

Present Situation and Main Danger to Democratic Movement

In the backdrop of growing anger, agitation and outbursts of people spreading fast across the country against oppression and onslaught by the Congress government headed by Indira Gandhi, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh makes a thoroughgoing analysis here of the political situation prevailing in the country at the time. In particular, he draws attention to why movement was not growing in West Bengal, widely held to be the citadel of left-movement – which fact, he explains, lays bare the roots of the stumble causing repeated failure to rally people on way to building united, broad-based, protracted struggles against the rule of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Comrade President and Friends,

I have been asked to place the views of our party on the present political situation in India at this mass meeting organized on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the foundation day of our party, SUCI. Besides, as on earlier occasions, numerous requests from many friends and people, verbally or in writing have come to me seeking discussion on diverse subjects. The suggestions include discussion on different aspects of the international problem, the Lin Biao episode in China, the situation in India, in particular why despite the ongoing movements in Bihar and Gujarat no strong resistance movement has developed in West Bengal which is considered the front-ranking state with regard to left movement in the country. More such requests have come to me to discuss the terrible unemployment problem that has assumed dangerous proportions in the country and to throw light on how to solve this problem. Besides, many have requested me to discuss, among others, issues such as why despite the Renaissance movement in our country — to the extent it progressed from Rammohan to Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Sarat Chandra and Nazrul — why despite the presence of many a great personality, many renowned self-sacrificing political leaders and martyrdom by the revolutionaries of Bengal in the Renaissance and freedom movement and notwithstanding so many luminaries with great achievements having emerged as exemplary role models in our country – why no influence of it is being

perceived in the Indian social life while such characters of the Renaissance elsewhere in the world and their activities are found to have left behind a lasting impact on social life.

Naturally, I should expect those to be present at this meeting who have asked me to discuss these questions. I humbly request them to surely realize that the time available at a mass meeting is insufficient for a detailed discussion on even any one issue amongst all these questions. Whereas you see, in the complex political situation that we are facing in India today and in view of the state of existence of democratic movements just now — the main problem that has emerged in people's life is how to confront this situation. This issue is of such overriding importance that I have to discuss it, treating it as more urgent. Therefore, in my speech at this meeting today I shall in the main deal with the present situation in the country and what should be the tasks of us, the Indian people in this situation. If there is scope I shall briefly discuss the suggested issues of the other questions in so far as they have a bearing upon the subject.

Why is there no movement in West Bengal although the leftist parties are strong in this state?

You all know and have observed how the anger of the people in Gujarat and Bihar has burst out in a powerful explosion. The oppressed people of all strata of society have extended their support to these movements without any hesitation. With full confidence I can tell you that the limit of human endurance is being crossed even in the other states where such type of explosion of anger as in Gujarat and Bihar have not yet come about, and that there will be powerful outbursts of people's anger in almost every corner of India today or tomorrow. The people are bound to burst out in movement sooner or later. But a very pertinent question that is haunting people's mind in West Bengal is why a strong movement is not yet developing in this state which is the seat of democratic movement, of left revolutionary movement — a state with rich heritage of struggle, a state where the leftist parties are strongest. You all know that those regarded as the right reactionary parties are not such a powerful force to be reckoned with in this state of West Bengal, still now they play no effective role here. In the political movement here, on one side we find primarily the ruling Congress, while on the other side are the anti-Congress left parties that, notwithstanding the differences amongst themselves, are providing leadership to the people. What is construed in terms of political organization, influence and clout, these are

with the leftists, and it must be borne in mind these leftists in West Bengal are not like those forces denoted as the leftists in UP, Bihar and other parts of India. Here, the leftist parties who call themselves Marxist-Leninists and swear by socialism are found to have maximum influence and clout. Then how is it that in spite of this the movement against the ruling Congress is not gaining in that strength and momentum in West Bengal? This is of concern to the common man today. This is of grave concern to me and our party, and I know you are also seriously concerned about it. What is the reason for this? We have to provide an answer to this question. Siddhartha Babu¹ has already pronounced that there is no movement in West Bengal because the people here do not want to fight, or even if they want to fight, they have discarded the leftists. Going by his opinion, this is a strong proof that the people of West Bengal have lost faith in the leftist parties. He feels that the people's anger has not yet burst out in that form in West Bengal because the people here still have trust in the Congress. It is but natural for Siddhartha Babu to talk in consonance with his level of understanding and intellect; this is not at all surprising. For, obviously every person is bound to speak according to his level of understanding—Siddhartha Babu too has just done so. But we have to ponder over that crucial issue and find out the correct answer.

