spite of so much oppression and humiliation, the people could still retain in their character, in the character of the nation, within society itself, the moral-ethical sense of values centring round the old moral and ethical concepts that existed to some extent, and they could grasp the correct revolutionary ideology and give birth to the new sense of ethical-moral values conducive to their struggles. That is why the Vietnamese people could not be cowed down by the showering of bombs. The starving, hungry, illiterate peasants and the whole people of the country could not be made to yield even by reducing the whole country to ashes. This death defying spirit — boys and girls in their early

teens, and the old, men and women, giving a life and death battle — where did it come from ? Were they all Lenin and Stalin ? Did they all grasp all the revolutionary theories thoroughly and correctly ? This is simply absurd. But one thing they surely did possess, and do still possess, and that is the moral and ethical values, on the strength of which they stood up with indomitable courage against all sorts of exploitation.

The ruling class in India is engaged in a conspiracy to totally destroy that very moral character of the nation. They are shrewd to the bone ; they know that even by extreme oppression and repression, and by keeping starved, a nation or people cannot for long be kept under the boot by police and military alone. The history of oppression and tyranny of the despotic rulers of all ages tells but one thing — that no amount of brutal and coercive forces of the police and the military can ultimately defend the rule of injustice, or put down the organized power of the people. People's power asserts itself and stands up if the masses can keep their moral strength intact and find the correct revolutionary ideology. The Indian bourgeoisie, the ruling clique, has not learnt the good part of the lesson of history. Devils as they are, being the exploiting ruler, they have not failed to take that part of it which serves their need — that is to destroy the moral-ethical strength and ruin the very character of the nation. In that event, people, being starved, will only whine like dogs even when oppressed hundred times and more, they will only vent their grievances, and may even, at times, burst into sporadic revolts but will fail to give birth to the organized revolutionary movement — they will fail to organize revolution. Because, apart from the correct base political line and the correct revolutionary leadership, what is essential for adopting the revolutionary ideology and organizing revolution is this moral-ethical base.

Heinous conspiracy to incite base instincts in man to serve the petty, sectarian party interests, on the plea of so-called practical politics

So, the cultural-moral degeneration that you witness at present is not just an accident — not something spontaneous. It is not just like something pre-ordained, something fatalistic, *fait accompli* — as if destined to happen and is so happening. If you can see through the game you will note that, though it is happening beyond the knowledge of the people, there is, behind it, a calculated move of the ruling clique, a definite patronage. In their pulpit speeches they are asking the people to be good and honest. But at the dictate of petty, sectarian party interest, and on the plea of practical politics, not the ruling party alone but even many pseudo-revolutionary parties are inciting the base instincts in man. In the name of militancy and class struggle they are giving indulgence to such traits as cowardly violence — a gang attacking a lone individual — and showing extreme intolerance to polemics and ideological battle. Greed, avarice and meanness, which make a man inhuman and spoil fortitude and self-respect in him, are now being encouraged. The cadres of political parties are being engaged in exchange of money to do regular party or union activities and even election work. And all these have been going on in the name of 'practical politics'. The whole of the country teems with millions of unemployed, people are left with no means to fill their empty stomach. Taking advantage of this misery of the people, political parties are using them, providing them with this kind of so-called employment.

You all know that man has both virtues and vices. Only by helping all the good aspects in a man to bloom further — that is his qualities like courage, valour, compassion, broadness of mind and sense of obligation to people — can his failings and shortcomings be eliminated. Simply asking them to shun their vices will not help them to get rid of their vices ; simply asking them to be good and honest will not automatically make them good and honest. But giving advice to

people to be good and honest on the one hand, and simultaneously inciting the base instincts in them on the other, on the plea of practical politics — whichever party it may be, whatever may be its vocabulary, and it is immaterial whether their leaders are personally honest or not — they are, in reality, knowingly or not, helping the game of the bourgeois conspiracy to pollute the ethical-cultural atmosphere in the country and to destroy the moral character of the nation.

Only the ideologically-politically conscious and organized exploited people and not the lumpens and beggars are the forces of revolution

If this be the trend, the situation, then the morality of the nation is sure to die. And without morality there can be no revolution. They are nothing but fools who think that the mounting economic distress and multiplying oppression will bring about revolution spontaneously. They do not know that in no country did beggars ever organize a revolution. It is the exploited people who bring about revolution. This has a definite and deeper meaning. Lumpens are not the forces of revolution. Rather lumpens have been used by the bourgeoisie, by the fascists, as forces of reaction against revolution in every country. That is why from Marx to Lenin and Mao Zedong, every one of them, had to say that those among the proletariat who are becoming lumpen from economic misery are none of us, they are not the revolutionary proletariat. The revolutionary proletariat are to fight this lumpenism in the interest of revolution itself. So it is clear that from poverty alone revolution does not surge forth. What bursts out of it is agitation that ultimately goes more to the benefit of the exploiters. The direction being wrong, leadership faulty, theory erroneous and no clear-cut political outlook about revolution being there, when such an unorganized struggle of the masses meets the inevitable doom before the organized coercion of the state apparatus, defeatism comes in its trail. The struggling spirit that was in men is thus spent up and as a result frustration and defeatism engulfs the mass movements, even if temporarily. The exploiting class makes the most out of it. They utilize the situation to their advantage. They further consolidate their class rule and tone up to some extent their political organization.

