

Mass Movement in India and Tasks of the Youth

This analysis Comrade Ghosh made on 21 June 1975 in his address to the delegates of the All Bengal Youth Conference of the Democratic Youth Organization held in Suri, West Bengal. In the background of the prevailing political situation, Comrade Ghosh exposed the duplicity of the pseudo-revolutionary parties, their clandestine understanding with the Congress. He emphasized the urgency of building people's own alternative political power in the concrete shape of struggle committees to organize class and mass struggles and the role the youth are to play in these struggles.

Comrade Delegates,

You are the youth force of Bengal. You have come to this conference from the different districts of West Bengal to adopt an appropriate programme for building up an organized, powerful mass movement against the Congress government in the true interest of the people. I am aware of the inconveniences you are facing here. One thing is that because of the bandh¹ called by the Eight Party Combination ² for June 20, many of you have had to travel from far-off places for two, even three days, in great hardship to reach here one day ahead of the conference. Moreover, many among you have had no food for two days for lack of proper arrangements, not even the space to take some rest, let alone sleep. Even more, you are facing many difficulties due to heavy rains. I know all this.

Even so, I want to tell you something. It is, can revolution be achieved in comfort? For revolution, people have to go without food for days on end. They have to suffer hardship in rains, in the scorching sun. Does revolution wait for rains, for the heat? Did not the people of Vietnam accomplish revolution, staying in forests in company of tigers and snakes? It goes without saying that you are suffering difficulties. But where lies the difference between men and animals? The difference is that animals are driven about restlessly by natural instincts, while man decides his duty using his intellect and with a level head he discharges his responsibility and goes about it, no matter any natural inclemency, adversity or a thousand difficulties whatsoever.

How many such large conferences are held in West Bengal? Perhaps the Congress can organize it. But they do it, spending fifty, sixty lakhs, or a crore, may be even a crore and a half of rupees. They set up camps with sanitary latrines, make good living accommodation with plenty of electric lights and fans. No such thing as suffering or hardship they have. They can afford to spend millions to do all this. But ours is a party of the poor, the workers and peasants — how can we afford that? Difficulties are liable to be there, especially when so many youth have assembled for such a big conference in an inclement weather of this scale. Moreover, you have heard that the administrative heads of this town and all the political parties, the Congress, even the leftist parties, not to speak of co-operating, have simply obstructed this conference in every way. In the last moment, personnel from the police department pressurized the landlord of the house which had been arranged for lodging a section of the delegates. They said, the house would be required for their use. As a result, it became known only in the afternoon of the day

before the conference that the house would not be available to us. You know, schools and colleges are now all closed for vacation. But the CRP³ and the police have already occupied even those. We don't have the resources or money to erect a better *pandal* (makeshift shelter) which could have reduced your sufferings in these rains. So, it is not just a question of competence or incompetence of the local organizers. Not much better facilities could have been arranged by the organizers at any other place in a situation where such a large number of delegates have arrived, some five to seven thousand. More so, in these heavy rains and with such kind of obstructions from all sides. Even more, the house for accommodation could not be availed. So it is not unexpected that you find yourselves in this distress. You are suffering hardship, but it makes me sad to learn that some delegates are aggrieved because many have had to go without food for two days, many have had to go without sleep for two nights. This pained me deeply (voice chokes, after a while he resumes speaking).

I have been actively involved in political movements for long fortytwo years. Out of that, for thirty years I strove working tirelessly to build up the SUCI as a new type of party, a genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party on this soil. I am not very old. But my health has already broken down from working untiringly to rear up party workers and develop the party. But all this has been for the sake of advancing the cause of revolution itself in this country. I have noticed that some among us lose their calm the moment they are in difficulty. But if we can work together with calm and composure amid difficulties and hardship, calmly persuade each other and work in discipline, that goes not only to augment our powers, ability and character, that also serves to teach people many things. Whatever discipline you have shown amid such hardship and difficulties has elicited unstinted praise from the people of Suri and the Birbhum district. There is talk within the police and the administration that even they do not have such discipline. Even so, whatever dissatisfaction has grown in you, it hurts me deeply.

You are here in large numbers as delegates from all districts of West Bengal. Only from the district of West Dinajpur just a few delegates have come. The struggle in West Bengal in the coming days depends on you in a large way. I am going to place before you the present situation, the political situation of India, of West Bengal in particular — what the different parties are doing and aiming at, and what we are doing and aim to do. I hope, you will not let the purpose of this conference be defeated, and will return from here with the correct understanding of the main political line and the tactical line — the style and programme of propaganda, work and organization — all this and also your tasks and duty to advance your cause of carrying forward the struggle. You are in discomfort as everything is drenched with rain. Maybe, further rains will put you in still more difficulty. Still, I hope that you will return with the firm resolve to go forward with all strength to meet the challenge which faces you in West Bengal.

Although outwardly there appear to be many opposing forces in politics, and the press projects so many contending forces, but viewing the situation from the context of ultimate struggle, I hold, only two contending forces are there in politics — one for revolution, the other opposing revolution — in whatever nomenclature might it be posed. One is the politics of countering revolution, whether by the Congress through its politics, whether by all the many juggleries of so-called leftism, or by proclaimed commitment to democratic socialism, or by raising various right reactionary slogans, and through politics of catchy stunts. And the other is the politics of organizing revolution.