Unorganized agitational movement of people lacking political consciousness cannot advance far

Before discussing this subject, I want to place some points before you. You have observed that in Gujarat the powerful offensive of agitational movement which people launched after exploitation and oppression crossed the limit of their endurance, could not make much headway. In Bihar, too, the course which the movement is following and with the leadership of the movement even today effectively in the hands of such forces — as its inevitable consequence, notwithstanding people's anger and resentment, people's sacrifice, people facing bullets and laying down lives and the unthinkable magnitude of governmental repression – despite all this, a similar fate for this movement is not far off. What I want to convey to you by this is, so long as there is oppression and when that crosses the limit of human endurance, people's anger will explode and they will come out into the arena of struggle again and again, whether there is correct leadership or not, whether there is a correct ideology or not, even if the path is wrong and the leadership is wrong. People will fight. And they are actually fighting. You must keep in mind

that the common people of India have shed a lot of blood. If someone says that the people of this country do not know how to fight, how to sacrifice their lives and cringe in fear at the sight of police guns and burrow into their safe shelters, then I must say I do not agree with them at all. They are either ignorant of this country's history, in particular the history of all the mass movements beginning from the days of freedom movement up to independence and even thereafter to the present times; of all the self-sacrifices, martyrdom, and brutal police atrocities, or else they are quite deliberately distorting that history, or they have become oblivious of it. I would like to tell you with full confidence — the people of the country will fight again. Whatever be their hopelessness and frustration as regards movement, their no confidence in the political parties, whether they like or dislike the leadership of a party and even if this type of thinking persists in them that none of the political parties can achieve anything – nevertheless they cannot remain unmoved. For, hunger is a ruthless taskmaster. Whenever oppression and exploitation exceed the limit of human endurance, then people's accumulated anger is bound to explode, they are bound to burst into movement, embracing death, laying down their lives. But what I want to stress is that nothing will be achieved by all this. Because, even if people's anger, agitation and their spontaneous movement breaks out with wide dimension, the agitational form of movement by unorganized masses lacking political consciousness cannot advance far. You will surely note that the nature of this movement, inasmuch as the means and tactics adopted are concerned, is the same as the form of the movements that have been going on in our country under the leadership of the bourgeoisie since the days of independence movement. In other words, it is not a resistance movement in an organized form developed by making the people politically conscious, making them conscious of the ultimate political objective. The very character and motive of these movements are such that when people's grievances begin to crystallize into a fighting spirit against the existing administrative system, the leaders deliver fiery speeches to make them emotionally surcharged and get them to take to the streets. The people fight on the streets against the government while the leaders at best feed them at times with some so-called programmes of struggle. The leaders remain totally unscathed—the most that can happen if a government gets alarmed, feels embarrassed or is a bit unwise, is that it arrests the leaders, politely ushering them into jail, saying: "Please do come, sir". From this stay in jail the leaders draw political capital. They joyfully go to jail, become division one prisoners and wrangle over whether or not they deserve still higher allowances as prisoners. After ten to

fifteen days they emerge from jail garlanded like victorious warriors and immediately begin sounding a war cry against the government. And if an election is round the corner, all the better. They begin proclaiming: “This government has done nothing for the people. It is we who have fought, so bring us to power, place us into the seat of governmental power. Once in government, we shall establish the golden rule of King Ram.” This is what I wanted to term as the bourgeois form of agitational movement, similar to that resorted to by the bourgeoisie.