Just pause and ponder over the history of this country, and you can easily recall that there have been struggles here time and again in the past. Nobody can say that the youth, the workers, the toiling people of this country had showed any aversion to fighting, or had not come to the field of struggle, or were afraid to go behind the bars, to lay down their lives, to die. None would dare say this. Those who are conversant with this history know it very well that people in this country have burst forth into fighting time and again. Even after attainment of independence, during the last twentyseven years, not only in West Bengal but in the whole of India, how many self-sacrifices, what amount of bloodshed there have been — how often workers, peasants, youth and students have laid down their lives ! With what an intense urge for revolution, time and again, people of this land have come forward in the movements and have faced death ! But what has been the outcome ? All say now that it is reaction that has gained in strength. Repression is let loose, fascist attacks are unleashed on the democratic movements. Why this ? How can it happen ? Democratic movement should have by this time led to ending capitalism, should have unfurled the victorious banner of revolution. For, what was essential for the victory of revolution — the popular support, was provided by the masses. At the call of the leaders the youth came in thousands and plunged in movements craving for revolution. How then could reaction gain in strength ? It is the revolutionary movement that should have gained in strength. Is it the handiwork of God ? Is it mysticism ? Is it sorcery and witchcraft ? Those who believe in all these may no doubt draw some solace. But if there is nothing like sorcery or witchcraft and if there is

nothing like whims and caprice of Allah or God then why does it happen ? This is the real question.

Not merely realizing the economic demands but giving birth to the revolutionary political power of the workers is the principal task of the revolutionary trade union organizations

At the outset, I would remind you one of the teachings of Lenin. Lenin gave repeated warnings to the workers on one point. Right from Marx, all have dealt with this important question on many occasions. All of them have pointed out that the workers, however militant movements may they conduct for the realization of their economic and democratic demands, however much democratic rights and economic demands may they realize by shedding blood, by that alone they cannot bring an end to their slavery, they still remain wage-slaves as before and darkness in their life still persists. Their condition too cannot be changed simply by shouting slogans like “Long live Marxism-Leninism”, “Down with capitalism”, “Long live revolution”, during the struggle over economic and democratic demands. If their fight is for the extension of democratic rights only, then however much democratic rights they may earn, that can never bring about the emancipation of the workers. For their emancipation, the workers should realize, these struggles built up on economic and democratic demands are nothing but struggles for survival, protecting the minimum rights against exploitation, nothing but means through which they are to give birth to their own political power capable enough to overthrow this exploitative system. They can achieve emancipation only if, through the process of these struggles, they can gradually build up their own political power in the concrete shape of struggle committees, can initiate and conduct a protracted war or revolutionary battle for the overthrow of capitalism — a protracted struggle that will not collapse in the face of even thousands of onslaughts of the capitalist state machine, just as the people of Vietnam could not be subdued by napalm bombs turning the whole of the country into a desert ; the US imperialists had ultimately to bow out.

This is why Marx had posed the question right from the beginning : why should workers join trade union movements ? They should join because trade union is the school of communism where they can learn the elements of communism. While fighting collectively against injustice and oppression from this platform daily, workers get the opportunity to analyse events and search out truth. Consciousness dawns on them as to why there can be no emancipation without revolution. While conducting the day-to-day struggles, the revolutionaries alone, and none else, want to educate workers thus. Others, the pseudo-revolutionaries, ask the workers to join trade unions, to take active part in these, but they themselves give rise to bureaucracy in trade unions and get the workers used to it. And this is how bureaucracy takes root in trade unions. The leaders create the air that they are big people. Their words carry much weight. The management both fear and flatter them. Remember, fear and flattery are two sides of the same coin. These leaders need both. They want that the management should treat them with respect and this is why they intimidate the management at times.

The workers too approach only those leaders who, they think, can wrest some concessions for them. So, we find that workers usually run after the bosses of those unions that are run by the party in power in the hope that these leaders can make the management hear their demands and that they have a chance to get some concessions. When this becomes the sole concern of the trade union movement, such movements do not advance the struggle for emancipation of workers even by a single step. It never can. This type of workers' movements, whatever be their banner — red, white or green — has nothing to do with the revolutionary movement, with the struggle for emancipation of the working class. When the sole activity of the trade union leaders

is to create disaffection among the workers and to get them into their fold by projecting a false image about their capability to wrest concessions from the management, then know it for certain that this party or union leadership is practising moderate trade unionism or economism like the Labour Party in England, or the giant trade unions of the USA. You can very well see that these big trade unions in England and the USA off and on, at times, organize nationwide industrial strikes and paralyse the production. These forces, in reality, play the role of opposition within monopolist group and are controlled by the monopolists. A typical example is the Labour Party of England, which stands for and defends the interest of the British imperialism. When these parties bring the whole of England to a standstill by such nationwide strikes the general workers run frantically after them in the belief that revolution has started here and now. But this does not even scratch the British imperialist interests a bit — rather the monopolists, the imperialists laugh in their sleeves seeing that the shrewd union leaders have bound the workers, and have trapped them in such tricky manoeuvres. They very much appreciate the fun. The workers, thus trapped like cattle tied in the noose, fail to realize that they have fallen victim to the devilish design of the leaders. That is why Marx as also Lenin time and again cautioned that trade unions should be the school of communism. They said, those workers who come and join in thousands in the day-to-day struggle — don't incite them by senseless fiery speeches just to draw their applause. Don't waste your time by loading your speech with hyperboles against the known enemy ; say something concrete, something useful. Even in a movement full of promises, make the workers conscious about the failings and deficiencies that might be there and, when it meets a setback, educate them as to the reasons for this setback as also the elements of success that are there in the midst of apparent failures — this is the task of the leadership.

But you see, in trade union movements as conducted in our country these are not being explained to the workers. What ultimate political goal these day-to-day movements are to be led to and for that what should be the style of these movements — the workers are not told, they are not educated either. The workers are only fed with fiery exhortations : be prepared for revolution, build up strong organization, as strong as a fort — such a fort where nobody else can enter. At once the workers stand up, sticks in their hands, and build up the fort — a fort where a person even when he wants to say something reasonable, something logical, is gagged if he does not belong to the particular party or organization !

