

On Cultural Degeneration and Unemployment Problem — Whither the Solution

Central to the problems which afflict the youth in India today is mounting unemployment and all-pervasive cultural degeneration. In this address delivered at a meeting held in Calcutta in June 1973 on the occasion of the foundation anniversary of the All India Democratic Youth Organization, Comrade Ghosh dwelt elaborately on the root of all these and showed the way to resolve the problems of the youth life. In clear unambiguous terms, he brought out how solution to these problems the youth face in their life, are intertwined with the question of overthrowing of Indian capitalism. In the present hour, with the sham Marxists openly playing the role of social democracy, this espousal of the necessity of a revolutionary transformation glows amid despair, degeneration and restlessness in youth life.

Friends,

On this occasion of the foundation anniversary of the Democratic Youth Organization (DYO) I have been requested to speak on the political-cultural situation of the country and the tasks ahead of the youth. In discussing the present political situation, the point I would emphasize before anything else is that the question of politics is inseparable from the question of the character of the state. That is to say, to understand properly the present political situation in our country, it is essential to examine in the first place the nature and character of the state.

Here we should keep in mind that in the course of gradual historical development of the state there came into being through abolition of the worldwide feudal system or the monarchical state, the types of state we witness today, namely : 1. capitalist-imperialist state; 2. colonial and semi-colonial semi-feudal state; 3. national bourgeois state; and 4. socialist state. Another point has to be kept in mind in this context. In this era of imperialism, that is, in the era of moribund capitalism and proletarian revolution, in the colonies and semi-colonies through successful culmination of bourgeois democratic revolution or national democratic revolution led by the working class, people's democratic states emerged as an interim system of states towards the eventual transition to socialism.

Now, to understand clearly the character of a particular state we shall have first to determine which class is in the state power in the particular class-divided society ; in other words, in the interest of which class in the main the state is being run. Together with this it is also necessary to understand the nature and character of its economic base, that is, the nature of the economic system of that country. At every stage of social development and progress a particular economic system governed by a particular economic law develops, and on this base evolves a particular social-political-cultural mode of life.

The issue to be judged is whether the present state structure or the economic system of our country is conducive to the growth and onward development of the society, or whether this state or economic system constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to progress and all-round development of this society. The point is that, in judging these questions in a class-divided society there cannot but be two mutually conflicting class outlooks. Before you judge, you will

have to choose one of them as the yardstick. There may be scope for difference over what I am going to tell you, but in no way can it be denied that while you try to understand or judge anything, your thinking and judgment are bound to be governed, knowingly or unknowingly, by either of the two fundamentally conflicting class outlooks prevailing in the society. It is for you to decide in any case which outlook you would accept as the basis of judgement. What I consider to be the scientific and rational outlook, I am going to explain to you.

Ours is a class-divided society, no matter whether we wanted it to be so or not. It is a society divided into the exploiter and the exploited. This is a plain truth. There are millions of exploited people on the one side, those who somehow eke out a living in exchange for their labour power. On the other side, there is the handful of exploiters who own and control whatever wealth is there in the country. They are expropriating as profit whatever addition to wealth is being created by human labour. As a result, whatever industrial development is taking place in the country, the wealth so produced is getting concentrated in the hands of those few. It does not percolate down to benefit the common people ; poverty is becoming more acute, prices of commodities are soaring, unemployment is mounting ; an extreme cultural degeneration has set in, and problems galore surround us. That society got divided basically into two classes, the exploited and the exploiter, has not happened because someone wanted it like that. Whether we like it or not, whether we approve of it or not, it is in accordance with the inexorable law of history that society has been divided into two classes. There is no way to deny it. And ever since society split into two classes centring round the contradiction between production and distribution, as social beings we got linked up with one or the other of the two class interests, voluntarily or involuntarily, knowingly or unknowingly. We live our whole life being aligned with this or that class interest. This is because we cannot live in society as social beings without entering into production relation in some form or other. To meet the necessities of life — food, clothing, education and everything else needed for living — we have to enter into some form of relation with the production system. Through this relationship we get linked up with the interest of one class or another, be it voluntarily or not. The two mutually antagonistic classes in society have conflicting class interests. The exploiting class benefits most from the existing social system, so it always wants the system to continue and stay. In order to perpetuate the existing system the exploiting class fosters religious practices, prescribes social injunctions, moulds thoughts, ideals, ethics, morals, legalities, economic theories — everything. They propagate these and dish out arguments in favour of this system. Of course, they do it in the name of all humanity, claiming all this to be for the welfare of mankind. But in reality they do it to perpetuate their class rule and class exploitation. Perpetuating the existing social system is in the interest of the exploiting class and it gives birth to its sense of class interest. Similarly, those who are exploited in this exploitative social system, that is, the exploited class, want to overthrow the exploitative state and social system to achieve emancipation from exploitation so that the oppressed majority may lead a happy and dignified life, may bring about all-out economic advancement and open the door for full flowering of the cultural life. Thus it will be seen that at every stage of history of the class-divided society the exploited class always wanted to overthrow the exploitative state and social system and establish in its place a state system which can bring about economic, political, cultural development to fulfil the urge for uplift and advancement of those who constitute the majority of the society. So, to smash the exploitative state structure and social system has been the fundamental interest of the exploited masses in all ages, and from this urge has developed their class interest.

Ever since the division of society into the exploiter and the exploited, the fundamental contradiction between the exploiting class and the exploited class has been constantly at work within society. In the economic, political, social and cultural spheres, in every field of activity and at every level, this contradiction between two antagonistic social forces is constantly at work. When antagonism reaches a climax in this course it turns into an open conflict or revolution and, ultimately, the old state system gets abolished and a new state order is established in its place.

In every social transformation that happened again and again ever since society became class divided, the fundamental law which is at work behind all these changes stipulates that as the contradiction between the exploiter and the exploited reaches a nodal point, a climax, the exploiter and the exploited can no more exist or live together through any compromise whatsoever and then arrives the hour of final confrontation through which the exploited class overthrows the exploiting class, establishing a new society, a new economic system, a new state structure and new laws and rules. These social regulations, rules, laws, system of education, culture, all that we come across, arise as part of a superstructure on the base of a particular economic system. The state is the instrument which looks after and safeguards all this. Hence, the state is the most powerful instrument in the hands of the ruling class with which the exploiters protect all their institutions and conduct all their movements in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres. So the state is, in a word, the most powerful weapon in the hands of the class in power in a class divided society to enforce its class rule. Going by history, there is no way to deny this. Only by clinging to fancy, unhistorical fancy at that, can one arbitrarily deny it. But if we trace the history of emergence of the state and revolution, their gradual historical development and the history of social development and progress, there is no way to deny this fact.

Therefore in order to correctly assess the present political-economic-cultural situation in the country it is necessary to decide at the outset which of the two outlooks, that of the exploiter or of the exploited, should guide us while analysing the problems. When we speak about the present situation of the country, what do we actually mean by the country — whose country do we mean by it ? By that do we mean the country of those 500 million out of a total 520 million¹ who earn their living by labour and produce the wealth by tireless toil ? Do we concern ourselves with the present and the future of our country with this spectrum of people in mind, from the intelligentsia to the ignorant village peasants and landless labourers who constitute the bulk — with their future, their interest and their welfare in view ? Or instead should we mean by country the interest of that exploiting and tyrannical handful, a mere 20 or 30 million out of 520 million, who have made themselves the owners of whatever wealth there is in the country, who are amassing profits by exploiting the labour power and toil of the people and see things according to their interest and outlook ?

In a class divided society there is no such thing as a single and indivisible interest of both the owner and the worker, both the exploiter and the exploited — no such thing as the common interest of both the classes. When we talk of the patriotic feelings it is either in the interest of the owners, the capitalist class or in the interest of the exploited masses of the people. Those who indulge in such confusing and vague talks like ‘national progress’ or ‘problems of national development’, meaning these to be devoid of class outlook and without reference to class interest, are either political swindlers or gullible men at best. They are either rogues or are simply ignorant. Let them choose for themselves whatever label they want, people won’t object to that. Only political swindlers, in order to hoodwink the people, talk of ‘interest of all people’ as

meaning ‘national interest’ ; else only the ignorant can talk like that. But those who would speak the truth, who would analyse history, science and all the spheres of knowledge to find out truth, who are the ones to speak for the people — the workers, peasants, landless labourers and other exploited people — cannot talk vaguely like that. They have to spell out clearly and concretely whose class interest is meant, or in the interest of which class is all this talk about.