This politics of opposing revolution has paved the road to usher in fascism — whether consciously or unconsciously, unknowingly, just as the intellectuals, youth and students in Italy and Germany objectively helped in installation of fascism, forgetting their heritage. They did not

usher in fascism knowingly. Confused and duped by Hitler's fake progressive slogans and his hoax of national socialism, and Mussolini's deceit of democratic socialism, nationalization and social welfare measures, the intellectuals, students and youth of Germany and Italy objectively strengthened fascism. They sold out their conscience to the money power of the monopolists. In flocks they got enlisted in the troops of Nazi hooligans. They did not have any prick of conscience. Just see, Germany, that once stood out in the whole of Europe as a powerful nation with all-round great heritage in education, culture, cultivation of knowledge and science, industrial advancement and working class movement, is discredited and divided today owing it to Nazism. Its earlier prestige in the world community stands no more. What havoc and harm has Nazism wreaked on Germany and the world at large, which people around the globe have condemned in one voice, calling it the worst enemy of humanity! But when fascism came in Italy and Germany, it came in a cloak of deceit spreading illusion. It came, hiding itself behind the smokescreen of confusing slogans of progress and socialism.

In India, too, a multi-pronged conspiracy is afoot to usher in fascism. At the mass rally in Calcutta on 24 April last I tried to explain one thing. I tried to show that people who talk of solving the country's agricultural and unemployment problems by encouraging small-scale production and small-peasant farming within the present capitalist state and economic structure are objectively helping install fascism in the country knowingly or unknowingly, no matter the party badge or ideological cloak they wear. I wanted to highlight another point at the meeting, but could not make it clear as the proceedings of the meeting got disturbed by adverse weather. I wanted to explain the strategies that the different political parties pursue in the mass movements — the trickeries with which they confuse their ranks and supporters who are not politically conscious, and confuse people too, creating in its ultimate consequence obstacles to developing the revolutionary mass movement. With all their activities, they are only strengthening the election-oriented politics. This politics of theirs can in no way weaken capitalism, it cannot generate the forces of revolution eventually. In reality, they are incapable of giving birth to what we call the people's own political power.

By political power of people I mean developing such conscious, militant committees comprising the people and the youth force in villages and in different areas of towns and cities who can by themselves tackle all types of work on the basis of the revolutionary mass line using their own brains, and dare to confront any situation, who would exercise influence over people not with force or police help or hooliganism, but on the strength of their own qualities, capability, personality, thinking and contemplation, their character and organizing capacity, who can correctly discharge their responsibility while confronting all adverse situations. I am talking about building such types of effective, politically conscious, powerful people's committees from the village level upwards to the national level. Because, it is not always possible to foresee where and how obstructions or offensives would be mounted by the opposing forces. It may be possible to anticipate some such moves with discernment and power of penetration. But even men of profound wisdom cannot anticipate all the sudden attacks which may be coming. All through, the revolutionary movement has to face such situations. Therefore, individually as also at the committee level, the revolutionary organizers need to have the requisite quality of not losing head and spoiling work under any circumstances, or getting involved in altercations and muddling up everything.

I am noticing one thing in our party, from top to the bottom — and this I want to discuss here. In our party there is no trickery or clever manipulation as found in other parties. We discuss things openly. Some state level leaders are here. I am addressing them and am addressing the

common party cadres. I have taken note of everything carefully. I have noticed, the moment they face difficulties in managing a big event as this, they start to muddle things and go on bandying words. These leaders do not know that in a difficult situation they should not bandy words. The necessity then is to maintain calm and have boundless patience. One has to know and learn the art of how to distribute and take on workload without uttering a single unnecessary word in such situations. Whereas, those who engage in exchange of words or in altercations on the ground that work is not progressing as it should, or that there appear difficulties — their conduct shows that even though their character remains quite good and they are capable to die for the cause of revolution, they are incapable of providing the leadership all so necessary to protect and advance revolution in the face of storms and stresses, sudden danger and most adverse situation.

Just as one has to start from a,b,c,d while learning a language, all who transformed society through the ages, who accomplished revolution, learnt thoroughly by heart the first elementary lesson of the science of revolution. This first lesson is that if one falls into difficulties, or faces danger — whether the same are due to counter-revolutionary forces, natural calamities, an enemy unknown, or factors unforeseen, or, say, one's own weaknesses — one is to transform it at once, or, as we put it in English, to turn difficulties into advantage — endeavouring to unitedly achieve this is the true revolutionary education. And to raise clamour about why difficulties are there is bad education in the name of revolution, it is no good education. If you suddenly come face to face with difficulties that never cropped up earlier, or you are in danger which you never faced before, or you fall in trouble you never before had to handle — if you face all this, and go ahead with your task, enduring it and bringing it under control unitedly in a disciplined manner then how much you will learn and how manifold your powers will increase ! How much power you would acquire to exercise control over your mind, your character and conduct ! You need to master all this. Else, revolution will not come about just through talking about it.