You are aware that once many such 'red forts' sprouted up in different parts of the country. They were as if the private preserves of a particular party or organization where entry was barred to others. How is it that if somebody says even words of reasons we will not listen to him since he does not belong to our party or organization, nor will he be allowed to enter into the area because we claim it to be our fort ?

Might be, the criticism would have been helpful to the very cause of revolution, but shutting out even that because a 'fort' has been built up — does it stand to reason ? Leaders are saying : build up fortresses everywhere. Does this mean building baffle walls against logic or reason ? What has been the result ? This breeds blindness, and blindness or fanaticism is the very base of fascism — it helps the bourgeoisie. Workers' movement and revolutionary struggle have no truck with ignorance and irrationality. They believe in logic, debates, discussions, ideological-political struggles and polemics. Because, they are in search of truth. They are not afraid of debates, discussions. Only those want to suppress, those want to discourage discussion who are in the wrong and on the side of reaction. That is why sometimes on the plea of discipline, and some other time on the plea of unity or under cover of pseudo-militant slogans like 'convert the organization into a fort', what in reality they do is gagging all discussions and debates. They fear

debates and discussions, they are very much afraid of logic and analysis. If somebody presents a searching analysis in his speech, they remark tauntingly that he is taking a class. As if speeches are meant for inciting people only. Then, being incited, let the people die in sporadic battles here and there. And it is the people not the leaders who die in such battles ! When and where do such leaders die in police firing ? They do not die in battles, but, of course, the revolutionaries do die in battles. But here are these leaders whom the police always protect and flatteringly address as 'Sir' ! So, these leaders only incite the people and the more the people die getting excited the better for the leaders. They would then observe martyrs' days, whip up public sentiment against the ruling party and make political capital out of it for getting through electoral battles.

Correct base political line is an essential precondition for revolution

True, people have to lay down their lives for revolution. But how is it that in spite of so many struggles, so much sacrifice of lives, reaction has been gaining ground ? What is then the heart of the matter ? The essential point is the correct revolutionary ideology and correct base political line. We must grasp correctly the character of the state structure, the concrete social, economic and political condition of the country where we are to organize the revolution. Just the other day, the Chinese Communist Party at its 10th Party Congress made a very important observation which I liked very much. A giant party as this which successfully led revolution and then organized the Cultural Revolution, which enjoys an overwhelming command over the masses of as big a country as that — even such a party does not plead that because it enjoys so much popular support, has so vast a membership strength, so many committees are behind it, that is why it is correct. They are saying on the contrary that if the base political line is not correct then even if there is mass support and strength, the army at command, and even if the organization is very big today, they cannot be retained in the long run. If the line is incorrect, everything will be lost today or tomorrow. By this it is presumed that even an incorrect line may draw popular support for some time till people realize from their experience where the mistake lies. If this is not true then how could Hitler once become the undisputed leader of Germany ? How could a dictator like Nasser and the political bosses of Egypt become national leaders and suppress the communists ? So, even if the line is wrong, popularity can be earned at times and can be retained for some time too. The glaring proof of this is the overwhelming political influence of the Muslim League over the Muslim peasantry, labourers and the middle class during the freedom movement.

But could this support be maintained for long ? No. So, the Chinese Party, a giant party at that, despite so big a mass following and so many cadres, reiterates that a party even if it begins with one member, will double itself, treble itself and thus will multiply its strength manifold and give birth to political power and capture the state power one day, provided its base political line is correct. Hence drawing up the correct base political line is one of the principal preconditions of revolution. Marx, Lenin and all of them highlighted this truth, although in different language. It is Marx who pointed out that it is the proletariat alone who can change the world. And it is he who, with the help of dialectical materialism, showed for the first time the scientific process to change the world. But he cautioned at the same time that to say that the proletariat can change the world does not mean they can change it just because of their position as the proletariat. Does it mean that the proletariat, anyhow organized in thousands and raising slogans for revolution, can bring it about ? Only those proletariats can achieve it who have transformed themselves so as to be equal to fulfilling the task of revolution.

Proletarian culture is not the culture of degenerated workers, victims of bourgeois decadence

Only those workers can change the world who have been able to give birth to the quality of revolutionary leadership, and that not in political battle alone or in slogans, but in behaviour and lifestyle, in ethical-moral standard, cultural tone and taste, by freeing themselves from the narrow confines of vile bourgeois culture. So long as the workers are not freed from the influence and impact of bourgeois individualism, bourgeois ideology and its decadent culture acquired from the bourgeois society, they cannot organize revolution however much their economic distress may aggravate. The evil influence of the bourgeois decadent culture reflected by the workers can by no means be called the proletarian culture simply because workers are carrying it. At one time some people who joined the working class movement with philanthropic ideas thought that whatever the workers do and reflect is revolutionary. That is why all, from Marx to Lenin, gave a good dressing down to this idea, reminding that proletarian culture could never mean that the culture itself was proletariat ! They showed that picking up the language and habits of the illiterate and backward sections of the workers who are victim of decadence of bourgeois culture which once grew on the edifice of humanist and bourgeois liberal values conducive to the bourgeois revolution should not be mistaken for the assimilation and practice of proletarian culture based on proletarian ideology in this era of proletarian revolution. Proletarian culture is for freeing the workers, who are crushed under the burden of a wretched existence and rotten bourgeois culture, who, having slipped into fatalism, have taken for granted their miserable life as inevitable, who have fallen victim to the vicious circle of economism-opportunism, and proletarian culture is to inculcate in them a new ideology, make them stand erect with indomitable spirit of defiance, transforming them into communists. Here, in India, we find just the reverse.