During the freedom movement, without giving the anti-British sentiment of the masses a unified and organized form, the bourgeoisie involved the people in sporadic and isolated action programmes against the British and wanted to use the pressure thus created to bargain with British imperialism. Even today various political parties simply stir up discontent and resentment among the people and basing upon these, goad them on to the field of struggle and from the resultant police atrocities and state repression, the anti-government, anti-ruling class sentiment and hatred that naturally breeds, spawns and spreads amongst the people – this they regard as their political gain. Whether revolution comes about by this or not, whether a radical transformation of the social system responsible for the plight of the people comes about or not is of no concern to them whatsoever. Yet capitalizing on this resentment and hatred against the government or the ruling party that further intensifies among the people, what all these parties do is that some talk about revolution, others talk about socialism and some present a long list of what they avow to do for the people with fantastic promises of making kings and lords of people, among others – with such tall claims, long speeches and presenting grand programmes they all ultimately move towards election and try to form a government. This vicious circle—the grievances of the people crystallizing into struggle, people’s anger erupting into agitation again and again while the election-oriented parliamentary parties utilize this agitation to reap dividends in election politics again and again—what is the way out, how to free democratic movement, left movement, people’s revolutionary movement from the grip of this vicious circle, is the pertinent question.

Mass movements should have a clear-cut political objective

You should remember one thing. Outburst of people’s anger, whatever may be its magnitude, is not revolution. Agitation does not automatically usher in revolution. Revolution means a

radical change of the present state structure, that means to overthrow the present state and replace it with a new state—with regard to the overthrow of a capitalist state we call it the establishment of a socialist state, thereby bringing about a total transformation of the present capitalist economic, social, political structure and in its place establishing a socialist structure. This is what we call revolution. This revolutionary change does not come about in a spontaneous way through outburst of people's accumulated grievances. History does not say this, nor does science. Such a concept is unhistorical, unscientific. Those who represent agitation to be one and the same as revolution in this way are either ignorant simpletons or else extremely sly, they are pernicious election mongering politicians. By conducting resentment-driven agitational movements and economism-driven movements, giving these a somewhat militant posture and thereby passing these off as revolution, they misdirect the preparation of the real revolutionary movement and obstruct the course of revolution itself. They create hindrance in the path of revolution. So, bear it in mind that agitation and revolution are not the same thing. Though not today, yet the very people of West Bengal will again burst into agitational movement as in the past. The people's anger will burst again into a powerful movement. But in spite of having suffered the ensuing repression and having turned against the government they will again be drawn into the arena of election politics. Capitalism as it was, exploitation, unemployment problem as it was, the way in which the education standard was declining and the moral, ethical standard sinking lower day by day—will remain as they were. You will not be able to touch even the fringe of these problems. Notwithstanding a thousand and one sacrifices, you will not be able to organize revolution simply on the basis of grievance-driven agitational movement, self-sacrifice and martyrdom. To accomplish revolution, you will have to get organized on the basis of a definite, clear-cut political goal, that is to say, an organization capable of conducting the protracted struggle of politically conscious organized people will have to be built up.

So, while organizing these struggles what needs to be determined first of all is: with what objective should we build up the struggle and against whom should it be directed? All this talk about revolution, struggle, sacrifice of lives, for building up organization – what for is this organization and struggle? You will have to find a clear answer to these questions. My point is why are we fighting against the Congress? Do we have personal enmity against the Congress? No. I hold that we at least are not fighting for this reason. Are we then fighting against the Congress because it is enjoying power and pelf, while we are denied this opportunity? No. We

firmly hold that simply on such a ground we have no moral right to oppose Congress. Why are we then anti-Congress? We are opposed to the Congress because it is trying to perpetuate the present capitalist class rule by any means whatsoever, by devious stratagems and cunningly spinning a web of lies and deceitful arguments. The Congress is the political party of the capitalist class, the bourgeois class for protecting and perpetuating the capitalist social system and state structure. Because we want to overthrow capitalism, the task to politically fight the Congress is imperative for us. So, today I do not find any difference at all between the anti-Congressism of the Jana Sangh, or the anti-Congressism of the SSP or the Congress-O, the Swantantra, the Pragati and the anti-Congressism of those who are not anti-capitalist and have no programme of anti-capitalist revolution even if they speak of Marxism-Leninism. If they do not oppose the Congress as because they are against capitalism, want to overthrow it and speak of anti-capitalist revolution while the Congress is trying to preserve and perpetuate capitalism, then what is the difference between their anti-Congressism and the anti-Congressism of Pragati? I at least cannot find any difference – you please ponder over it. We oppose the Congress because it is the protector of capitalism. Otherwise, to say that the Congress is bad and we are good is meaningless. Although the question whether a person is good or bad is very important, a far more important consideration is whether a system, a state structure, an economic system is capitalist or not, that is to say, whether the Indian economic system is capitalist or not, and whether the Indian state is trying by all means to consolidate and strengthen Indian capitalism or not. This is the fundamental issue.