To remove the inconveniences in which you find yourselves here in this conference is beyond the powers of the organizers. Firstly, want of means. Secondly, the adverse circumstances. Even if they try it, the situation cannot be rectified much now. But you have come here not to attend a fair, or a festivity. You are here to take up a challenge. All the parties, even those with leftist labels, are in a conspiracy to isolate the SUCI. They think that while the Congress and the CPI, on the one hand, are mounting oppression from their seat of power in this state, all of them will try, on the other, to jointly push the SUCI into a corner. They want the SUCI to submit to their totally election-oriented evil politics, the politics of stunt, the politics of grabbing ministerial positions and powers, the politics which degrade their political workers into opportunists and cowards. We cannot anyway submit to this combined pressure of the leftist parties, because we have seen how this politics has turned not only their party workers and supporters but all workers of the leftist movement in West Bengal into opportunists and cowards. Otherwise, how is it that whereas the people of West Bengal desire with all their heart that the leftists forge an effective, powerful movement against the Congress, yet, with so many organizers, workers and supporters with them, they are saying that there can be no movement now in West Bengal because of the tyranny of the Chhatra Parishad⁴ and the Youth Congress⁵. For, they say, their cadres cannot come out of their house due to terrorism of the Congress. With this mentality, how can they ever accomplish revolution? In this way their party leaders are turning them into the cowards they are. Those who will accomplish revolution have first to learn this thing : We are ready to die. The day we were initiated to revolution, we booked ourselves to court death. You have heard about Julius Fucik. When the fascists were torturing him and threatened to kill him, he responded like this: Whom are you trying to scare ? Do you know, the day I took on the banner of communism,

the flag of revolution, I booked myself for death. I won't yield even if you kill me, I will go on saying whatever I have to say, I will keep on doing whatever I have to do. Because, those are cowards who take to killing this way. Only the brave can court death. The brave stand up to fight the powerful enemy, they wage fight against the military. And it is the cowards who pounce on the weak to show off their 'heroic' muscle power when they have the backing of the police and the armed forces. But see, here the CPI(M), the party which professes revolution, makes its party workers stay holed up because the Chhatra Parishad hooligans will not let them move out! While, on the other, they are trying for a clandestine understanding with the Congress. Their politics is to make an ostentation as though they are going for an alignment with Jayprakashji⁶, while behind the scene it is to enter into a deal with the Congress. This deal they clinched with their *mahamichhil*⁷ of 5th June. If you will just take note of their propaganda at Suri for the strike they called on 20th June, you will realize how far this deal with the Congress has made progress behind the scene. They could not come out of their homes for fear of the Chhatra Parishad, but now on the one side they are parading streets in processions raising slogans for the bandh call, while, on the other, just by their side the Chhatra Parishad cadres are passing down with slogans of 'stop this bandh', and the two sides are grinning at each other. Nowhere a clash erupts. What does all this show? It shows, this anti-Congressism is only a mock show put up by them — a scene of their election-oriented politics. They are moving under a clandestine deal with the Congress. Whereas, the SUCI stands as a living protest and challenge against this politics.

This politics of deceit perpetrated upon people is going on in this country, and you have come to this conference as delegates in order to take up the challenge of confronting this very politics. You have to expose this politics thoroughly to the people of West Bengal, you have to make it clear to them. Discuss it everywhere, in towns, in villages and make people realize it in order that no traces of doubt about it linger in their minds. So they will clearly understand that this politics is politics of fake anti-Congressism. Whereas, behind the scene in reality, their relationship with Indiraji⁸, with the Congress itself is that of friendliness — a political deceptive move for the sake of election politics. This politics has no relationship whatsoever with revolution. You see, a heavy responsibility rests on you.

You should bear it in mind that the police and military — the violence of their tyranny notwithstanding — are not as big an enemy as the grievous harm this wrong politics is doing to the people. You know what a big country India is. What is Vietnam compared to this vast India? In terms of human resources, in terms of industrial advancement, Vietnam is a country even smaller than West Bengal. Its population, too, is not as large. But that country drove off the entire military power of America. This was no ordinary warfare either. America spent much more money to crush the revolution in Vietnam — to slaughter its peasants, workers and youth — than the total money spent during the Second World War. It poured on much more weapons of destruction. But could it suppress the people of Vietnam with all this? It was America which had to flee Vietnam, fleeing like a dog with its tail tucked between its legs. Yes, for that, of course, peasants, workers, students and youth of Vietnam did have to sacrifice their lives. But not only the Vietnamese did sacrifice lives, thousands of American troops died there too. People of America awoke to the situation after such loss of lives. They understood what a criminal act they had been committing. So, after the defeat, Kissinger had this to say: We had everything — the military forces, ships, warships, fighters, bombers, napalm bombs, thieves, cut-throats, gangs of hooligans, prostitutes, wine — but we did not have with us the people, the morale and strength of mind like that of the Vietnamese, the strength of character and determination to fight on like them. So we lost.

America turned the whole of Vietnam into a desert. Here, for two days you suffered from rains, from want of food and sleep, but the Vietnamese had no place to stand upon. On the one hand, America had been constantly dropping bombs upon them, and they went on fighting against the same. On the other, while they fought on, they created underground another Vietnam, so to say, by digging earth with spades, not with machinery. Even as they defended themselves and fought against America, all people, from twelve or thirteen years old up to the aged, carried out this job. Did they flinch, did they retreat? For this they could accomplish revolution. Cowards do not achieve revolution. Also those do not achieve who waver under difficulties. Learn all this. Learn about your weaknesses thoroughly from this conference.