Here, the so-called communists since they are to mix with the workers, they are to take to addiction to narcotics and drinks. Once so many people came to the Labour Party from the ranks of workers with the urge for revolution, leaving their families, careers, everything. In what a pitiable position such a big party has landed itself today — a party which got so many cadres from the workers which no other party including ours has, till now, been able to draw. In the name of inculcating proletarian culture, they have all been reduced to the degenerated proletariat. None of their cadres they could mould into revolutionaries. What incalculable harm was wrought to these cadres ! They wanted to rouse the workers but instead they themselves became the victim of the culture of the already degenerated proletariat. All their potentiality went in vain based as it was on this quicksand. So, unless the workers can change themselves first they cannot change the world — such is the principal condition for the success of the Marxist or working class movement. That is why, the question of establishing the correct revolutionary leadership on a correct base political line as also on the edifice of proletarian culture is intimately connected with the success of revolution. Workers will have to grasp the inner law and character of class struggle and will have to correctly analyse the socio-political-economic condition of the country with the help of the only weapon or science at their disposal, i.e., Marxism-Leninism. The struggles that are constantly developing within the society centring round deprivations, miseries, repressions and exploitations — to what ultimate goal they are to be led, who are the exploiters against whom the struggle is to be directed — to know and realize all these is the fundamental question before the workers' movement. You want struggle and, for this, an organization too. And you are happy when you get both the organization and struggle. Nothing short of these can satisfy you. But why this struggle ? What for the organization ? Struggle is

surely not for struggle's sake. So also organization is not for the sake of organization only. Then be it struggle, be it organization, all are for revolution, for the workers' emancipation. Emancipation from whom? Who is the exploiter? Where is the obstacle? When I am being exploited by Ram, if I get ready to fight Shyam I shall never be able to achieve my emancipation. So, the all important point at issue is to determine the correct path. Honesty, dedication, sacrifice, struggling spirit — even if all of these are there but the path is wrong then everything will go to waste. Remember, these are elementary base qualities without which, not to speak of the revolutionaries, even the reactionaries can do nothing. The fascist Nazis who in Germany established a fascist state and stopped the march of revolution and gave birth to counter-revolution, the Japanese imperialists who let loose a nefarious imperialist rule and oppression all over the South-East Asian countries, who held out such a great threat in the last World War, they too, knowingly or unknowingly, had to take up their ideology with all the honesty, sincerity, dedication and base it on a moral strength. They practised 'harakiri'. Surely you have heard about 'harakiri'. The followers of Japanese imperialism, whenever they thought they had betrayed the state, the military or had failed to discharge the duty allotted to them, they would kill themselves. It symbolized their sense of dedication and discipline. If you go through the life stories of the Nazis and are acquainted with their sense of discipline, you will see that this is also a kind of discipline, a kind of militancy which even the reactionaries do also need. Those who mean to do something, everyone of them, must have this. But what is the most important thing is whether the base political line, whether the main political approach is correct or not. Honesty you may have but have no correct scientific idea about the thing you want to create — then you can never do it.

Say, for instance, you do not know what are the ingredients required to prepare Tincture of Iodine. Now you choose lime, sand and mortar as the ingredients for this and you are prepared to put in hard labour, to go hungry and even be ready to give your life. That is to say, there is no dearth of honesty and dedication on your part, but will that enable you to make Tincture of Iodine with the ingredients you have chosen? True, honesty, sincerity and dedication are necessary but only with these qualities as capital can anyone prepare such a fanciful idea? This is very important and applies equally well in politics and social science. You have to understand first of all what is the nature and character of the Indian revolution which you will have to accomplish. That is to say, what is the root cause of economic exploitation in India, what is the character of its state, which class or classes are wielding the state power. So long as our conception about these basic questions is not clear, we will not be able to determine the correct base political line, what in political terminology we call the strategy and tactics of revolution. And here on this point, if anyone with fanciful idea, on the basis of wrong conclusions, builds up a party with the avowed object of revolution, then in the course of conducting movements centring round people's sufferings and distress and having organized people in this way may even succeed in giving birth to a powerful party for some time, but nonetheless they will never be able to bring about revolution. Rather, by this, the fighting zeal of the people is diverted into wrong course, the revolutionary potential will be exhausted and, as a result, the capitalist class and the reactionaries will further gain in strength. That is why we have to understand thoroughly what are the fundamental problems in our country and why they are aggravating more and more. In my considered opinion three basic problems are agitating the politico-socio-economic life of India.

The cause of cultural degeneration which I have discussed earlier, to understand it in the proper perspective also you are to understand thoroughly these three principal problems.

Three fundamental problems of the Indian society

Of the problems with which are related all other problems of our social life, the principal one is the ever increasing unemployment problem. Nothing can stem its tide. Plans are being taken one after another but the problem of unemployment goes on unabated. Why is it happening ? The rulers say that population increase is the principal reason. Whether this is so could be a matter for consideration only if they could prove first that there is no wastage of existing resources, i.e., no wastage of the productive forces and labour power, no corruption, no wasteful expenditure and that the installed capacity is not lying idle but is being fully utilized or at least there is a serious attempt to fully utilize it and nothing further is left to be done. So, even after fulfilling all these conditions if the total work force could not be absorbed then and then only the problem of excess population could have been a matter for consideration. But what we see is just the reverse.

Even the existing installed capacity is not being fully utilized at present. Corruption and wasteful practices are ever on the increase — they have exceeded all limits. What is the reality then ? Is it for excess population that the existing installed capacity cannot be fully utilized ? Or is it the reason for which corruption and wasteful expenditure cannot be stopped ?