What for are we discussing the present situation and the country’s problems? Of course, we are doing it in order to understand these problems and to solve them for the benefit of the people. Now, the view of the capitalist class regarding the country’s welfare is not the view of the exploited class. If the problem is to be correctly analysed and the correct solution found in the interest of the proletariat and other sections of the exploited masses, then what we shall have to confront first is that with these lies and bluffs the exploited class can achieve nothing ; they have to seek out the truth. Unless they grasp the truth they will not be able to understand the real nature of problems of this society. Merely clinging to wishful thinking or by endlessly repeating what others say, they will waste time only in futility. They will not be able to grasp the real problems and untie the knots, let alone find the real solution. Hence it is the exploited masses of every age who in the main have truly cultivated knowledge. The exploiters also have cultivated knowledge, but only to the extent they needed it to maintain the exploitative system, to constantly upgrade it, strengthening their war machinery to make the coercive instruments of the state ever more ruthless and deadlier, to step up trade and commerce and export-import and, of course, to make their standard of living more luxurious. Only that much. Whereas, the exploited masses in all ages, spurred by the urge to live and to know truth have cultivated the fields of knowledge meticulously and in every detail. Since the question of emancipation of the exploited classes is bound up with the question of social development and social revolution in every age, the exploited class urgently needs to know truth. The need of the exploiting class, on the other hand, is to suppress truth. Because, if people get to know truth as regards, why they are plagued by so many problems, if the youth get to know the root cause of the problems and why they are unemployed, then one day they will explode, when no allurements, no amount of clever rhetorics, no political trickeries by the exploiting class will succeed in holding them back. That is why the exploiters and their political agents trade in all these falsities, trickeries and deliberate lies to constantly suppress truth. At the same time this is also why the exploited masses, driven by the yearning for emancipation, have always, in every age, engaged in cultivating knowledge to know truth concretely and in all details. Hence, should we choose to understand the situation obtaining in the country from the outlook and interest of the exploited class, the toiling masses — the workers, peasants, middle class, intelligentsia — we have to seek help of history and science. It means, to understand the state structure and political situation of the country, we have to first understand the class character of the state, that is, which class or classes are in the state power, and in the interest of which class or classes the state is being run. At the same time, we have to understand the character of its economic base, that is the nature and character of the economic system prevailing in the country.

Those who argue that ‘the state has no class character’, or that ‘the state is of the whole people’, ‘the state is above class’, that is, ‘the state is supra-class’ are the worst liars and cheats. They seek to suppress thus the very history of revolutionary transformation of the state. The state has not fallen from the sky, neither has God himself come and set up the state. In the course of human civilization, at a particular historical stage of development of society and production, the state came into being. Those who know this history of emergence of the state should know well that it was only after individual or private ownership had been established by force over the

community property of the primitive clan society that the instrument of oppression and exploitation, which the ruling class built to safeguard its ownership, came into being and this has developed into today's modern state through a long process of evolution and revolution. Nobody has the power to deny this truth.

So, if we fail to understand the class character of the Indian state and the basic character of the present Indian economic system with its particular features — if we cannot correctly understand all these — we cannot hope to have a clear grasp of the nature of exploitation at present, nor can we determine the real cause of the unemployment problem, cultural degeneration, moral depravity and all that. Also, we shall not be able to grasp where really lies the root of the problems of millions of youth not getting any kind of jobs, or in other words where lies the root cause of the problem of unemployment, with which issues it is inextricably linked up, and thereby we would fail to evolve the correct course of solving the problem. Consequently, all we would be doing is to raise slogans and get organized with the object of launching movements. Maybe we will even launch militant movements from time to time, but without a correct objective and goal. If we fail to determine whom to attack, who is our enemy and who are the friends, where exactly to strike and deliver the blow, how and in which way our movements shall have to be conducted for the final solution of our problems, then simply by crying ourselves hoarse and exhorting a thousand times to 'strike' blows, even as we may strike a blow here and there but not at the main enemy, all this would end up as an exercise in futility. What is more, as a result of such acts, the power to strike blow that is there with the people, is simply misdirected. Striking blows where it is useless to strike only helps waste people's energy, and the striking power itself gets blunted, even if temporarily. Nothing fruitful is achieved. On the other hand, as a severe reaction, extreme frustration grips those who took part in the struggle. Thus frustrated, they tend to think : "We passed through all these struggles and had all this toil, suffering so many prison terms making such sacrifices ; so many gave their lives, but what came of it in the end ? The problems of the youth remain as they were. The unemployment problem remains as before. We couldn't even touch its fringe, rather it is aggravating with each passing day. So struggle won't deliver the goods. We have seen enough of all these political parties !" With such frustration and reaction engulfing the people, opportunity comes handy to the reactionary forces to further consolidate their apparatus of coercion, and the progressive movement suffers a setback for some time at least. It is obvious then that if ideology, morality and base political line are not correct, we may go on agitating a band of youths for some time, rally them under the party banner, even keep them engaged in a frontal organization for a period with pious but meaningless exhortations like 'the youth has to be imbued with ideals', 'moral values have to be inculcated in them', 'unemployment problem must be solved', 'only the youth can build the nation', etc., etc., but after all these we cannot solve their problems. To find the correct path to solve the problems of the youth, namely the problem of unemployment, cultural degeneration and such others, we cannot, therefore, avoid or underrate in any way two questions. The first is: what is the character of the Indian state, that is which class or classes are in state power? And the second is : what is the character of the Indian economic system, what are its particular features? If we can correctly answer these two questions, freeing ourselves from all revisionist and bourgeois reformist thoughts, we can find out the correct revolutionary line.

Let us now examine the character and specific features of the state established in our country. What type of state can it be called in political terminology ? As students of history we know that the state is a superstructure on the base of the prevailing economic system. This most powerful instrument in the hands of the ruling class is its weapon to enforce its class rule and class

domination. What we should keep in mind at the same time is that, because of twists and turns in class struggle and revolution and uneven development of capitalism, the main point to be discussed has become the question of which class or classes are in the state power. Failure to grasp this truth entails the danger of succumbing to economic determinism and a host of revisionist trends of thought. It also amounts to a denial of the historic truth that in most cases, and frequently, political developments influence the economic situation. From this approach it can doubtlessly be said — without going into hairsplitting analysis — that the Indian bourgeoisie is entrenched in the state power.

Let us now discuss in brief the nature of the economic system of our country. Everybody understands in plain terms that this is a capitalist system. But what is meant by capitalism? It will not be possible to enter now into all details of the question, into the complex laws and processes of capitalism. I would instead concentrate on those aspects alone, without grasping which you won't be able to understand the basic character and the main laws of capitalism. In a general way, it is in your knowledge that capitalism broadly means an economic system where there are owners and workers, and production is carried out on the basis of owner-worker relation and to earn maximum profit. That is, the main feature of production relation in every case is the relationship of the owner and the worker. One is the owner of the means of production, and the other is the worker or wage-earner. The worker sells his labour power in return for wages, but whether the wage the owner gives him is fair or not cannot be determined as there is no definite standard conforming to the principle of social justice by which to judge it. The wage he gets depends in a large measure on the wishes and whims of the owner. It will be possible to set up a yardstick for just wages only when social ownership, in place of individual ownership, has been established over the means of production and the profit accruing from the labour of the workers through production, or the total wealth created in society goes back to the worker after investing a certain part of this for the all-out development of the country and industrial progress. Only under these conditions, that is, in a socialist system alone, can it be said that the worker is being paid just wages in conformity with social justice. As long as such a system is not established and individual or private ownership or capitalist system will prevail, the owner will appropriate a large part of the wage due to the worker. The entire wealth of the country is the creation of the workers' labour power. Yet, doing no labour himself, the owner appropriates a large part and gets fattened. His capital is constantly on the increase, while the worker is plunged into lifelong poverty, never to be remedied. He has even no security of job. In plain language, this is the essence of capitalism.

The bourgeoisie sometimes nationalizes industries and adopts other such programmes in a capitalist state also. But that does in no way eliminate the owner-worker relation. It rather takes a more severe form. Nor is the capitalist economic law of earning maximum profit done away with by that. On the contrary, in the name of creating national wealth, exploitation assumes an even more ruthless character. Briefly, when production takes place on the basis of owner-worker relationship and its motive force is to earn maximum profit, it is called the capitalist system.

Is production in our country being carried out with the social objective of giving the worker just wages and increasing his income progressively in keeping with increase in wealth, on the one hand, and, on the other, of directing production with the collective necessity for social development in view and carrying out production through planning after assessing what exactly the people need, that is, by assessing the collective needs of the society and fixing the prices of commodities in keeping with the purchasing power of the people and introducing an equitable system of distribution? Obviously not. What is happening in this country is that the worker is

given a minimum of wage, only that little, short of which he cannot subsist with body and soul together and keep fit enough to be used as a tool of the owner to loot profits. Whereas, the rest of the wealth being produced goes into the coffers of the owner as profit and to maintain bureaucracy. As a result, the purchasing power of the people does not increase, neither is there expansion of the market, nor continuous industrial development. This is precisely because the primary objective of production is to earn maximum profit. In plain words, if there is no profit the capitalist owner will simply not invest capital. Hence no coming up of industries, no increase of production. This system is the capitalist system, its basic feature being capitalist production relation in which production takes place on the basis of owner-worker relationship and is designed to earn maximum profit. Talk of fulfilling social necessity here is an empty rhetoric. Production is not done here to meet the needs and ensure the progress of society. Production is done to secure profit.