The present Indian state is helping consolidation of capitalism in this country

In which way do we determine whether a state is capitalist or not? Marxism-Leninism has taught us, we have learnt from history and science that if a state in the given condition of its existence does whatever is required to develop capitalism in that particular situation and helps to consolidate capitalism, then it is called a capitalist state. This is what I have realized from Marxism-Leninism, from whatever knowledge I have and whatever I have understood about it. It is to be noted that Engels, then Lenin, Stalin to Mao Zedong – all have unmistakably affirmed that all modern state machines are capitalist state machines. And in the present era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, that is, in the present stage of reactionary international capitalism, in the backward countries where capitalism is afflicted with many complexities,

makes various compromises and suffers from many kind of weaknesses, these weaknesses are not the determining factor of whether a state is capitalist or not. Whether a state is capitalist class-controlled or not is determined by whether that system, that particular state is doing everything possible in the given circumstances required to perpetuate capitalism, to consolidate and strengthen capitalism, extending all help to tide over its crises. So, if the Indian state, in the context of the present international and national situation and the crisis of world capitalist market, helps to consolidate capitalism – then it has to be acknowledged that whatever may be the weaknesses of capitalism in the country, nevertheless it is a capitalist state and the bourgeois class is in control. This truth cannot be denied anyway if one truly realizes Marxism-Leninism. To deny this truth by spinning a web of false arguments or on any other pretext is tantamount to refuse to fight against capitalism. Otherwise, even the Congress speaks against capitalism in general terms. They too speak out against exploitation by monopoly capital, against vested interests and against the landlord system. Even the Chhatra Parishad², the Youth Congress (I)³ and Indiraji⁴ herself are speaking of socialism too. Even by mistake they never say that they want to perpetuate capitalism, consolidate it. Nobody ever openly speaks of perpetuating this capitalism. Again, whether some speak against capitalism in general terms, against the bourgeoisie and monopoly capitalism, is not the crucial question. The crucial point is, they have to clearly state whether the Indian state is capitalist, whether it is consolidating capitalism. If they do, then also it will have to be borne in mind that if revolution is meant in the sense of revolutionary overthrow of the state, then its only real meaning lies in having a programme for the overthrow of this capitalist state. But many Marxist-Leninists in our country have enormous confusion in this regard.

Marxism-Leninism alone can show way to emancipation in present era

In this context, I want to deal with a very important point. You should keep in mind that only the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory, ideology shows the path of emancipation of the people in this era. Unless Marxism-Leninism can be grasped, unless the correct diagnosis of what is ailing the society can be made by applying the Marxist-Leninist methodology of analysis and unless the character of the state can be correctly determined, it cannot be possible for one to acquire a correct political outlook, a correct scientific outlook on the social problems and to adopt a correct political line or programme in accordance with it – what we call the revolutionary

programme. Take a look at history. By going against Marxism whosoever tried to free their society, their country from capitalism indulging in tall talk and devising utopian formulae – like the Labour party and the Fabian socialists in England and many socialists in different countries of Europe with many plans and programmes – none of them could even touch the fringe of capitalism. Rather, they all ended up ultimately as servitors of capitalism, of imperialism – they patronized imperialism. If conducting workers’ movements and organizing strikes or at the most deadlocking the economy of the country through very powerful strikes—if all these constitute a great revolutionary movement or these alone are the signs of revolutionary character, then the Labour party surely brought about a great revolution by precipitating an election in England only the other day! But what could that do? Does it prove that these forces can bring about a revolutionary change of society? No. Nobody can bring about a revolutionary change of society in the present era by going against Marxism, because in this era Marxism alone can show the path to emancipation. All other ideologies are nothing but ideological confusions. Hence that section of the youth and the people who, by observing the severe distortion in the Marxist movement in the country, have turned away from Marxism-Leninism and leaned towards the Congress, are completely mistaken. Those who are distorting Marxism in this country in the name of Marxism-Leninism are responsible for this, not Marxism-Leninism itself. I would like them to reflect over this. In this situation it is their duty to free Marxism-Leninism from this distortion. I request them to consider what I just said.