So, is it anything other than a bluff ? And to give this bluff an air of credibility crores of rupees are being spent on commissions, conferences and technocrats. And the country has now become a fool's paradise, the fools going by the name 'technocrats' ! In our country the specialists are those who do not specialize in knowledge, but in ignorance — the grand idiots ! Otherwise they could not provide such an explanation that —“population increase is the principal cause for aggravation of unemployment problem.” I do not mean to say that the problem of unemployment is not at all a problem in our country today. What I mean is that the rulers and the ruling class are arguing in circles or are resorting to deceptive logic with the motive of concealing the real cause behind the unemployment problem. They are raising the bogey of excess population only to make it a scapegoat and sidetrack the main point.

Why then the unemployed cannot be absorbed ? The unemployed can only be given employment by opening up newer and newer industries and establishments. How many of them can be absorbed in idle jobs in a top-heavy administration ? There is a limit to it and it has its adverse effect. An inflated army, inflated police, producing nothing but only subsisting on public revenues must have its evil effect on social life. Inevitably parasitism will prevail in our administrative activity as well as in all other fields of activity. But that is a different issue altogether. I agree to leave aside also the question of wastage of national wealth. But practically how many can be provided with jobs in this way ? Another novel avenue for employment has been opened up of late. That is, in formation of Seva Dal or volunteer forces. The parliamentary political parties today, as you find, have turned out to be entrepreneurs or business concerns where vacancies exist and you can have jobs. That is to say, if you hold lathis for these parties, be their so-called volunteers, their election workers, you can earn five or ten rupees as daily wage in exchange. And this perverse practice goes on in our country today. This novel practice of giving employment to such a large number of unemployed youths is quite unheard of elsewhere in the world. In this country, big jotedars, money lenders, big sharks — the blackmarketeers-wholesalers — are employing a large number of economically distressed people for smuggling of rice. And such an unethical means of livelihood like blackmarketing has become an open affair in this country. Drawing rice, sugar and other articles from the ration shops against ration cards and selling them at higher prices elsewhere is now an open secret. And the government of the country is a mere onlooker, it feels no shame. If this be the state of affairs,

can there be any moral standard left in a country ? It is getting indulgence from all powerful quarters. However, can all these methods of giving employment minimize a bit the pressure of unemployment that is ever on the increase ? The only rational solution to this problem lies in opening up the path of uninterrupted growth of industries. And the question of uninterrupted industrialization is intimately linked up with the question of modernization and mechanization of agriculture, and without modernization and mechanization of agriculture it is not possible to remove the distress and miseries of 75 to 80 per cent of the rural population. And this modernization of agriculture, in its turn, is also not possible unless an uninterrupted pace of industrial development is maintained. For, only when the uninterrupted pace of industrial development is maintained, the millions of rural work-force rendered unemployed due to modernization of agriculture can be absorbed. But the reality is that in the cities scores of factories are closing down, thereby adding further to the number of unemployed. When the already established factories are closing down how can there be modernization in agriculture ? But without modernization of agriculture the condition of villages cannot be improved and purchasing power of people cannot be increased, or in other words extension of the market cannot be achieved. But without the extension of market wherefrom will come the urge for production ? And so the vicious circle. What then is the real problem with which are linked up all these questions ?

What stands in the way of development of production in our country ? What stands in the way of investment of capital ? The answer to all these is the same — want of sufficient market. But whose is this problem of market ? Of capitalism, or of feudalism ? This is the crux of the problem. Whether feudalism exists or not and to what extent, I do not intend to enter into this polemic here. To me, this is a most irrelevant question. Suffice it to say that feudalism does not exist in land relations of our country. If time permitted I could have proved this contention with elaborate analyses, facts and logic. But suppose, for argument's sake, feudalism still remains in land relations at some places. But it is the teaching of Marxism that in any analysis of a mixed phenomenon, its character is always to be determined by what is its dominant feature. Let us now see what the principal characteristic feature of Indian economy is. Is it feudal or capitalist ? What is the basic structure of Indian economy — feudal or capitalistic ?

Law of monopoly capitalism is operating in the entire economy including the agricultural economy in India

Say, for example, the production of steel is being obstructed — but who is obstructing ? Is it the feudal lords, or is it due to the crisis in capitalist market ? Is not the crisis of capitalist market the cause of productive capacity remaining idle ? Capitalist relations of production is no longer of use for social progress. Even if someone shows with the help of statistics that land has been concentrated in the hands of a few — a phenomenon which some may term as capitalist landlordism — then in spite of it this does not prove that feudalism or semi-feudalism is existing as the dominant production relation in the rural economy. True, capitalist landlordism is a term used in the agricultural economy. In England one can find it. At one time in the USA too it grew and developed in certain areas, for some time. But this phenomenon of capitalist landlordism is related to capitalist production relation itself. This is nothing but the phenomenon of admixture of feudal habits with capitalism and can only be eliminated through overthrow of capitalism. Keeping the capitalist economy intact, or bypassing it, there is no scope of eliminating the outmoded feudal habits. So why bring up all these irrelevant issues only to confuse the principal question of revolution ?