Such is the system prevailing in our country. The inevitable consequence is exploitation. Workers are deprived of their legitimate dues, a large part of which is appropriated by these sharks, that is, by the owners, and goes into their pockets as profit. If there is a boom in the market, that is if a market exists to sell goods then the owners invest a negligible part of their profit for development of industries in the hope of reaping an even larger profit, but the greater part goes into the coffers of the owner in the form of profit and under various other heads. In this situation, the purchasing power of the people is bound to fall. The real income of the worker is bound to go down. And if the purchasing power of the people goes on declining it is not at all possible to keep to the path of continuous industrial growth and in that case there will be no modernization and mechanization of agriculture, nor will it be possible to remove poverty and miseries from village life. Where will people find work in this situation? Who will give them jobs? Nobody — neither the individual owner, nor the capitalist state can provide employment when there is no work to be done.

It is not merely that our system is a capitalist system. It is such a capitalism which has no more scope for unhindered development of production. In spite of being backward and underdeveloped, this capitalism too is enmeshed in crisis. This however does not mean that under these conditions, there is no industrial expansion or market expansion. But even when such expansion takes place, there is simultaneously the grave crisis of the market. If, say, five new industries are coming up, we find ten other industries closing down. There may be an enterprise with a new license or permit, a new factory may be set up and the state itself may be taking initiative in some cases, but even the running industries, on the other hand, are seen to keep part of their installed capacity idle, be it for lack of raw materials or for want of market. Some shifts are closed, production is stopped, workers are retrenched or a lay-off is declared. Because, there is no work. Why is there a lay off? When the market exists with its constant demand for production then lay-off is not declared in the mills and factories. Lay-off is resorted to when the production capacity lies idle and is getting idle.

The worker wants to work, but the owner cannot utilize his labour power. If, under these conditions, full utilization of the labour power is made, then, following the law of capitalist production, overproduction results and the products pile up in godowns. This is just because there is no market for selling goods as people lack purchasing power and prospects in foreign markets are not promising either due to fierce competition and other reasons. Today capitalism can no more bring about constant expansion of the market for onward development through industrial revolution as in the past. Today, in this era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the era of crisis of world capitalism, specially in this third phase of intense general crisis of the

world capitalist market, capitalism in no country is capable of bringing about uninterrupted expansion of the market as was possible in the era of capitalist revolution of the eighteenth century. Capitalism in our country, being part and parcel of the moribund world capitalist system, is reactionary in character. So, how could capitalism in an underdeveloped country like India ensure expansion of the market in a situation like this ? It is not possible to take up the programme of modernization and mechanization in agriculture on a vast scale, and although feudal economic relations have been abolished feudal and semi-feudal habits and customs still outlive as hangover in the village life. It is no use talking in a vague way that 'feudalism or feudal exploitation still exists'. Do we still find feudal land relations in our country ? From whatever knowledge and information I have I can say that there are no remnants of feudal land relations whatsoever in the agricultural system in our country. Capitalist agricultural production relation has replaced feudal relations of production, whatever be its form due to differences in conditions of growth and development of capitalism because of differences of time and place. However, since inroads of capitalism in agricultural economy here did not come about through an uncompromising struggle against feudalism as happened in the West in the eighteenth century, and agriculture has not been modernized and mechanized, so these pundits who conclude that the land relation in India is not capitalist but feudal only betray their utter inability to grasp correctly the character of capitalism in a developing country in the present era, whatever be their expertise otherwise. Because of the acute crisis of the market in this era, the moribund character of capitalism, and, above all, because of the reactionary character of the production relation, capitalism in this era is incapable of undertaking the task of uninterrupted industrialization as before when it was a rising force. Hence, present capitalism in a relatively backward country like India is unable to undertake the task of uninterrupted modernization and mechanization of agriculture. It is not possible, therefore, to open the road to unhindered growth of industry, and any attempts of capitalism to penetrate agriculture with machine-tractors will throw millions out of employment at one stroke. Under the pressure of additional unemployment on this scale capitalism will be pushed to the verge of collapse. Therefore, with the problem of unemployment as such taking on an ever more severe dimension, capitalism in India cannot take to this course for its own survival. There are thousands upon thousands of landless labourers, share croppers and poor peasants in the countryside who are tied to small holdings of land and who depend on these to somehow eke out a living, no matter how subhuman its level. Should the capitalist owners try to get the land cultivated with machine-tractors, these people will be thrown out as surplus. In a country where even before the introduction of machine-tractors the army of the unemployed is constantly swelling because of lack of job opportunities, where the unemployed cannot be absorbed in industries, and even those who have been working in mills and factories are being laid off and retrenched as industries go on closing down, and people from the villages flock to the towns because there are no jobs for them in the countryside, capitalism won't be able to save itself if it tries to modernize agriculture with machine-tractors in such conditions. Hence to extend the lease of life of the moribund and reactionary capitalist system for as long as possible, the ruling bourgeoisie is after all kinds of palliatives, calling them 'green revolution', 'Japanese method of cultivation', 'Taichung', 'IR-8' and all that to augment the agricultural production. They are juggling in so many ways to work magic in growing different crops and in much larger quantities in small patches of land. Hundreds of millions of rupees are being spent for this purpose every year. Yet they cannot mechanize and modernize agriculture with tractor-machines due to above reasons. But because of this and since they cannot take to the path of modernization and mechanization of agriculture it cannot be said that our agricultural

economy is not a capitalist economy. It was by breaking up the feudal relations that capitalism made inroads in the backward or less developed countries. But in such a situation capitalism, in its own class interest, wants to keep the majority of rural people tied to the small patches of land, so that the unemployment problem cannot assume such staggering proportions as will bring the state onto the verge of collapse under the burden of unemployment and help prepare the ground for revolution. If those millions of people become unemployed at one stroke, then this gigantic army of the unemployed will explode one day in the villages and towns and to meet this challenge is not possible for any state power. It is not possible, therefore, for this capitalist system in our country to effect complete modernization and mechanization of agriculture as a task conducive to industrialization. So there is a conspiracy afoot to keep the majority of rural people tied to the agricultural economy in a half-fed and half-clad condition. The programme of land reform of the Congress, the most trusted party of the ruling bourgeoisie, and the outlook and programme of the advocates of national democratic and people's democratic revolution concerning land reforms are ample proof of this conspiracy.

In fact, there is no scope at present for most people in the villages to get work for more than three months a year. The meagre amount they earn from whatever little work is available gets exhausted in fetching meals of sorts a day and procuring a small piece of rag to wear. How can they afford to buy industrial goods then ? Seventyfive per cent of the people of our country live in the villages. Of these again, seventyfive to eighty per cent are agricultural labourers, landless and poor peasants. By poor peasants we mean those peasant households which have to feed four to six mouths but possess only two to three bighas² of land. The landless have no land, the agricultural labourers, too, don't have a patch of land either. Nor do they have any regular job throughout the year. A section of them, besides working during the sowing and harvesting seasons, turn to other jobs, like thatching huts, sometimes working as porters, or digging earth at times. Without a direct knowledge of this rural condition, it is impossible to imagine what strange and odd means they have to adopt to secure a semblance of livelihood. These agricultural labourers, landless peasants, poor peasants and a small number of lower middle class peasants who do not own more than fifteen bighas of land constitute about eighty to eightythree per cent of the total rural population. The remaining twenty per cent or less own between fifteen and hundreds or thousands of bighas of *benam*³ land. They are the ones in whose hands practically the entire land of the country is concentrated. If you leave out the middle peasants, who own land between fifteen and fifty to sixty bighas, there remains a very small number who are the jotedars and rich peasants, the greedy land grabbers and owners of *benam* land who own this huge land evading the existing laws. You see, this is how, following the inexorable law of capitalism, most of the land in the country has been concentrated in the hands of a few people who have turned into rich peasants or the capitalist landlord class, while eighty per cent of the people in the countryside have been reduced to rural proletariat and semi-proletariat masses.