My request is that each one of you will return from here as a trained political soldier who can take up any responsibility single-handedly whatever the difficulties or hardship. You are not going to offer any excuses. Keep in mind, to become conscious revolutionary political workers, you have to acquire such qualities that you can single-handedly carry on any responsibility. You feel it a shame to refuse an assignment, your head hangs in shame to offer excuses, that hurts your dignity. To say : “I cannot”, makes you droop in shame. It should be that you can keep your cool under any storm and stress. If others distract you, even so you keep yourself steady. Or, if you find you cannot, you will constantly strive to learn the art of keeping your cool. To have this quality is a vital necessity for a revolutionary worker.

Besides, bear in mind also that you cannot ask for anything from your poor party when you are discharging responsibilities entrusted to you. You will take help from the people. Money is needed to travel to attend a conference, a minimum expense is necessary to stay in the delegates’ camp. You come from poor families, you don’t have the money. How many of you are able to pay for it ? The party asks you to attend the conference and collect the money needed for it. Let it not happen that you could not attend the conference — or could not go to whatever place you need to go to fulfill an assignment of the party —because you could not collect the money by moving among people for collection. You should collect the money from people in your respective localities. If needed, you should form a committee with some others and collect money from people on behalf of the committee for attending the conference. You should collect money from your relatives. After collecting the fund this way, you will set apart a sum needed to meet your expenses and you will deposit the balance in the conference fund. But attend the conference you must. If you have to travel without ticket because you could not collect the money and if you are jailed for that, so be it. As an ideologically inspired soldier, how can it be that you will not board the train because you have no money to buy your ticket? You will get on the train, ready to go to jail. You will tell the railway staff that you had no intention to cheat the railways, but were obliged to do it as you had no other way. You have got on the train because you have to attend the conference. If they do not let you go and want you to go to the jail, you will go. This should be your attitude. Such should be your determination, your sense of responsibility. And while you leave this conference, leave it with the clear idea of how far you have understood the political line of yours. Understand it well enough so that you can explain your views and line to people convincingly. You have seen, the Eight Party Combination gave a call for all-Bengal general strike on June 20. We did not oppose it, and we did let it be known through a prior statement in the press. Nowhere we opposed the strike call. We only requested them that because 20th June was the date scheduled for the open session of our youth conference, about which they had prior knowledge since long, so instead of going for the strike on that date they postpone the date, particularly because this youth conference was going to be held with the object of building up movements. But they did not heed any of our requests and

reasons and kept the date for strike unchanged on 20th June. My point is, notwithstanding the difference of opinion between them and us, for that, and knowing everything, they called the strike on 20th June itself to jeopardize our conference — for what reason? They could as much shift the strike date from their earlier declared date of June 18 on the plea that Ganga Puja⁹ falls on that date — a puja which the people of West Bengal do not even know much about! And they shifted the date to 20th June, the very day of our conference, so that our delegates and other people would face endless difficulties in coming over here. Because, with the strike called for 20th June, the delegates would have to reach here on the previous day. And for that, they had to start from their homes one day earlier. Again, there are such distant areas from where, to reach the conference in time, they would have to start on the morning of even one more day earlier. We are short of funds, there is the problem of arranging food for them. And because of disruption of the transportation system due to the strike, there would be lots of difficulty for people to come over and attend the open session on 20th June. And I had apprehended it beforehand that whether or not this strike succeeded in other parts of West Bengal, both the Congress and the Eight Party Combination would try to make it a success at least in this district of Birbhum. Because, either would oppose this youth conference. The Eight Party would of course want to make their strike call a success, and the Congress would outwardly oppose it, but at heart both the sides would want it to be a success in Suri so that our youth conference got hard hit. And this is what actually happened. Moreover, this severely inclement weather. But what has been the outcome ? Has ever such a huge gathering happened in Suri ? This gathering took place in the face of all this adversity, opposition and natural inclemency.

Some of those who are here had attended the Baharampur conference of the Krishak O Khetmajur Federation¹⁰, the peasant organization of our party. They saw what a huge number of people had assembled there. The people of Baharampur said, never had there been such a huge gathering there. In the previous year, about the gathering of people that was in Bankura on the occasion of the Krishak O Khetmajur Federation conference there, the people of Bankura said that such a huge gathering had never before assembled in Bankura. Many saw it with their own eyes. But how much news of it came out in the press? The newspapers gave no publicity to the huge gathering. What a big mass rally was held at the Shaheed Minar Maidan in Calcutta on 24th April this year! People had no count of how many had assembled. Nobody in fact assessed the figure to be below 2 lakhs. Some even put it at 5 lakhs. The Maidan that day could not be distinguished — the whole of it and the surrounding streets upto Grand Hotel on the one side and the Curzon Park on the other side were thronged by a sea of people. But no newspapers gave any publicity to this gigantic mass meeting. Whereas, if Jyoti Basu¹¹ holds a meeting of even only two or three thousand people, what a coverage it gets in the press! Any number of statements of even the RSP, which does not have much of an organization, are published in newspapers, even a meeting of just 500 people held by it gets how much publicity! They publish news about the Forward Bloc, about Prafulla Sen¹², about everybody else. Is it that they give publicity to the Congress alone? But even if the SUCI organizes huge mass rallies, that hardly gets importance in the newspapers. What do these go to prove ? These prove that they all think this party has grown without any publicity, it has grown so big. After this, if publicity is given to its meetings or processions, and speeches by its leaders are published, then the strength of this party would go out of their control. They would no longer be able to block it. So, it is with motive that the newspapers are preventing publicity to this party.