Bourgeois social system trying to extend its life by resorting to falsehood

I do not want to give you a longwinded narrative of how the all-encompassing crisis in our society has assumed an alarming dimension, because you yourselves are the sufferers. You know better than us how the prices of commodities have soared up. The point I like to convey to you is that the bourgeois social system in our country is still trying to extend its life by resorting to utterly false reasoning. The bourgeois ruling clique is hoaxing the people of the country, confusing the youth and even somewhat confusing a section of the intelligentsia, although they are getting disillusioned rapidly. You have to see through that trickery and deception and free yourselves from its influence. Just take one example – prices of commodities in India are rising. This fact can no longer be suppressed. The rate at which prices have soared here is incredible. There is a worldwide economic crisis, a recession in all capitalist countries. At the same time

prices of some commodities have gone up in all capitalist countries. But the rate at which prices of various commodities have soared up in India during the past one year bears no comparison with that in any other country. But the common people are not aware of all this. Hence, you have seen how Indiraji, without wasting any time, quipped that price rise is not restricted to India, it is reported to be a common feature in all countries of the world. This is an outright lie. Firstly, the situation in the socialist countries is not like this. It is not like this in China, our neighbouring country. The situation there is by no means such that prices have been continuously soaring sky high, far beyond the purchasing power of the people. Nor is the situation like that in the other socialist countries. It is only in the capitalist countries that the prices have gone up somewhat. But Indiraji has deviously put it in a very clever way that prices in our country have increased in the same way as in other countries, as if the issue concerns not just India but is a general phenomenon beyond human control, and so nothing can be done about it. It is something like a natural calamity. I find this lady, whether she has learnt anything else or not, has learnt chicanery and sly deception extremely well!

Let me ask you one thing: is price rise as such a problem? It is foolish to say so. Would such price rise of commodities have caused such suffering and such an outcry if the real income, the minimum income of everybody had been sufficiently high, if every able-bodied person in the villages and cities had a minimum monthly income of 350 to 400 rupees? Secondly, Indiraji has also suppressed another point, that is, how much price-rise has there been in England and the USA in proportion to the wages of workers there, and in what proportion have the prices gone up here in relation to the monetary income of the people in this country? It is by taking this into account that the situation has to be understood. If it is viewed in this way, it will be seen that the real income of the people in our country has been continually going down, while prices have been rising. And in those countries the wages are increasing and along with it prices of some commodities are also going up, and whatever price rise there is, it is causing difficulty for them too. But the gap is not so much as in India. So, this sort of mendacity, indulging in any fabrication that is convenient, is what I call the politics of chicanery, taking advantage of the ignorance of the people; lack of moral courage to squarely confront the truth. Otherwise we are to presume that she is quite ignorant of the fact that while comparing India with the other countries, the yardstick of minimum income of the people has also to be taken into consideration in relation to the price rise. But we cannot take her to be that ignorant. Even if we assume that

she is so ignorant there is no reason to think that the others in her party are equally ignorant. Hence, in our country, in relation to the rate at which the prices are rising, compared to that, the real income of the people is decreasing every day; it is sinking even below its previous level. Prices of commodities have gone up at such a rate that the present purchasing power of a worker despite getting slightly higher wages in monetary terms, is less than what his purchasing power was previously with lower wages, as a result of the deficit in his real income. Such is the situation. How can this be denied? It is in the context of this analysis that the issue of price-rise in this country will have to be approached.