Just think of it. Seventyfive per cent of the five hundred-twenty million people in the country live in the villages, and eighty per cent of this rural population have no purchasing power. They are half-starved, many even starving. They don't have work throughout the year. What these people earn from whatever little job opportunity they have is not enough to see them through the year, nor through half the year in fact. Now look at the cities. There also you will find an almost identical situation. The urban workers, too, are deprived of just wages. Their present income may now be a little higher in terms of money compared to what they used to get before. But if you just calculate it in proportion to the continuously rising prices, you will well realize that their real wages are actually falling. So whatever little purchasing power they had earlier, that too is

coming down every day. Over and above, middle class families are teeming with unemployed and half-employed youths. This being the condition of the vast majority in the country, how will the purchasing power in the market increase? Purchasing power in the market means the ability of the people to purchase commodities. If people don't have purchasing power, why will the owners produce? If there is no market then why will the owners produce the consumer goods? They will instead produce arms and other items for military use, and the state itself will be buying those. That is why we find allocation for military in the budget going up every year and more money is being spent for defence industries. But no such development is being observed in case of other industries. The reason is that this capitalist system in our country is moribund. Not only has the capitalist production relation become decadent, capitalism in this country has become transformed into monopoly capitalism and, thus transformed, it has given birth to finance capital.

Yes, you need to grasp these complex issues relating to economics. Monopoly capital has given birth to finance capital by merger of banking capital and industrial capital, resulting in the formation of a financial oligarchy in India, which virtually controls the whole national economy and social life through control over banks, share markets, stock exchange, etc., in spite of the fact that this financial oligarchy consists of a mere handful of people compared to the total population. Even the produce of the agricultural sector is under their control. Not only do they control the whole of industrial products, even the products of the numerous small factories and enterprises with small capital investment are under their domination. The entire market is in their grip, which means the entire economic life is being ruled by the handful of financial oligarchy, their stranglehold not sparing the owner of small industries even. The youth are fed with stories of persons having started out at one time with a capital of five rupees, living on *chhatu*⁴, accumulating millions of rupees and becoming one day a great industrialist. Such stories are dished out to the youth of India with the advice: "So, if you also try hard, you, too, may become a big industrialist one day, for in our country those who once started business hawking clothes from door to door are the owners today of large mercantile houses, and many of them have become the owner of one or other large industrial enterprises". "You, the youth of today, especially the Bengalis, have no mind for business, and that is why the youth remain unemployed." They are all cheats. Don't they know, that age is over! Today, starting a business with a capital of five rupees will result in your living on *chhatu* only! Starting a business with five rupees, saving bits to accumulate capital, then one day becoming a Birla or a Mundhra is possible but only through cheating. There is no other way. Yes, there is another way to achieve that: to enroll in the gang of wagon-breakers. If a wagon-breaker gang can be put up successfully there is no need to go for any business. By pilfering others' property, capital may be accumulated. Thereafter one could become a bigwig commanding respect in this society. By starting out with a capital of five rupees and hawking clothes from door to door, living on *chhatu* and accumulating capital — none can grow today into a big businessman any more. It's absolutely impossible. These are myths, false, absurd at that. And with these myths the youth are being confused. The avenue of trade and commerce is no longer open today to the common people. That era of rising capitalism is gone. Those with but little capital can't manage to survive. Unless the government gives them adequate subsidies and adequate orders for purchase, unless the government buys a minimal quantity of their products, the countless small industries cannot survive. Such is the situation.

We need to know that the birth of monopoly capital, finance capital and financial oligarchy means that the character of the economic system of India is not only capitalist, this capitalism

has already lost its national character to some extent and acquired imperialist features and character. Maybe, it is backward and weak compared to the developed imperialist countries, but export of capital by itself signifies imperialism. Consider the instance of America or Britain. They invest capital here with the object of exploiting the cheap labour power and raw materials of this country, appropriating profits and taking them back to fatten the capitalists in their own countries. Exactly in the same way, India is investing finance capital in different countries of Asia and Africa. Is it for any philanthropic purpose, to distribute blankets of Gandhi *ashrams*⁵? Or, is it to exploit the cheap labour power and cheap raw materials in those countries in order to appropriate the profits thus amassed and swell the coffers of the giant monopolists here? So, in this process their wealth is swelling. By plundering the national market and exporting finance capital to other countries, investing it there, capital is accumulating in our country. Is it being used to set up newer enterprises? Do we find any initiative worth the name for industrial development here? Is the unemployment problem getting anywhere near to its solution? We find none of these. Yet wealth is accumulating; no doubt capital is accumulating. In whose coffers then is all this accumulating? Whose wealth is increasing? It is that handful of financial oligarchy whose wealth is increasing. This is what I call capitalism — not merely capitalism, but that kind of capitalism which has already been transformed into monopoly capitalism and has acquired imperialist features and character. Anybody who has a correct idea of what is termed by imperialism in political economy should be able to recognize what this imperialist character means.

Export of finance capital is what we call imperialism. If that is how we should understand it, we cannot but conclude that not only has there been birth of monopoly capital in India, but the transformation of industrial capital into big industrial capital, that is monopoly capital, has given birth to a financial oligarchy. Now what do we mean by financial oligarchy? Previously, banking capital and industrial capital were separate, one being conducive to the other and the two operating in close co-operation with one another. These two forms of capital had not then been integrated and controlled by the same section of capitalists. But today, in the present stage when capitalism has developed into monopoly capitalism, banking capital and industrial capital have completely merged together. In the process of this merger or coalescence a most powerful group of capitalists has appeared which we call financial oligarchy in economic terms. Further, there has been birth of state monopoly capital, making the state subservient to the interest of monopoly capital and this subservience is growing more and more. These features together with the investment of finance capital by the financial oligarchy have all to be considered combinedly for a correct assessment of the character of the prevailing economic system.

Another point you need to understand in order to fully grasp the fact that Indian capitalism has already acquired imperialist character to some extent is: what does 'export of capital' signify in economy? The export of the commodities produced in our country is a particular characteristic. Each and every country does that. It is necessary for a country's industrial development. That is a specific feature of capitalism. But this feature alone does not automatically make a capitalist country an imperialist one. When capitalism in the course of development reaches a stage where it not only exports commodities but also exports capital, then in economic terminology it is called export of finance capital to the foreign market for imperialist exploitation. There is a fundamental difference in character between export of commodities and export of capital. By exporting finance capital to the foreign market the capitalists of the exporting country exploit the labour power and natural resources of the country where capital is exported to, which is not possible through mere export of commodities. Herein

lies the difference in character between export of commodities and export of capital. Hence export of capital to foreign markets is called imperialism in economic terminology. India, too, is exporting capital, be it in the name of multinational corporations or in any other manner. Whatever the name, whatever the cover, the fact remains that the Indian monopoly capitalists, too, are exporting capital, they do business with finance capital in the foreign markets. This is the essence, the basic point.

Since small countries in their struggle today against the big countries, and big countries in their struggle against even bigger countries are also having combinations amongst themselves, therefore they are resorting to a new kind of fusion of capital. This phenomenon of capital flowing out of the national boundary into other countries and combining with the capital of another or other countries — which is called cosmopolitanism — this is what they are designating the multinational corporation in the present-day world. But as long as capitalism remains its basis, that is, as long as monopoly capital and the financial oligarchy are at work at its base, in other words, so long as it is finance capital that operates, then by whatever name may it be called today, it is a new arrangement more or less similar to the old international trusts and cartels. And this reflects only its imperialist character. There is no way to deny this fact.

So it can be seen that capitalism in our country is not only reactionary but has already acquired the imperialist character to some extent. What is more, it is such a capitalism which is throttling the very essence of progress, because of which deep crisis has arisen today in all spheres from science, epistemology, economics, politics, art, literature, culture and morals. Merely by calling it moribund or reactionary capitalism, it is not possible to fully comprehend its character. Along with this, you will have to carefully observe the particular features of capitalism in our country. As I said, capitalism all over the world is moribund and extremely reactionary in character today. After reaching the stage of imperialism, capitalism has been continually trampling the very ideals of liberty, humanism and democracy which it had itself championed at one time. Now it is becoming more and more attached to militarism and bureaucracy, oppression, coercion and all that. This is true for every capitalist country to a greater or lesser extent, depending on its strength and particular conditions. But what I want to highlight before you is that the total disregard for moral values which is manifest almost in every sphere of national life in India, especially the all-pervasive corruption in business and higher echelons of administration, is simply unprecedented. Its parallel cannot be found even in the most reactionary and diehard capitalist-imperialist countries of Europe. Such brazen disregard in internal administration for the laws of the land, which they themselves framed, cannot be found elsewhere. It is almost a daily routine now for the police and administration, the custodians of law and order, to violate the law. The manner in which most of the officials of the police and the administration engage in unlawful activities, without the least compunction, for personal gain or out of a vindictive attitude, or at the behest of the party in power, the way they harass so frequently the workers of democratic mass movements and the cadres of the different political parties by implicating them in false cases has no parallel either, even in the most reactionary Western imperialist countries. As a result, an attitude of total disregard for the sense of duty and responsibility is striking at the roots at every level of social life. A glaring difference can be noticed in regard to the national characteristics of the Indian bourgeoisie if you compare them with the national characteristics of the bourgeoisie of America where the capitalist-imperialists, trampling all moral and ethical sense of values, conspired to raze to the ground entire Vietnam in the most savage manner. True, in the interest of their class rule and class exploitation the ruling bourgeoisie in no country lag behind when they face the need to ruthlessly muzzle the voice of

the people and trample their freedom. But the fact is that the capitalist class, the bourgeoisie of the Western imperialist countries, who are the kingpins of underworld activities and are constantly engaged in all sorts of criminal acts throughout the world, cannot think of adulterating babyfood and medicines, and they never encourage these heinous activities in their country. They may engage in perpetrating a thousand and one criminal acts against one another, but none will put up with neglect of duty in their own country. But the capitalist class and the bourgeoisie in our country do not feel the slightest prick of conscience in adulterating even things like babyfood and medicines. Even the babyfood which their children too consume and the medicines which could save their own lives are being adulterated by businessmen in this country.