Jayprokashji asked me yesterday that so big a meeting had been held in Rourkela; and he saw a picture of the mass rally on 24th April in Calcutta published in our organ *Proletarian Era* —

indeed a huge gathering. But no newspapers properly reported it. Why is this happening? I replied, I need not explain this to you. You are intelligent, you can understand the reason yourself. If leaders of repute in India who in fact have been propped up by the media to become leaders, held a meeting only a fraction as big, the newspapers would have given it huge publicity. A motive works behind this. They count on these leaders to keep people away from the path of revolution with irrelevant, catchy, pseudo-militant talks — just like fraudulent leaders of trade unions do. In order to keep the workers away from the path of revolution, at workers' rallies these leaders call the capitalist owners cheats, traitors, even they heap obscene abuses on the owners if that helped, cursing them and their forefathers. Listening to all this, workers go on applauding continuously, and they think — Oh, how big is this leader, there is no bigger enemy of the capitalists than him! And if the owner, on hearing these, wants to tell the leader off, the leader quite easily makes it clear to the owner that unless he abuses him, why should workers be with him? After all, those were not real abuses against the owner, those were just a ploy to keep the workers in his fold. Otherwise, workers would swing towards the revolutionary party, which would only harm the owner. The owner is pleased at this trick of the leader, and the leader leaves smilingly, together with the extra sum over and above his dues as the price of his trickery. The leftist leaders of our country are leaders of this make. Outwardly, they are vehemently anti-Congress. But, underhand, they are in an understanding with the same Congress. Behind the scene, they explain to Indiraji that if they publicly praise her and do not speak against her, how could they fight the Congress at the hustings? As for the Centre, however, Indiraji need not worry. Were there a bid to dislodge her from power, they would again stand by her like they did in 1969 when the Congress got split. And, you think, these are the leaders to bring about revolution !

But don't forget, be they wrong or false, they are the ones who still go on creating confusion in people. What is most dangerous is that away from public view they are moving closer to an understanding with the revisionist Soviet leadership and the CPI, on the one hand, and with the Congress, on the other. Because of their militant anti-Congress public propaganda, even their party workers cannot realize this, let alone the people. From this conference get a clear understanding of all the aspects of their deceptive politics. You should understand why they want to be with Jayprakashji on particular issues even while they are not joining with him in any anti-Congress movement. They did not join the movement in Bihar because the Congress(O)¹³ was in it, but how is it that here in West Bengal it is they who are organizing meetings and processions along with the Congress(O) led by Prafulla Sen — a man whom people of West Bengal denounced in every way. They did all this on the plea of demand for protection of democratic rights. If it is a question of building a movement to protect democratic rights, a movement involving the masses to restore the democratic atmosphere, do Prafullababus constitute the force of that movement in West Bengal? Or is Jana Sangha¹⁴ that force? We have repeatedly proposed to them to start an effective movement if they really want the establishment of democratic rights. They say, the conditions are not congenial to movement, because the Congress is resorting to such hooliganism that their workers do not want to come out of homes. The situation is not such that they can come out. Their logic amounts to this that the situation is to become appropriate first, that is, the Congress would not touch them and the police will not arrest them — then they would start the struggles. Before that, in line with their logic, how could there be a struggle in West Bengal? As for now, meetings and processions can be organized. So, no movement is going on in West Bengal. And now, because their clandestine deal with the Congress is maturing, these heroes have started stepping out onto the streets, raising slogans like “fight in

order to live, live by fighting.” Because, the behind-the-scene deal with the Congress is progressing. Those are now parading the streets in processions, who so long were afraid of the dreaded hooligans of the Congress and so chose to remain inactive. And these heroes of the Congress now watch this, they say nothing. My point is not that the Congress should object. My point is, why did not these ‘leftists’ come out earlier despite the Congress standing against them ? And when they are coming out now, why is the Congress not objecting to it? Whereas, both the sides are strongly criticizing each other on paper, in speeches. This is a mock fight like what the police and the military engage in during training — this is no real fight.

Whatever the image and influence of Jayprakash Narayan in West Bengal earlier, he has in some way come to the forefront in the Indian mass mind through newspapers and magazines, centring round the combined effect of the turn of events like the Bihar movement, the Gujarat movement, his role in the freedom movement, etc. Whatever may be one’s political evaluation of him, Jayprakashji is raising the slogan for developing one thing. Which is, the emergence of people’s power, the power of the youth and the students based on moral and political consciousness — that is, let there be people’s movement. For that, he has advocated formation of struggle committees, because, without that, no change can be brought about in the country. Although, all his stand regarding the change, the revolution, is hazy. I told him squarely about my difference of opinion with him. I told about it at yesterday’s meeting, too. He is reading my articles. This he said also at yesterday’s meeting. I told him in Patna also that I agree with him that people’s movement has to be developed from the grassroots to the highest level through forming people’s committees. Afterwards, on the battleground of mass movement we will settle whether it will be peaceful or will be all-out radical, or whether it will take the form of armed anti-capitalist socialist revolution — which we hold to be the historically determined path for emancipation of India. But we agree with him on the point that he desires emergence of people’s power. We, too, want that outside the confines of this anti-Congress mock fight, people’s committees grow up from the village level upwards as people’s own instrument of struggle. Let the parties, if they have the ability, extend their own influence over these committees and direct them.