Indian capitalism has to be assessed in the context of present phase of third intense general crisis of world capitalism

So, just see what the situation is like. If you examine both the Indian economy and state structure, from whatever angle it be, even if you do so simply by applying common sense without getting entangled in jugglery of words, you will be able to understand that the Indian state is a capitalist one. This state is looking after capitalism with an eye to how best consolidate it under the present circumstances and its entire conduct, policies, rules and regulations and norms are all being determined with that in view. For example, there has been widespread infiltration of capitalism into the agricultural economy of India. But in the 18th century when capitalism was progressive, during which era the character of the world revolution was capitalist, bourgeois democratic revolution; when capitalism was advancing through uncompromising struggle against religion, on the one hand, and feudalism, on the other, and when production, although under individual ownership, was ushering in a revolutionary change on the basis of capitalist production relations — capitalism at that time was infiltrating in agriculture through widespread mechanization with the use of machines. The then capitalism brought about widespread mechanization in order to develop agricultural economy as a base for supplying the raw materials conducive to the development of industry and to solve the food problem, on the one hand, and, on the other, through that made many of the peasants redundant, thereby creating a surplus so as to engage them in the industries as industrial workers. This was possible because at that time unhindered industrial development, growth of factories and mills was taking place. In such a situation, if the majority of the people are confined to the land as serfs, confined to small plots of land, then from where can people be found for working in the industries? So, by

introducing mechanization in agriculture the capitalists did two things. On the one hand, to provide raw materials for the industries they developed an agricultural economy complementary to the industries, while on the other, they brought the surplus rural population to the towns and cities to employ them there. It is for this purpose that capitalism in the 18th century introduced use of machines in agriculture.

And in the present era, that is, in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution capitalism has not just become reactionary, but is at present confronted with the third phase of intense crisis of capitalist world market, a market crisis that is much more intense, on a much more horrendous scale than before. Earlier there was recession in 1930, as a result of which capitalism, caught in the vortex of intense market crisis triggered the Second World War following the first, that is, it engineered another world war. It was the market crisis of capitalism that brought this about. But despite that, even at that time, the world capitalist market had some relative stability; there was still some scope for the further development of capitalist economy. But now that is also gone in this present third phase of intense crisis of world capitalist market. The present crisis of capitalism is a daily, hourly one. If there are signs of a boom in the morning, a slump sets in in the afternoon. This is exactly what is happening in the world capitalist market today. Hence, even though capitalism was crisis-ridden, the world capitalist market had a relative stability up to the Second World War, which has been lost due to different reasons. As you see, a large part, entailing a huge number of people, has gone out of the erstwhile world capitalist market. As a result of the revolution in China, establishment of the people's democratic states in the East European countries and establishment of a people's state and socialist state in North Korea and North Vietnam, respectively, a large part has gone out of the world capitalist market and consequently, side by side with the world capitalist market there has emerged a socialist market. Thus, a large part of its traditional market has been lost to capitalism. Over and above, the newly independent national states in Asia and Africa have emerged as fresh competitors in the remaining world capitalist market, as a result of which the already contracted world capitalist market has become further contracted. Yet even when the entire world market was under the complete control of the rich capitalist countries, they could not but take recourse to war against one another due to market crisis, hence in the present situation with their erstwhile market having drastically shrunk, their market crisis has assumed a critically acute dimension.

All capitalist countries, advanced or backward, are trying to survive through militarization of industries

On the other hand, even if they wanted to restrict the development of the productive forces in their countries, nevertheless these go on developing to some extent — no capitalist country can restrict that, however much it may try. The capitalist countries can conspire to restrict somewhat the development of technology, but its development cannot be halted altogether. It cannot be halted because it is determined and governed by man's contradiction and struggle with nature. The contradiction between nature and man's intellect and his mental faculty is beyond man's control. It is due to this that however much the advancement of science may be sought to be restricted, there is bound to be some advancement even amidst capitalist crisis. Hence, notwithstanding all efforts to restrict the productive capacity in the capitalist system — yet the productive capacity goes on increasing. Now, how can the capitalists utilize this additional productive capacity? Where do they get the market for that? And without a market if the capitalists produce any goods, these cannot be sold. These will accumulate. Once the goods accumulate, what will happen? To whatever little extent the mills and factories are running, to whatever little extent the people are getting jobs even amidst the existing unemployment problem — even this will be severely impeded. Lock-outs will have to be declared in mills and factories. Even if they do not declare lock-out, the capitalists will have to resort to lay-off, retrenchment, closing down of some shifts. As a result, many workers will lose their jobs. So, what is happening? Faced with such a market crisis the capitalists in the advanced capitalist countries — and even in backward countries which are being reconstructed on the capitalist lines — on being confronted with such multifarious crises, are dovetailing the whole economy with the military economy. In other words, since a market boom cannot be sustained due to crisis, attempts are being made to stimulate it artificially. This means, that the government itself turns up in the market as the buyer with the money from the government budget funded by the people's money. But what will the government buy? To what use can those things come? So, they increase the military strength and trigger off war here and there. They go on producing armaments, increasing military strength and building up defence industries. This very act of militarization of economy, fully dovetailing the productive system with military production — this is what we call militarization of industry.