How is it that even today the bourgeoisie of the Western countries cannot dream of stooping so low as to commit such heinous crimes even as they are out and out reactionary and engage constantly in criminal activities all over the world ? This is because the advent of capitalism had taken place in those countries through uncompromising revolutionary struggles against feudalism and all shades of religious superstitions. The humanist ideals on which developed the bourgeois social order or democratic system conducive to the capitalist revolution there was secular in character. The concept of humanity or individuality centring round man actually formed the edifice of social sense of values of the then society. Even though at a later stage humanism made compromise with the essence of Christianity, it was with this secular humanism at the core that the distinctive features of national character could evolve in the spheres of politics, economics, ethics, principles and in daily life in those countries. Despite all their present misdeeds, these distinctive features of the national character of the bourgeoisie of Europe and America have not yet become completely extinct. That is why even today they cannot condone neglect of duty as we witness all over our country, especially in the administrative activities. Even now they would not dream of resorting to such heinous means of amassing profits like through adulteration of babyfood and medicines, even as they indulge with impunity in all sorts of underworld activities and all the criminal deeds across the world of which they are the chief perpetrators. You know, we all consider West Germany a fascist capitalist country. Some time back a news item appeared in a daily here that a businessman of our country wanted to place an order with a West German firm for manufacture of a machine that would produce fine stonechips looking like ricegrains. In exchange for money the West German businessmen could have manufactured such a machine, but they did not oblige. For, although past masters in criminal deeds, they seem to have never heard of this kind of adulteration. They simply could not conceive that an order for a machine to produce stone-rice to adulterate foodgrains could be placed. So, they informed our government of this. What does it show ? It shows that though they do business, make profits and cheat people and engage in underworld activities, the evil idea of manufacturing and selling a machine for production of a thing like stone-rice did never occur to them. And our government, instead of getting hold of the businessman who wanted to place this order and publicly trying him in a court of law, suppressed the matter surreptitiously. Who knows, they may have even invited and entertained him for his ingenuity, wondering whether this great brain could not be put to use in the administration ! This is the character of the bourgeoisie of our country. The mere term bourgeoisie is inadequate to describe them. Indeed, strange is their nature ! And that is where they differ from their European counterparts. One cannot but note this difference between the capitalists and businessmen of those countries and the capitalists and businessmen of our country even in their vileness.

What is the reason for this difference in national character of our bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of those countries ? Unlike the eighteenth century European capitalism, capitalism in

our country did not grow through an uncompromising revolutionary struggle against feudalism and religious superstitions. Because of this, in our country a firm foundation for development of bourgeois national character had not been laid. Because, first of all, capitalism grew in our country at a time when world capitalism had become out and out reactionary. Second, capitalism emerged in our country through compromise with feudalism and imperialism and in collaboration with them. As it was, the moral backbone of the people had bent double under the age-old Brahminical injunctions, casteism and countless religious superstitions. Even though some progress had been brought about in a section of the people in the wake of emergence of capitalism during freedom movement through struggle against casteism and religious superstitions, after advancing a few steps that trend succumbed. Consequently, all the filth that had set in our social life and which could not be swept clean because of the compromising nature of our freedom movement is now revealing itself so menacingly. This much regarding the particular feature of Indian capitalism.

Now, if the state is what safeguards the economic system, then, no matter how one glorifies the democratic character of the Indian state, the character of the Indian Constitution, what else can this state be other than an armed state machine to maintain and protect the formidable, corrupt monopoly economic system, that is the exploitative capitalist system? Is any name other than capitalism to be found in history to characterize a state which defends and protects the exploitative capitalist system? This is why we call the Indian state a modern capitalist state. It is a capitalist state, a state which safeguards capitalism and helps it to develop. And what kind of capitalism is this? A kind which today is incapable of bringing about industrial revolution, solving unemployment problem, modernizing and mechanizing agriculture. It is a state which can only export finance capital to exploit the foreign market while producing less for home market, increasing prices of commodities artificially and bleeding people white. Had it been capitalism of its revolutionary era, one that brought about uninterrupted industrial revolution, modernized agriculture, drew in the rural unemployed to the towns to provide ever newer jobs in the mills and factories, advanced art, literature, science, epistemology, then it would have been a different proposition. But this capitalism is a kind which is obstructing all progress, stifling in its deadly grip the morals, ethics, ideals, art, science, literature, economics, politics, everything. It is moribund, corrupt to the core and out and out reactionary capitalism. That is precisely why there is so much of decadence in our social life, so wretched is the condition all around. The youth won't get anywhere if they try to wish away Indian capitalism as a mere illusion or *maya*⁶ of Shankaracharya. They have to face these questions squarely if they want to solve their problems and achieve emancipation from this all-pervasive crisis.

There are quite a few other youth organizations in this country which are guided by different other ideological outlooks. Leaving aside the youth organization of the Congress, the party of the ruling capitalist class, what comes to mind naturally are the two youth organizations of the CPI and the CPI(M). Keeping aside the differences in the mode of expression, what both the organizations are saying is that the course of democratic movement of the youth and the programme leading to the solution of the youth problems have to be conceived and decided keeping in mind the ultimate goal of people's democratic revolution. Those who talk of people's democratic revolution in fact want to deny the reality of this capitalist state and capitalist economic system by shutting their eyes. They say that the first and foremost task in the country is to overthrow feudalism and imperialism. This means, the first and foremost task of the Indian revolution is not to overthrow the bourgeoisie who are firmly entrenched in state power, but to overthrow whatever economic exploitation is being perpetrated by the foreign imperialists, and

to abolish whatever is left of feudal exploitation — how much is left they alone know best. But the fact is that there is no feudal exploitation in the land relation in our country. If their argument is that feudal exploitation still exists because land is not cultivated by scientific methods and agriculture has not been mechanized, then I must say that they don't understand how in this era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, especially in this phase of third intense general crisis of world capitalism, capitalism makes inroads in agriculture in the backward countries. I am constrained to say that these advocates of people's democratic revolution and national democratic revolution fail to differentiate between how capitalism infiltrated agriculture in the era of capitalist revolution of the eighteenth century and how backward capitalism today, in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, especially in this phase of third intense general crisis of world capitalism, is advancing in our country. In trying to analyse by drawing a parallel between the two they have muddled up the whole thing. As a result, they have succumbed to modern revisionism or bourgeois national reformism.

Yet, even as they admit, while analysing the actual position of agricultural economy, that capitalism has made decisive inroads in agricultural economy, in the same breath they raise slogans against the introduction of tractor-machines for cultivation, that is against mechanization and modernization of agriculture⁷. Because, in that event it will lead to much greater unemployment among the peasants. For that the peasants would have to be organized and a movement against machines, tractors, etc., built up.⁸ Strange indeed !

This is exactly what the ruling bourgeoisie and its party, the Congress, are saying. Unable to solve the unemployment problem, they want to keep the majority of the rural population tied to the land. Today the ruling bourgeoisie is seeking a solution to the problem along this path. The proponents of the people's democratic revolution are also asking the peasants, in their programme of people's democratic revolution, to get organized against introduction of tractor-machines. They contend that otherwise this would aggravate the unemployment problem. I say, it certainly would. But does that mean that Marxist-Leninists should have to raise the slogan to stop introducing tractor-machines ? What does this slogan boil down to ? It is just another version of the bourgeois plan to keep most of the rural people tied down to small patches of land by stalling introduction of tractor-machines as far as possible and save capitalism from the evermounting pressure of unemployment in the rural economy in today's situation. While conducting the day-to-day struggles of the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers in the countryside and their struggle against unemployment problem — even if these have to be organized in some places for some time against introduction of tractor-machines — even while conducting such struggles it has to be explained to the peasants that mechanization of agriculture as such does not go against the interest of the people, rather it is indispensable for advancement of the society; but this task cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalist economy in the present condition. Hence if the agricultural economy cannot be freed from the yoke of capitalist exploitation, if industry cannot be freed from the capitalist mode of production, and the gateway to uninterrupted industrial revolution cannot be opened up in this course, then it will never be possible to modernize and fully mechanize agriculture, nor will the misery in rural life and the poverty of common people get eradicated. Since any attempt to introduce machine-tractors in the present situation without simultaneous arrangements for alternative job opportunities would lead to the loss of work for a vast section of the agricultural labourers, sharecroppers and poor peasants of the villages and there is lack of alternative job opportunities, then in this context only a resistance movement can be built on the slogan : either give us suitable alternative jobs, or else we will resist introduction of tractor-machines. But a movement with the general slogan