State power here is in the hands of the capitalist class, the bourgeoisie. And the struggle to overthrow the state is revolution. The workers fight, build up their organization — all these are for the ultimate object of overthrowing this exploitative capitalist state machine. It means they will forcibly dislodge a class from state power, they will strike to remove a particular socio-economic system. But, a class is to be dislodged from power — which class is it ? You will be striking against a class economy — which class economy, which class system ? Is it anything other than the capitalist economy, capitalist social system and the capitalist state ? But to confuse this basic question, many have been raising slogans against imperialism and feudalism and, along with these, against monopoly capitalists. All are raising slogans against monopoly capitalism, even Chhatra Parishad and Yuba Congress². The CPI and CPI(M) too join in the chorus. They, all of them, are pulling the same hoax. But is the fight against monopoly capital a fight against an individual monopoly house like that of Tata or Birla, is it a fight against an individual or against capitalism as such, against the bourgeoisie as a class ? So the slogan should be directed against the class as a whole. Monopoly capitalists by themselves do not constitute a separate class. They are just a section or a group within the capitalist class. The owners of banking and industrial institutions, who are in control of finance capital, constitute the financial oligarchy. And this group is the leader of that bourgeois class against whom we want to direct our attack. But to bring to the fore only the leader, sparing the class whom it leads, means to shield the principal enemy — capitalism, the bourgeoisie as a class. Can we overthrow the bourgeois class by shielding the class itself ? You will find that Marx, Engels and Zhou Enlai, the other day at the 10th Party Congress of CPC, have posed the same question although in different language. They all have said that our fight is not against an individual. Individuals may come and go but so long as the capitalist class remains, it will inevitably give birth to monopoly. Monopoly capital does not mean an individual monopoly house, say of the Birlas. Monopoly capital is the inevitable outcome of the capitalist productive system, of bourgeois class rule. So, as long as capitalism exists one Birla may go, but it will breed more Birlas. That is why when the fights against the Tatas, Birlas or individual factory owners are not conducted from the basic angularity of overthrowing capitalism — if people and the working class are not organized on the basis of the necessary revolutionary ideology and consciousness conducive to the struggle to overthrow the class rule of the capitalists, then all these struggles howsoever embellished with revolutionary jargons cannot strike against capitalism anywhere, cannot scratch it even.

India's revolution is anti-capitalist socialist revolution

Thus it is clear that this so-called anti-monopoly slogan of these pseudo-revolutionary parties is nothing but one to protect capitalism by obstructing the course of anti-capitalist revolution behind the facade of a so-called fight against individual monopoly houses of Tatas and Birlas. In this way, the most simple and essential things for the understanding of the real question of revolution are being deliberately confused in this country. And we all know that according to Marxism-Leninism the revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie where it wields the state power is nothing other than socialist revolution. It never alters the stage of revolution if, along with the bourgeois class, there are a handful of feudal lords in state power. Go through the history of Russian revolution and you will find that after the February Democratic Revolution, almost all the important portfolios in the Kerensky Government in ministries like defence, finance and foreign affairs were in the hands of persons coming from the Czar family. But still then Lenin said in the *April Thesis* that the moment the Russian bourgeoisie had assumed the state power by overthrowing Nicholas Czar, that is, a new class had assumed the state power in the place of the

old one — to that extent and in that sense the bourgeois democratic revolution was completed politically and Russia had entered the stage of socialist revolution. Was not Lenin aware that the kulaks were there, kulakism still prevailed — the influence of Czardom was very much there ? Did he not also know that a large amount of foreign imperial capital was operating and its influence and domination over the Russian economy was still intact ? There too were ‘Marxists’ of this variety who, referring to all this, argued vociferously that how could one jump directly to socialist revolution without making a clean sweep of imperialism-feudalism ! Giving them a good dressing down Lenin stressed a very important point. He showed that “Marxism is not economic determinism”, and that “politics must take precedence over economics and to argue otherwise is to forget the ABC of Marxism”. The relationship between politics and economics is not that simple, is not so mechanical that politics simply follows economics. For instance, with the capture of state power by the bourgeoisie politically, notwithstanding the influence and domination of imperialism-feudalism still prevailing economically, a new question comes to the fore. Taking cognizance of this particular phenomenon, Lenin pointed out that since the bourgeoisie had come to state power before these changes in the economic field had been accomplished, imperialism-feudalism cannot be pushed out an inch without overthrowing the bourgeoisie. In that respect and to that extent the Russian revolution was socialist in character, and so long as it had not been accomplished, these two things will run parallel, one intimately mixed with the other.

But a section of the so-called Marxists in our country, without drawing any lesson from Marx to Lenin, without caring a bit that the character of the present state structure is capitalist and that in determining the stage of revolution this is the principal question, are clamouring that feudalism still exists in our rural economy. Their way of argument is that in our villages the mode of agricultural production is still backdated, it is still a small peasant economy — land being tilled in small plots — and that a major portion of land is concentrated in the hands of a few. Big farming or improved types of machines and implements as can be found in advanced capitalist countries are absent here, and all that. Lenin has provided on this question some very important lessons. He has given serious warnings in this regard. Speaking about agrarian reforms, Lenin showed that land farming in small plots of land with antiquated methods, or modern type of farming through big farms with the help of improved machine and implements — none of these determined whether the character of the agricultural economy was socialist, capitalist or feudal. The character of agricultural economy is really determined by the production relation and the nature of trade and commerce of the agricultural produce.

In other words, what is the character of agricultural produce ? What is the nature of its trade and commerce ? Are they the commodities of localized agricultural market, or are they commodities of the trade and commerce of capitalist national market ? Or are they produced on the basis of socialist economic planning as a means of exchange in terms of socially necessary things ? Is it that the government, just like in a barter system, is bringing them to circulation in the market for distribution to people with a view to gradually minimizing the commodity circulation ? Is the production in agriculture being conducted with this basic aim and objective ? So, you see that the character of agricultural economy is determined by the motive force of production and the nature of trade and commerce of the commodities.

What is happening here — in our country ? The owners of land here are investing capital in land and are selling the surplus as commodities in the market to extract profit. Production here is principally not for individual consumption but for extracting maximum profit by selling in the market. As a result, land too has been transformed into capital, i.e., capitalist means of

production. By this process — the agricultural produce being sold in the market as commodity — the volume of capital invested in land is increasing. In other words, in the agricultural economy of our country, the economic law of M-C-M (Money-Commodity-More Money) is fully at work. Investment of capital in land economy is therefore the reality. It is the law of capitalist economy, pure and simple, and obviously so.