But what is happening now? A committee is being set up at the top level with different parties in it, which include even such parties as have practically no strength at all, like the Workers’ Party, Marxist Forward Bloc, RCPI and Biplabi Bangla Congress. They all, sporting a signboard each, are behind the CPI(M) with hands raised in support of the CPI(M). If a decision needs to be taken on a matter by vote in the committee, they, too, would have a vote each. But none of these have any organization worth the name. The Forward Bloc and the RSP have some organizational strength, but no widespread organization. All these parties will be with the CPI(M). Sitting atop, they will decide everything, the people have no role in it. When would there be a struggle — they will decide. When would the struggle be withdrawn — that, too, they will decide. What will be the nature of struggle — that also they will decide. But they will not allow the people’s own instruments of struggle to be built up ... (a portion of the speech could not be recorded at this point due to change of tape).

... We need numerous youth workers now who, when they receive an instruction, can take up a real challenge against the totally election-oriented politics of trickery and deception of the people which is going on here in the name of leftism, not raising questions about any hardships, or about arrangements for food and shelter. Just like Kshudiram¹⁵ did at the tender age of fourteen. When he left home to work for the freedom of the country, did he think about where he would stay, what he would eat? The police chased him. But he understood his duty and took it

up. Like that, every youth worker should learn his responsibility at this conference. They should understand why no basic problems of the people can be solved unless this capitalist social system in India is replaced. And you have to understand that in order to change this capitalist social structure, you will have to build up and develop people's struggle committees from the village up to the town and city levels — people's committees which will have to ultimately confront the state power through struggles. The rallies and processions which are now organized — we may have to move along this conventional democratic path for a considerable length of time yet. In particular situations, we may have to organize satyagraha¹⁶, and also stage dharnas¹⁷. But the whole object is to develop the struggle committees through all this which can organize people everywhere — local committees in the localities, district committees at the district level, provincial committees at the provincial level — and conduct the task, guiding them like a disciplined army. Every worker in these committees would conduct himself like an ideologically inspired soldier. This army is not a mercenary army of hired soldiers, this army is what is called people's liberation army, the red army, or the army of the working class — it is that. This army shall have to be built up that way. But such an army of cadres will not grow up in a day, nor with unworthy people.

I said for this, start with a handful. And this precisely was the guiding principle when I started this party with just a handful of compatriots. Everybody laughed at us then. The CPI, then an undivided party, ridiculed us. They taunted, we had sprouted like a mushroom. They derided : if the SUCI is a party, then a bat also is a bird; how is it that they, too, would sit with us! The Forward Bloc, RSP and RCPI, everybody said that the SUCI was not a party at all, it was just a club. Even sitting with us could not be contemplated. I endured all this silently. I ignored all their ridicules and just proceeded along with firm resolve to build up the party. With what result? Where are those parties lagging today? Today, the CPI(M) considers the SUCI an even greater enemy than the Congress. Because, they apprehend it is the SUCI which would dig the grave of its politics of trickery. The SUCI would expose the design of not only the Congress but also of the pseudo-socialists in the cloak of leftism. Because it carries in it the seeds of revolution. None of the parties who are lording it over all in the name of revolution, can tear this veil. The party which can do so is the SUCI. That is why, it is as if the fake revolutionary parties have forged a common front against the SUCI.

But all the parties agree, without acknowledging it though, that the SUCI cadres are the most honest. If asked, everyone will say in unison that they are honest, disciplined and dedicated; they are not given to making indecent utterances like many cadres of other parties do. They do not make obscene gestures, do not behave indecently, discourteously. They are self-sacrificing. But all other parties are united against this party. Why so? This is because, all of them, the Congress, the CPI, the CPI(M) perceive that this party spells their doom. So, they are secretly combining against the SUCI. Because, after all, politics is to them nothing but a means to advance their own personal interest. The fight among them is only a mock-fight. Just like during Hindu-Muslim riots, the Hindu and Muslim zemindars at the helm dine together and hob-nob, while poor common Hindus and Muslims knife one another at their instigation. Similarly, while the lower level workers die during mock-fights between the CPI(M) and the Congress, the CPI(M) big-wigs secretly have dinners in Siddharthababu's¹⁸ house. It transpires that the house of Snehangshu Acharya¹⁹ is used for their mutual parleys. If that secret meeting leaks out, then the house of Arun Prakash Chatterjee²⁰ is there for meetings and dining together. Do they lack any such resources ? But they perceive that if the SUCI gains in strength, they will be ruined all together. That is why, they are jointly trying to corner the SUCI. And they are trying to do this

by dishing out a nonsensical argument unheard of in the history of Indian politics. They are demanding that in a united front no constituent party may offer such criticism of the wrong politics of other constituents as may cause discomfiture to the concerned parties, because, in that case, this falls in the category of hostile criticism. We cannot accept this in any way. And this is why we were forced to come out of the Nine Party Combination.