that 'we will oppose introduction of tractor-machines' cannot be conducive to the interest of the working people in the ultimate analysis. So, even if the rural working people and peasants have to be organized at some places against introduction of tractor-machines as part of their day-to-day struggles, its objective should be to make the peasants conscious that if they cannot accelerate the process of anti-capitalist revolution, there can be no solution to their problems. Sooner or later this revolution will come. But they say that movements will have to be organized against introduction of tractor-machines, integrating this movement with the programme for the overthrow of feudalism⁹, and not with the anti-capitalist revolutionary programme ! Is it feudalism that is creating obstacles to introduction of tractor-machines ? In that case, introduction of tractor-machines will overthrow feudalism. The end of feudalism will be hastened through introduction of tractor-machines. Just see the self-contradictory stand! The CPI(M) wants to incorporate the movement to oppose introduction of tractor-machines in the programme for overthrow of landlordism, that is, in the language of their programme, for the overthrow of feudalism. What a strange theory! This is virtually the same as the programme of capitalist land reforms adopted today by the ruling bourgeoisie of our country with the sole objective of checking the growing pressure of unemployment in the countryside. That is why I said that this programme of people's democratic revolution of theirs is just another version of the programme of bourgeois national reformism or modern revisionism. As a result, the fundamental question of revolution is being muddled up.

See again, they say that India is an independent national state. If India is an independent national state then what else but a bourgeois state is that ? If it is a modern type of state, then what else than a capitalist state could it be ? So, the overthrow of the capitalist class, that is, the ruling bourgeoisie from the state power and smashing the capitalist state machine and freeing production from the grip and tentacles of capitalist relation, these questions are linked up with the question of modernization and mechanization of agriculture and amelioration of people's miseries and these are obviously intimately linked up with the question of industrial revolution. And with these questions again is bound up the question of solution of the unemployment problem. Yet both the CPI(M) and the CPI are saying that the questions of modernization and mechanization of agriculture, industrial revolution, solution of unemployment problem and amelioration of people's miseries do not pertain to the question of overthrowing the capitalist state, but are bound up with the question of overthrowing imperialism and feudalism. In this way they are trying to divert the people's attention in order to shield the ruling bourgeoisie from the anger and hatred of the toiling people. If we take a look at their past history we will find that time and again they tried to divert the attention of the people from the main questions and the main enemy by paying undue importance to questions of relatively lesser significance, and sometimes by projecting before the people imaginary enemies even as the main enemy. Be that as it may, to return to the subject, when really will it be possible to provide jobs to the unemployed ? Only when you can open up the gateway to uninterrupted industrial revolution. But when will you be able to open up this gateway? Only when you will be able to free the productive system from the capitalist production relation and the capitalist motive force of production after the overthrow of the capitalist state. Only then you will be able to do so. Only when you can thus throw open the closed doors to industrial revolution will you be able to modernize agriculture. Then you will have inexhaustible job opportunities, and it will be possible to provide the youth of each and every family with jobs. Hence, those who mouth fiery slogans against monopoly capitalism in a show of militancy yet bypass the question of anti-capitalist revolution, that is the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie from the state power, those who

speak against foreign imperialists and feudalism but deny the necessity of the revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and do not want to recognize the fact that by now Indian capitalism has acquired imperialist character to a certain extent, be they exponents of people's democratic revolution or national democratic revolution, their strategic programme or programme of revolution is in reality but a bourgeois reformist programme, after all nothing but a programme for capturing governmental power through elections by passing off the struggles of common people on the various demands of their life as 'revolution'.

Can you find any remnants of feudalism in the land relation and agricultural production relations in our country except for the hangover of old feudal habits and customs in the cultural life of our people in the countryside? The revisionists and modern revisionists, who talk of national democratic and people's democratic revolution, also say that capitalism has made 'decisive inroads' in agriculture. Is it possible that capitalism can make decisive inroads in agriculture without breaking up feudal relations? Then according to their theory it is like this that with the feudal relations continuing and feudal exploitation remaining intact, capitalism can make decisive inroads in agriculture. The CPI(M) goes one step further. In their rejoinder to us they even said that the more the exploitation of the monopoly capitalists and the more they amass riches, the more also feudalism thrives!¹⁰ What a strange self-contradictory stand! What this really boils down to is: we will not touch the bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie are to be shielded from the wrath of the people, because their party has grown in strength through direct and indirect support of a section of the national bourgeoisie and even now is enjoying their patronage. If you notice their connections and associations with the high-ups in society then this point will become crystal clear. Hence, they have to see to it that the common people do not turn against the bourgeoisie as a class. But if they are to enlist the people's support for the party they also have to talk of revolution. So, they go on shouting against monopoly capitalists and the big bourgeoisie. Almost in a similar manner, the party of the ruling bourgeoisie, the Congress too is busy trying to shield the bourgeois class as a whole from the wrath of the people by shifting the onus of the class rule and exploitation of the entire bourgeoisie on to the shoulders of a handful of monopoly capitalists. That is why the Youth Congress and Chhatra Parishad¹¹ are raising slogans almost all the time against monopoly capitalists. Be that as it may, I ask the leadership of the CPI(M): you talk of revolution against the monopoly capitalists or the big bourgeoisie. Well and good. But you yourselves say that the big bourgeoisie are big industrial bourgeoisie, that is to say, in our country they are a section of monopoly capitalists. In that case these monopoly capitalists in our country are not compradors like those in pre-revolution China. In India the industrial capital has been transformed into monopoly capital. In such a situation, is there any other way open to attain emancipation from the class rule and exploitation of monopoly capital except through the overthrow of the bourgeoisie from the state power and destruction of the capitalist state machine? I would also request the cadres and supporters of the CPI(M) to ponder over this.

So, we find that the revisionists, who have completely failed to comprehend the character of the contradiction, conflict and also sometimes mutual understanding between the monopoly capitalists or the big bourgeoisie in our country and the imperialists, sometimes brand the big bourgeoisie as collaborators, and again, at other times, when they observe some conflict over economic interest or on some political questions, they discover a progressive role and nationalist patriotic character in this section of the bourgeoisie. The CPI(M) stated in its strategic programme, that is in its programme of people's democratic revolution, that not only contradictions exist at present between the Indian monopoly capitalists or big bourgeoisie and

the foreign imperialists but conflicts also frequently arise between the two. In their opinion the issues involved in these conflicts are: war, peace, national independence, sovereignty, interest of Indian economic development, etc. On all these questions where contradiction exists between the big bourgeoisie of India and the imperialists, the advocates of people's democratic revolution have pledged the unstinted support of workers, peasants and other exploited masses to the ruling bourgeoisie!¹² In that case the same big bourgeoisie or monopoly capitalists against whom they bluster, threatening them with overthrow from power, are considered progressive, nationalist and patriotic as per the above mentioned statement of their party programme. Because, unless they consider the big bourgeoisie or the monopoly capitalists 'progressive', 'nationalist', and 'patriotic', the question of pledging the 'unstinted support' to the government of the 'big bourgeoisie' or monopoly capitalists in the event of their conflicts with imperialism does not arise at all. Yet this is exactly what they have said in their programme of people's democratic revolution. What is most noteworthy is that they have even outdone the revisionist CPI, leaving them one step behind on the point at issue. Earlier in this discussion I have shown that on examining their programme of revolution we find this is actually nothing but a programme for introduction of certain reform measures after winning the governmental seat through elections albeit behind a smokescreen of 'revolutionary' verbiage. In other words, if a government is formed under their leadership within this system, within the framework of this state, then that will become people's democratic government, and if certain reform measures in the administrative structure of the state are carried out by that government, then according to them it would mean that the state has become transformed into a people's democratic state.¹³ That is to say, according to them it will be possible in this way to advance gradually and through peaceful means from capitalism to socialism. What has revolution got to do with such programmes? These are goals attainable through elections. With such a programme, how can they provide leadership to the movement that will have to be organized to solve the basic problems of people's life, the problems of the youth and unemployment problem and all that?