So, whether land farming is done in small plots of land, or through big farming with machine-tractors are all irrelevant. I have dealt with the question many times before as to why land farming is not being widely done in our country with machine-tractors and higher technology. In Japan too there is small peasant economy, big land farming is absent there. But does that prove that Japan is not a capitalist country ? The bourgeoisie of our country have taken note that if machine-tractors are introduced widely, then at one stroke it will push millions out of land and will render them unemployed. Unless, therefore, there is an uninterrupted development of industries in the cities to absorb these adding millions of rural unemployed, capitalism which is already groaning under the pressure of ever increasing urban unemployed is sure to stumble.

In the nineteenth century, when the advantage of open world market was there, in order to shift more and more rural work-force to industry in the very interest of uninterrupted industrial development, the bourgeoisie introduced machine-tractors to free the surplus work-force from agriculture. But how can the bourgeoisie modernize agriculture in our country in the face of the severity of crisis in the world capitalist market which has even lost its relative stability and when capitalism today is moribund, is mortally afraid of revolution, and fails even to fully utilize the installed productive capacity and keeps it idle ? Being afraid of radical land reforms the bourgeoisie is moving rather in the opposite direction. It is keeping the bulk of rural population arrested in small plots of land in a state of half-fed, half-clad condition, and is holding out the illusion of 'green revolution' to them. This is nothing but a sinister design of the bourgeoisie enmeshed in crisis. What is simply astonishing is that the CPI and the CPI(M) who talk of agrarian revolution, of overthrowing feudalism, present basically the same kind of planning in their agrarian programmes. Note their self-contradiction on the question of introduction of machine-tractors and modernization and mechanization of agriculture. The CPI(M) in its Mujaffarpur thesis has declared its opposition to the introduction of tractors and its intention to build up movements if they are introduced. Why ? Are the peasants and workers as a matter of principle opposed to introduction of machine-tractors ? Are the machine-tractors their enemy ? True, so long as capitalism is there machine-tractors will create unemployment, will take away jobs of many, as the motive force of its production is to earn maximum profit. But machine-tractors do not create unemployment in a socialist social system, on the contrary, they uplift and modernize the standard of living of the masses.

So, the slogan should instead be : "Let machine-tractors come for the upliftment of villages — we want it. But since in this capitalist system no alternative jobs are being provided, machine-tractors should not be introduced without guaranteeing that first." The workers and peasants should understand that unless capitalism is speedily overthrown the purchasing power of people cannot be enhanced, their standard of living cannot be upgraded through large-scale introduction of machine-tractors and electricity cannot be brought to the countryside, the condition of villages cannot be improved. The present backwardness of villages cannot be removed. No improvement will come in village life. But without integrating movements against introduction of machine-tractors in a capitalist economy that creates unemployment with the struggle to overthrow capitalism, these so-called communists are instead linking up this movement with the so-called anti-feudal struggle. What has it got to do with feudalism ? All these are entirely linked with the

capitalist relation of production. Rather we all know that in the era of capitalist development in the Western countries, when machine-tractors were introduced, it had helped eliminating feudal economic relation in agriculture. So, how does this question of linking up this movement against introduction of machine-tractors with the movement against feudalism at all arise ? What queer logic are they advancing !

There is, therefore, no basic difference between the land reform policy or programme of the Congress and those of the parties in Opposition, including the so-called communists.

The programme of anti-feudal agrarian revolution and industrial revolution through distribution of surplus land only, as the CPI and the CPI(M) contend, is basically the same as that of the Congress. According to the declaration of the Congress, surplus land above the 'ceiling' should be distributed among the landless peasants. Not only that, only the other day a Congress Minister was talking of bringing down the ceiling to 5 acres. Then we are to say that he is the greatest revolutionary because, if this is done more land will be available for distribution ! I say, this is all utopia. For, even if all the surplus lands above ceiling are taken over and distributed among the landless of the whole country, individual peasants, according to simple arithmetic, cannot get more than two to three bighas of land each. But this can hardly sustain him and his family ; it would be an uneconomic holding. Besides, for want of requisite money for cultivation, ploughs and bullocks, he will even be unable to cultivate that land. This will bring in its trail an adverse effect on production, too. Food crisis is bound to develop. The peasant will lose his land because of poverty and destitution. So, all these programmes are no effective solution. At best they may serve the politics of stunt.

Distribution of land is no doubt a big problem. It is known and accepted on all hands that distribution of surplus land to the landless with the force of movement is an important aspect of democratic movement of our country. But only they, who knowingly or unknowingly are helping capitalism that is responsible for all the problems and miseries in people's life to perpetuate, hold that merely by this the unemployment problem will be resolved, the door to uninterrupted industrial development will be opened up, market will be expanded, and they spread such confusion among the people. How queer is their self-contradiction ! On the other hand, they are telling that the number of agricultural labourers is on the increase in villages, capital is being invested in land, old economic relation is breaking down. They also say that capitalism has made decisive inroads into agriculture. But if it is a fact that capitalism has made decisive inroads into agriculture, how can feudalism remain the main enemy, even in villages ? Faced with this question they are proffering a new explanation that feudalism, being the old production relation, is no doubt giving way, but even while it gives way the feudal lords in combination with the rich peasants are exploiting the people.