But recall the Congress, which conducted such a gigantic freedom struggle, had within its folds the moderates, the extremists, the freedom fighters who believed in armed struggle, in violence against violence, whom the British rulers labelled as ‘terrorists’, the communists, the constitutionalists, the Congress-socialists, the Gandhites — all. Although they had separate existence partywise, they were all in the platform of the Congress, and Gandhiji was the undisputed leader of that Congress. The way Gandhiji came to the forefront before the whole country as the leader — Jyotibabu has not yet attained that stature. But in what stormy language had Gandhiji at times been criticized by delegate after delegate from the same platform at the AICC delegates sessions! When Gandhiji advocated adoption of *ahimsa*²¹ as the ideology of the Congress at the Karachi and Lahore sessions of the Congress — prior to that non-violence was considered a tactic — who did oppose that proposal of Gandhiji? It was Motilal Nehru, the national democrat. He said, no, it was impossible to accept that. The unarmed Indians could accept Gandhiji’s policy of non-violence as a tactic in the freedom struggle, but non-violence could never be the ideology of the struggle. As far as I remember, Motilal Nehru spoke in this language : “If I had a sword in my hand, I would have fought the British with it”. He said that non-violence could never become the creed of the Congress. Gandhiji lamented over it, but could not get non-violence adopted as the ideology of the Congress at those two sessions.

This mutual criticism, this pointing out of the wrong aspects of the politics of others was there even within the Congress. In what strong language did the communists, being within the Congress, criticize the socialists then! How sharply did Gandhiji himself criticize the freedom fighters who believed in violence against violence ! He even called them enemies of the country, a comment which Saratchandra took strong exception to, in the house of Deshabandhu C.R. Das! He asked Gandhiji to withdraw the remark. He said that the same logic by which Gandhiji called them the enemies of the country could be used by the latter to call Gandhiji an enemy of the country because of the difference of opinion with him. Did not the Congress remain united despite such adverse criticism of one by another? Or, did not the freedom struggle go on? Did the unity of the Congress break up on the issue?

Those with even a smattering of knowledge and study can see for themselves, if they go through Lenin’s writings, in page after page in what strong language did he criticize the Mensheviks, the socialist revolutionaries, even while the Bolsheviks led by him were conducting struggle jointly with them in the Soviets ! But simultaneously, Lenin conducted struggle jointly from inside the Soviets, as per the common united programme, against the Czar, against the Kerensky government. Did anybody argue then, like Jyotibabu and Makhanbabu²² do, that mutual criticism is not permissible within overall unity? Only those who do not want to evolve and thrash out the correct line, ideology and course in political movement — only they say this. Only those who want to draw the people into wrong current of politics by smugly continuing to be in the leadership without facing any adverse criticism, can argue like this. Jyotibabus want that however wrong their politics might be, they should not be criticized in a way that causes discomfiture to them. That is, their stand is that they may be criticized only to the extent that causes no inconvenience to them and does not expose their erroneous political line. So, what is the use of such criticism which does not vividly show up the erroneous line of their politics to the

people, their party workers and supporters? Such criticism is a mere eye-wash in the name of criticism! But by enforcing the conditionality that “no criticism is permissible”, they virtually forced us to come out of the Nine Party Combination !

After thus coming out of the Nine Party Combination, we brought out a booklet. In it we highlighted before them, before the people, from various angles, the point that struggle operates even within unity, by citing various instances from the history of Marxist-Leninist movement, and stressed, by quoting Stalin, that there is precedent of strong criticism even within unity in the history of the Bolshevik movement. We showed what childish argument Jyotibabu, being a Politbureau member, is resorting to on this issue ! Naturally, the honest cadres in their party, those who still believe wholeheartedly that their party would bring about revolution, put pressure on their leaders within the party. Then their leadership started writing that the SUCI itself has come out, destroying the unity, and is staying away from united movement on various pretexts. They are conducting this propaganda in such a way, as if, we ourselves have left the united struggle! But we have always desired united leftist movement on the basis of a programme and code of conduct, and we still desire it. We wish that they sit and talk with us, but they are not inclined to do so. They do not mind holding parleys with Prafulla Sen, but to sit and talk with the SUCI is abhorrent to them! They do not consider the SUCI to be a fighting force in the movement to protect democratic rights and civil liberties. To them, Prafulla Sen has become a force in the movement to build up struggle for protection of democratic rights. Well and good! If they can accomplish revolution in this way, let them do so. We are moving in the direction opposed to their opportunist line.

In organizing the procession with Jayprakashji jointly with Navanirman Samity of Prafullababus on June 5, one object of theirs, among others, was that when the people of West Bengal would through the June 5 procession, the SUCI would either have to join them, or else become isolated from the people of West Bengal and cornered totally. Perhaps they thought that in such a situation, while the Congress would beat up the SUCI workers on the one hand, they, too, would, on the other, take care of the SUCI. And with election approaching they would see how SUCI survives. They could not understand the character of the SUCI. They could not understand that it is not an election-oriented party. If an election comes in the midst of mass movements, this party participates in it no doubt. But this party does not break up if it is defeated at elections, it grows bigger. The workers of this party are ever ready to fight like tigers while contesting elections, but they would fight being prepared for defeat. What bogey of election are they raising to frighten this party that it would give up its base politics! But, this move on the political chess board was not effective. Perhaps they now think that this Shibdas Ghosh is the evil force. What did he impress upon JP (Jayprakash Narayan), what spell did he cast on him that JP now says that he would attend the SUCI programme! All the efforts to isolate the SUCI proved infructuous. Where they, the seasoned all-India leaders, failed to convince JP to bring him round, JP, at the words of Shibdas Ghosh, went ahead to an obscure, god-forsaken place like Suri to attend the youth conference of the SUCI ! So great is his concern!