Now let us see what are the real problems of the youth. The first task is to imbue the youth with that ideology which can save them from the alarming cultural degeneration in the society and provide them with the moral strength to stand up against all sorts of injustice and oppression and at the same time can also instill in them the unfaltering strength to carry out the task against all adversities. Remember, this abysmal cultural degeneration eating into the vitals of the society owes its origin to the reactionary capitalism in the main. It is not only that we have to go without food, without job, or that the standard of education is constantly declining, but the gravest evil is the all-pervasive moral and ideological crisis now gripping the people, the youth in particular. Fostering this all-pervasive degradation in the social life and using it as a handle, the ruling class, the exploiting bourgeoisie wants to break the moral backbone of the entire nation. Because, if people have high moral and ideological standard only then can they stand erect like men worth the name, with head held high even in the midst of unbearable miseries. And if that high standard is absent then men, though remaining men in their outward features in reality behave like beasts, like animals. The bourgeoisie not only exploits but is also engaged in conspiracy to pander to all the base instincts in man, such as greed, fear, cowardice, cowardly tendency to strike others from behind, aimless desperation, and all that.

However, one should not conclude from this that since the moribund reactionary capitalism is entrenched in our country, cultural degradation is inevitable, or think that because there has been this abysmal moral decline a high moral standard can never be attained. Such concepts go against the teaching of history and science. These are fatalistic and are born of a kind of despondency. It

tends to negate or belittle the role of anti-thesis within society. Remember, the spiritual world within society is not merely a mechanical reflection of the material world. Since the spiritual world is the superstructure on the material base, there are two mutually opposite forces within the spiritual world, too. And because of the dialectical relationship between the base and the superstructure, the spiritual world, too, can directly influence the material base. So, even though the moribund capitalist system, being the material base, is the root cause of cultural degradation and even though the bourgeoisie in its own interest is continuously giving indulgence to unethical means of livelihood, fuelling further cultural degeneration, yet if the genuine force of anti-capitalist revolutionary movement can make its ideological impact felt in society then not only can this trend of cultural decadence be contained to a great extent but it is possible to imbue a large section of the people with a new fighting spirit on the basis of a revolutionary ideology and raise their moral and cultural standard to a high level. In this way, freeing the people from the confines of a narrow outlook, superstition, cowardice, tendency to resort to cowardly physical assaults, inferiority complex, etc., and organizing them against all this, it has been possible in every age to bring about a revolutionary transformation of society.

Now let us see whether those who claim to be the force of revolutionary movement in the country, the so-called Marxist-Leninists, have truly discharged their role in this regard. You have to examine this question keeping in mind an important lesson. The living soul, the kernel of any noble ideal like Marxism-Leninism or of the lofty ideas of class struggle and revolution, is ingrained in the moral strength, character and in the cultural standard of the people involved in the movement. Hence, whatever be the political theory, if its practice does not infuse moral strength and if it does not reflect a higher cultural standard then in whatever lofty words its theoretical essence may be couched, it is merely an empty facade, a lifeless body. Just as a corpse has inevitably to be disposed of, so also if one clings to it out of attachment, it will, in its putrefied state, spread stench and be harmful for all people in society. Any political ideology devoid of higher morals and noble culture needs to be discarded likewise. Remember, if a political ideology or a movement cannot rouse moral strength or elevate the cultural standard of the people, then that is surely harmful and has become absolutely obsolete.

So those who are talking of Marxism-Leninism or of any other ideology, even if one may lack ability to judge the true character of these parties by complex theoretical analysis, it is easy to recognize the real character of these parties by looking at this aspect and to discern whether their political ideology truly bears a high standard and is revolutionary in character or not. This yardstick is indeed simple and excludes any scope for making mistakes. A party may talk of Marxism-Leninism, but if its influence causes degeneration in morality, if its cadre succumb to vile and degraded culture, if in conduct and behaviour they lack politeness, modesty and decorum, if they shrink from ideological conflicts or avoid the course of discussions based on reasoning and seek to defeat opponents by use of physical force, if they indulge in cowardly assaults under any pretext whatsoever, if they indulge in neglect of duty, then despite all loud and tall claims their ideology cannot be truly lofty, not to speak of being a Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The CPI(M) claims that it is a Marxist-Leninist party. They proudly proclaim that their influence over the people and the youth, at least in West Bengal, is increasing most. Well and good. True, their influence has spread, no doubt about it. But would they answer a pertinent question? They claim to be a revolutionary party, the torch bearers of the Marxist-Leninist ideology in our country. But Marxism-Leninism is the loftiest of all ideologies in this era. Naturally, it is expected that their growing influence over the youth and the people should have a

restraining effect on the cultural degeneration engendered by capitalism, and at least the youth and the people under their influence, knowingly or unknowingly, will reflect a higher moral and cultural standard. But has it ever happened or is it happening? Because, had it been so then along with the increase of their strength and growing influence, a sense of obligation towards the country and the society would have grown among the youth and the people, and an attitude to stand up against all kinds of injustice and wrongs at any cost, forsaking all personal interest, would have been discernible in them. In that case just as they would not have tolerated any injustice and misdeeds by others, so also they themselves would not have committed any injustice and indulged in misdeeds or vile conduct. In pursuing an ideology they might have become desperate or reckless but would not have fallen victims to aimless desperation or inferiority complex. There would have been a real uplift in moral and cultural standard of the youth, and all over India people would have been enamoured of it.

Yet what truth do the events in the past reveal? At the time of the United Front Government of 1969 when the strength of the CPI(M), the so-called Marxist-Leninist party, increased most of all, the people got scared at the muscle flexing of their cadres and supporters. Let alone reflecting a high moral and cultural standard and exerting a restraining effect on the students and youths along with the increase in the organizational strength of the CPI(M), this was the period when the phenomenon of mass copying¹⁴ among the students took the form of a movement! Under their influence a tendency grew among the people to increasingly make use of police and administration to benefit from undue favours and privileges for personal gains. And instead of a growing sense of social obligation, a tendency towards neglect of duty grew rampant. Similarly, instead of developing an attitude of philosophical tolerance, a base tendency to stifle the voice of political opponents grew among them. They even took recourse to cowardly physical assaults in favourable situations. And when, as a consequence of public reaction to all these, the Congress captured the governmental seat in this state, turning the situation against the CPI(M), then those 'firebrand revolutionaries' of the days of the United Front lost even the courage to utter a single word in protest! If in future the situation turns in their favour again, they will be found to be assuming the same character as they did earlier, some symptoms of which have already appeared. Had their politics been truly revolutionary, then just as they would have the heartfelt blessings of all the right-thinking people from all strata of the society, they would have at the same time incurred a burning hatred from the exploiting bourgeoisie. Yet in reality just the reverse happened. On the one side, a section of the police and administration of the capitalist state, and even a section of the capitalist class, started supporting them in various ways as the alternative force to the Congress, while on the other the right thinking people of the society became very much apprehensive about them. The truth borne out by all these facts is that the politics they practise in the name of Marxism-Leninism, whatever else it may be, is in no way genuine Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, since they are known to the people as a Marxist-Leninist party, confusion about the very ideology of Marxism-Leninism arose in the minds of a section of students, youth and the people on seeing this very behaviour. Not only did they succumb to degraded bourgeois culture even while chanting Marxist jargons and proclaiming themselves as revolutionaries, they also tarnished the noble ideology of Marxism itself before the right thinking people, the students and the youth of the country. That the Chhatra Parishad and the Youth Congress could muster their present strength after the United Front period was thus an indirect result of the increase of strength of the CPI(M) during the rule of the United Front. On seeing the degraded culture and mentality among the students and youth under the influence of the CPI(M), which surfaced very much during the days of the United Front, most of the guardians and wide

sections of the common people wondered : Good heavens ! if this is what the Marxists are like, if the characters we meet now-a-days all around and in schools and colleges show what Marxist-Leninists are like, may we be spared from such Marxism. Naturally, as a result of this reaction, the common people tended to swing towards reaction, even though temporarily. Students and youth of West Bengal, who had gravitated once towards Marxism-Leninism full of trust in it, turned away from seeing what Marxism-Leninism had become in the hands of the CPI and the CPI(M) and began to swing towards reaction.

To build a correct movement against cultural degradation you should keep in mind that Marxism-Leninism is a revolutionary theory and the noblest ideology of this era. It is the ideology which imbued the Vietnamese people, starting from peasants to children even, with indomitable courage and valour to stand with heads high and fight against the terrible napalm bombs of America, forsaking all petty considerations. It is the ideology which served the Chinese people as the instrument to win liberation and accomplish revolution. It is again the same ideology whose intrinsic force had awakened and roused the dormant peasants and workers of Russia to successfully accomplish the first socialist revolution in the world, which could not be crushed by deploying military. If the CPI(M) and the CPI were genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and if they could truly disseminate Marxism-Leninism then the youth under their influence would have reflected a higher moral and cultural standard, transformed by the magic wand of that noble ideology. Then how is it that the more their strength and influence in society grows, the more grows the aimless desperateness and vile behaviour among the youth ? Why is the cultural and moral standard declining all the more ? Why do they themselves have to complain that the youth are becoming more and more indisciplined ? Doesn't this prove beyond doubt that the politics which they actually practise in the name of Marxism-Leninism, in the name of class struggle and socialism, has in reality nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism, class struggle, or socialism ?