According to their analysis, if anyone, being owner of hundreds of bighas of land, stays in the village and takes part in cultivation, then he is not a landlord but is a rich peasant, an ally of people's democratic revolution. And who are the landlords ? Whatever be the quantum of land holdings, those who do not stay in villages and do not take part in cultivation are the landlords ! Then a person having, say, fifteen bighas of land but who does not cultivate himself, but is a city dweller, is a landlord ! And another person having several times more land in possession, if he stays in the village and takes part in cultivation, at once he becomes an ally of their people's democratic revolution. Because, unless such persons are on their side, they can hardly build up peasants' organization ! Unless these peasants are with them, wherefrom will they get their votes ? These rich peasants who stay in villages, take part in cultivation, hoard agricultural produce, mint speculative profit out of this — it is these rich peasants who actually control the

election politics in villages. So, this is the real character of politics of those who raise the high-pitched slogan of the people's democratic revolution. Has it got anything to do with revolution, or is it a programme of some reforms within the confines of the present capitalist economic structure ?

Three essential pre-conditions for revolution — correct revolutionary theory, correct base political line and a genuine revolutionary party

Hence, let me remind you once again of the teachings of Lenin — what are essential for revolution are : a correct revolutionary theory, a correct base political line and finally, a genuine revolutionary party of the proletariat. Unless you fulfil these essential preconditions, then like many of your fights in the past and many more in future, they will all be mere mock fights. So, while taking part in trade union movement you must make yourselves conscious of all these serious questions. Give serious thoughts to all this while you are in your collective struggles. While trying to build up your struggles you are to understand why and where lies the difference between your organization and those of others. Your sincere efforts should be to unite the workers in one union, despite political differences. What is necessary for this is philosophical tolerance for each other in political ideological debates. What is there to object if somebody can convince the majority about his superior politics and on this strength of ideology comes to the leadership ? But if anybody curbs the freedom of expression of others, snatches away their right to criticism and imposes his leadership just on the strength of majority in the committee, factionalism is bound to arise. And factionalism causes avoidable wastage of time for all of us. Because of it, we move against each other and cannot devote ourselves to develop revolutionary consciousness and organization among the workers correctly and whole-heartedly. Therefore, the real hindrance to building up one unified union of the workers is this spirit of impatience or lack of philosophical tolerance. Splits cannot be avoided if we do not listen to the views of others, gag them and forbid discussions. Because ideology cannot be just trampled underfoot. Just as you are a believer of your viewpoint, so also another person, even if he is wrong, has his own views and he believes in them. There should be scope for open struggle between these two viewpoints. If you want to impose your opinion on me, I cannot accept it. So, if there is free exchange of opinions and open debates and discussions, criticism, counter criticism, people at large get the opportunity to know who is right and who is wrong. If you are correct you have no reason to be afraid of polemics, rather your victory is assured. Only those who are on the wrong track, who cling to untruth, who have weaknesses are afraid of debates, discussions and ideological struggles. They only, on various pretexts — in the name of discipline and unity — keep their cadres and supporters away from open debates and try to confuse the masses too. Please give up this wrong course. Let there be free exchange of opinions. And through this course, try to unite the working class in united struggle.

Struggle you must. Not that you will not struggle. For, hunger is a stern mistress. Even if you think today that struggles will beget nothing, day after tomorrow you will have to come to the field of battle. Indications are already there. Thousands will take to the field, engage in battles, but change will remain a far cry. For this change to take place, what is demanded of you are those three things — correct base political line, correct revolutionary theory and a genuine revolutionary party. If you miss these, if your path is wrong, then, despite all your honesty, self-sacrifice and struggles, you cannot advance. Reiterating Lenin's teachings, let me remind you once again that however much you conduct democratic movements and carry on struggles on your demands, observe martyrs' days, confront the police in movements and strikes, shed your

blood, you will remain a slave as before. Capitalism would remain and its exploitation would continue unabated. Perhaps you would earn wage increases by ten or thirty rupees, but the prices which are already high would increase many times more. You would again struggle for wage rise and shed blood, get a rise of five rupees, but the prices of commodities would soar again. What is more, this uncertainty, aimlessness will bring despair and moral degeneration in your life. The family, centring round which you have built your dream of happiness, that very family, and the most intimate and the precious relations within it, cannot escape the impact of the social malady of the present society ; rather, it will worm its entry into it. You thought of a sweet home, many a dream of happiness you nourished. Go home and see how fleeting is your dream. The wife you have chosen as your life's partner, there too you will find no love, no peace. Stability is nowhere in this society. Even love loses its essence and beauty. Children, for whom you spared no pains, grudged no amount of hardship — nothing could stand in your way for them — they have each become a type by themselves — one becoming the fan of a filmstar, another of a sportstar. In other words, even living in the world of only your kith and kin and of dreams of your own, leading a life completely detached from strifes and struggles outside, from politics, simply a tranquil life of only attending to office desk, of coming home, of eating and sleeping, you cannot save yourself and your family. The spectre of social problems will haunt you in your home, it will vitiate your personal life, kill your love, reduce your love and affection to shambles. To live like a man, fight you must. And your fight must be on a correct revolutionary line. Merely chanting 'revolution' will not lead you on to the path of revolution. Only if you can organize the workers under the leadership of a correct revolutionary party and educate them with adequate political consciousness grown on a clear conception of the correct strategy of revolution and class character of the state, will you be able to give birth to people's own political power and become politically empowered truly. And then will materialize the cherished moment when tens of millions of the downtrodden Indian people will behold the revolution. Till then, it will be only agitation and defeat, only outbursts and despair. The road to emancipation from all this, emancipation of society, liberation of mankind runs through revolution, and revolution only. This is the way, the only way, and no other way.

Long Live Revolution !

Speech on March 17, 1974.
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The title has since been changed.

Notes

1. Comrade Subodh Banerjee, Chief Guest at the Conference, and Labour Minister of the first United Front government, and member, Politbureau, SUCI.
2. The student and youth wings of the Congress.