When JP agreed to the proposal to attend the SUCI youth conference in Suri, leaders of these parties got alarmed at once. They are aware of the present strength and capacity of the SUCI to organize mass rallies. Although the newspapers gave no publicity to the mass rally in Calcutta on 24 April last, they were stunned by its size! They thought that if the SUCI succeeded in assembling a bigger number of people in a district town like Suri even amidst the heavy rains than they could in the joint procession of so many parties with such publicity in the newspapers and fanfare, then there would be no end to their loss of face. So, they decided to shift the date of

their general strike to 20th June. The object was to create obstacles for the SUCI rally, to anyhow obstruct it. They thought that they would thus create obstacles, on the one hand, while, on the other, the Congress and the governmental administration could be counted on.

The tactics of the governmental administration are that wherever JP goes, they would outwardly show as if they are doing a lot to help him. But they would provide no effective help. Rather, the governmental administration here have meted out much unseemly treatment to JP. Many non-descript persons or dubious characters come and stay in the circuit houses. But they did not provide accommodation in the circuit house for JP who is no less than a VIP in any way. The Chandmari Maidan was requested to be allotted for the rally, but they turned down the request. The government officials said that the Chandmari Maidan was not allotted except for government functions. The organizers of the conference pointed out that this Maidan had earlier been allotted to others even for non-government programmes — for example, the Maidan had been allotted for a meeting of Indiraji during electioneering of Congress. Surely election propaganda of Congress was no government work! If they had allotted the Chandmari Maidan for election propaganda of Congress because Indiraji was a VIP, why would they not allot the Chandmari Maidan for JP who is a VIP like her? Then the local government officials said that it was a matter which only the Writers' Buildings²³ could decide. When an application was made to the Writers', we were told from there that the matter was under the jurisdiction of the district administration. The upshot was that the Chandmari Maidan was denied to us. Besides, this incessant rain and stormy weather. A house was arranged for a section of the delegates to put up at. But the police suddenly told the house owner that he would have to let the police personnel stay there. So, that house, too, was not available. Thus, the governmental administration obstructed the conference in every way. Besides, the Eight-Party Combination has of course created a tremendous obstacle by calling the general strike on 20 June. But what has been the result of all these efforts? Have they been able to prevent the people from attending?

They do not know and they have not taken the lesson from the revolutions of different countries that the workers and supporters of the different political parties including the Congress, taken together, are far outnumbered by the vast masses of people outside. The vast masses of people at large always far outnumber the combined organized strength of all the parties — before the revolution, and also for a long time after revolution. The revolutionary party has always to take into account this huge mass force. The leadership of our party has never erred on this point. They know what the mass mind of West Bengal desires. The people of West Bengal are getting impatient inwardly. They desire a strong movement against the Congress government. But along with it, they desire to see sobriety, discipline, modesty and spirit of self-sacrifice in politics, and the type of political workers embodying these. They do not want tyranny, high-handedness, hooliganism and lack of decency and decorum in politics. Our party leadership is trying to develop the workers in that mould.

I am unwell and short of breath. I feel very tired. I cannot continue with the speech any longer. The rest will be explained to you by your leaders. They will explain to you what the style of your work should be, how you should rally the students and youth in meetings in order to organize them in area after area, in locality after locality; you should call your leaders to those meetings and form the struggle committees with the students and youth who are ready to shoulder responsibility. These struggle committees should be truly functional, not for evasion or shirking responsibility. In these, the present situation is to be explained well to all to stress the point that a challenge has come and to deal with it all have to assume responsibility. The CPI(M)'s evil politics of anti-Congressism on the surface and of contesting the coming election

on the basis of a secret understanding with it will have to be explained and exposed to call upon people to rise up in strength against this design. The mass struggles would have to be conducted on the basis of the correct revolutionary political line. If election comes while the struggles are on, that challenge is to be accepted relying on the mass force. The struggle committees need to be moulded in that fashion from village level upwards to the city level. With this, I end my address.

Long Live Revolution !

*Speech on June 21, 1975
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Notes

1. General strike.
2. The then Eight Party Combination led by the CPI(M).
3. Central Reserve Police Force.
4. Student wing of the Congress.
5. Youth wing of the Congress.
6. Late Jayprakash Narayan, veteran political leader, known for his Gandhite outlook and social democratic politics.
7. Massive procession.
8. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India.
9. Worship of goddess of the river Ganga.
10. Later renamed Krishak O Khetmazur Sangathan.
11. CPI(M) leader and Politbureau member.
12. Veteran Congress leader and former Chief Minister of West Bengal, now deceased.
13. Congress-Organization, the anti-Indira Gandhi faction of the Congress.
14. A rightist Hindu communal party, the predecessor of the BJP.
15. The first martyr of anti-British revolutionary struggle in Bengal who was hanged by the British rulers.
16. Civil disobedience.
17. Sit-in demonstration.
18. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the then Congress Chief Minister of West Bengal.
19. A CPI(M) leader of West Bengal.
20. A CPI(M) leader of West Bengal.
21. Non-violence.
22. RSP leader Makhan Pal.
23. Seat of the West Bengal state government in Calcutta.