Those who want to organize movements against cultural degeneration should realize that because bourgeois nationalism, bourgeois humanism in the era of freedom movement against British imperialism was a relatively more progressive ideology than the then existing religious ideals and moral outlook in society, it was able to cause a kind of awakening among the people who had been languishing within the confines of the feudal society with their narrow outlook, and to release a tide of new spirit of life in a section and engage the youth of this country in the pursuit of struggle for character building. Yet even that freedom movement in our country suffered from so many shortcomings. It had been a religion-oriented nationalism. This movement was not totally free from the influence of religious superstition and casteism. Those who gave leadership to the freedom movement finally brought about the consolidation of capitalism in this country. Still, when the banner of the freedom movement was held aloft under their leadership, in spite of many limitations and failings of the movement, since that ideology was relatively higher and somewhat more progressive than the ideology prevailing in the society, a section of the youth from all over the country was roused, though temporarily, with a new spirit and new inspiration when they came in touch with the freedom movement. This is what happens in case of each progressive ideology. Hence the then national movement could open the gateway to advancement, to some extent at least, in every sphere, including education, science, epistemology, art and literature. The movement of that time, which came in the footsteps of the bourgeois humanist movement initiated by Rammohan, Vidyasagar, gave birth to such luminaries as P.C. Roy, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Satyendra Nath Bose, C.V. Raman, Meghnad Saha, on the one hand, and, on the other, Bankim Chandra, Rabindranth, Saratchandra, Nazrul,

Premchand, and others. It proves that this was made possible, in spite of many shortcomings and in spite of the weak and compromising character of the then leadership of the national movement in our country, since the ideology and morality of the freedom movement in our country at that time was comparatively and in a relative sense progressive.

But today that nationalist and bourgeois humanist ideology has not only become exhausted and reactionary in the course of history, it has degenerated into a privilege in the hands of the ruling and exploitative capitalist class. That is why that nationalist ideology of the past can no more at present inspire the youth in any way. Today, that ideology has become decadent, and hence the more the Congress leaders loudly talk of the glorious victory of that nationalist ideology, the more the entire administration, the entire country is sinking deep in corruption. The more they exhort, 'be honest', the more the people become dishonest without any hesitation and with greatest of ease. Worst of all, they do not even feel the slightest compunction, or unease of mind. Moreover, the old religious values are almost exhausted in our social life. Because the revolutionary theory and politics based on the teachings of dialectical materialism, Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism have still not been able to exert adequate influence on the life of the people and the youth, a void has been created in the field of ideology. As a result, we find this devastating cultural decadence and moral crisis. Unless the youth can be imbued with the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism and their cultural and moral standard elevated on the basis of the socialist ideals, this decadence can never be checked. So, just as you will have to continuously carry on ideological struggle for this and work among the people, so also, while conducting these struggles, you will have to distinguish between sham Marxism-Leninism and genuine Marxism-Leninism, and teach the people to do the same distinction.

For the youth the ever more acute unemployment and economic problem has today assumed extreme proportions. This, too, is happening because of the crisis-ridden, reactionary capitalist system. Since capitalism has lost its progressive character, has attained imperialist character, and capitalist production relation cannot advance the country towards further industrial revolution, nor can solve the unemployment problem and modernize and mechanize agriculture or bring about expansion of the market — neither internal nor foreign — having itself created the crisis of market today, itself causing one industrial crisis after another, so it is left with no other alternative than to gradually increase military industries. In a country where education, culture, health are lacking, where the government is not even able to ensure two meals a day for the people — why is it that thousands of millions of rupees have to be spent on the military with the supposed justification that the country is threatened? What is strange, this constantly increasing military budget has become an indispensable part of our economy — that is what the Union Minister of Finance openly told in Parliament. But not even a single communist member sitting in Parliament pressed him: what do you mean by this? A backward country with a half-clad, half-fed people, a country where the government is unable to provide even the most basic necessities for the people, if the ruling class of such a country tells that increasing expenditure on military has become an indispensable part of the economy then that can mean only one thing: today capitalism by itself is unable to bring about expansion of market. So, there is a constant necessity to create artificial stimulation of the market. For this reason, by artificially stimulating the market, it is possible to keep the industries running to some extent, and even though this will not bring about industrial development, at least it will provide some relief to crisis-ridden industries. The thousands of millions of rupees which come into the government coffers through imposition of taxes on the people are used for production of military hardware. These are not spent for the welfare of the people but to save capitalism from the crisis of the market as the

government itself becomes the purchaser of this military hardware produced by the government itself. If an underdeveloped economy is dragged into militarization of economy in this way, then what progressive role can such a capitalism have? Yet a so-called Marxist party says that this is not the stage of anti-capitalist revolution, but people's democratic revolution, that is to say an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution! I have already shown that in the sphere of land relations in our country capitalist relation has abolished the feudal relation and replaced it. I have also shown that whatever imperialist exploitation exists in our country it is there because in the present international and national situation, in the interest of consolidating Indian capitalism further, the ruling bourgeoisie of our country is pursuing a policy of collaboration with the big imperialist countries. Even the advocates of people's democratic revolution do not consider this collaboration to be subservience to imperialism, for in that case they would have called the Indian bourgeoisie comprador and denied the existence of an independent Indian state, as the Naxalites are doing.

So it can be seen that the Indian state is a sovereign bourgeois state, a capitalist state. Whatever is necessary in the interest of capitalism in the present specific international and national situation, the ruling bourgeoisie is doing exactly that, and is doing it very cleverly behind a smokescreen of socialist phrasemongering. This being the position — not to strike at capitalism, not to adopt a programme of anti-capitalist revolution — it actually amounts to crediting capitalism with a progressive role, although not saying it so openly. But had capitalism any progressive role at all to play, then with more and more capitalist penetration into agriculture, agriculture would have got modernized and mechanized more and more, the industrial revolution would have advanced more and more and the unemployed in towns and villages would have increasingly secured employment. But in our country the situation is completely different. Hence, if the movement against unemployment cannot be linked up with the anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist state machine and establishment of a socialist state, then it is bound to go astray. So, the struggle to establish a socialist state is the struggle to free economy, jurisprudence, science, epistemology, poetry, art, literature and culture — everything, from the grindstone of capitalist exploitation by smashing the capitalist state machine. The day the youth will correctly grasp this, the day you will understand that the day-to-day movement of the youth for employment, the movements that you build up demanding jobs for the unemployed, are all inextricably linked up with the question of revolution against capitalism, against the capitalist state, that is the revolution to free the entire productive system of the country from the bondage of capitalist production relation and motive force of production — only then will you be able to direct these movements towards successful culmination. Otherwise, these movements will ultimately be reduced to organizing the youth on the basis of some immediate demands, explaining this or that to persuade them, engaging them in some struggles while leading them astray as the so-called Marxist and Leftist parties are in the habit of doing. But the question of emancipation or liberation from exploitation, of true solution to the unemployment problem will remain unsolved because these are inextricably linked up with the question of overthrowing capitalism.

That is why you will have to build up the youth movement as a conscious political movement. If you can build up these youth movements as being conducive to the anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle of the working class and the exploited masses, then only can you protect the youth from the vile influence of cultural decadence and also solve the unemployment problem.

Remember, if the ideology and base political line are wrong, then however much organizational power and strength there may be, nothing really will be achieved by these; and the result can only be harmful. But if the ideology and base political line are correct, then no matter how little organizational strength you have today, by slowly and gradually increasing your strength you will be able one day to bring about a radical transformation of this society. So, get organized to defeat the bluff of socialism of the Indira Congress and the revisionist politics of people's democratic revolution and national democratic revolution. Conquer fear, be prepared for every sacrifice, the future is yours.

**Long Live Revolution !
Long Live Socialist Revolution !**

*Speech on June 26, 1973.
First published as a booklet
in Bengali on November 2, 1973
by the AIDYO.*

Notes

1. Population as it stood at that time which has increased in the meantime.
2. 3 bighas equal 1 acre approximately, depending on local variations.
3. *Benam* land — illegal landholding under a fictitious name.
4. Roasted and ground pulse, foodstuff of the poorest in some parts of India.
5. Retreat of Hindu Ascetic persons.
6. illusion.
7. vide the programme of the CPI (M).
8. CPI(M)'s Central Committee Resolution on Certain Agrarian Issues, March 8-15, 1973, Muzaffarpur, p-41.
9. vide Tasks on the Peasant Front.
10. 'Once More On The SUCI', *People's Democracy*, May 20, 1973.
11. Youth and student wing, respectively, of the Congress in West Bengal.
12. vide Programme of CPI (M), para 108.
13. vide chapter dealing with the state structure in party programme of CPI (M).
14. Copying in examination halls on massive scale.