This is what is happening in all capitalist countries. It is happening because the capitalists have no other way to keep capitalism somehow alive in the prevailing abysmal crisis. That is why all advanced capitalist countries are fomenting war tension and hostilities worldwide, while at regional levels they instigate local wars and conflicts. By embroiling this country in war with that and instigating a third country to fight against another somewhere else, they release some of their stockpiled armaments. Just as they are providing one side with guns and canons, they are also supplying the other side with armaments. They cannot but do this. Even when they talk of peace they proceed in this same way. For, only if their stockpiled weapons continue to be used up in this way will it be possible for them to somehow keep up the ongoing militarization of industry. Otherwise, if such arms continue to get stockpiled, that is to say, they do not get a market to release these, it will not be possible for them to maintain the artificial boom in the market even through militarization of industries. Hence, there will again be stagnation, recession will again set in and bring on a devastating aggravation of the unemployment problem. Today capitalism is caught in the clutches of a vicious circle in this way. Under these circumstances, that is, when such is the condition of world capitalism, it is not possible for the backward capitalist countries of this era to resort to mechanization of agriculture employing machines as capitalism did in the 18th century. So, in this era what are the bourgeoisie, the capitalists doing? They seek to keep the bulk of the population arrested within the villages. If you care to observe you will find that the bourgeois rulers of our country too are engaged in this conspiracy.

There has been decisive penetration of capitalism into our agricultural economy

In our country, capitalist economy has penetrated into the villages by breaking up feudal relationship. What are the criteria by which we understand that this capitalist economy has penetrated village economy? In a simple way try to understand an important point. Who are controlling production in the villages of our country today? The produce of the villages, the produce of the land – all this is controlled by the stock exchange, the share market. Big businessmen, the financial oligarchy are controlling the whole market through banking and in this way controlling the agricultural commodities too. The produce of village economy, what we call agricultural produce, has become a commodity in the national capitalist market today. The agricultural produce is no longer a commodity of the local market. The basic nature of production in the villages is no longer such that one produces for one's own consumption. Those

who own the bulk of the land in the villages — even the middle peasants who are a little prosperous — are investing money in land. By selling the produce of that land in the national market they are swelling their financial capacity. The others are either landless peasants or own one or two bighas⁵ of land, which is not enough to even manage two square meals. Hence this augmentation of capital through investing it, this transformation of land into an instrument for investing capital, this transformation of agricultural produce into commodities for the national capitalist market – all these signify capitalism is operating in agricultural economy. A person with even a most elementary understanding of Marxism-Leninism cannot possibly deny this, and many have even admitted as much. Even many so-called Marxist-Leninists have admitted in their programmes that capitalism has made decisive inroads into the agriculture in our country.

Notwithstanding the fact that capitalism in our country is a backward type of capitalism, it is confronted with an acute crisis today. It cannot solve the unemployment problem; though industrially backward, its economy is stricken with the pressure of recession; there is pressure of crisis, pressure of market crisis. This is because it can no longer effectuate a significant expansion of the country's internal market. If you correctly realize all this then only you will really understand the difficult situation with which capitalism is confronted in India. You are well aware that out of the total population of 530 to 540 million people⁶ 75 to 80 per cent still live in villages. Those who live in the villages – of this total rural population, 51 to 53 per cent, at a very conservative estimate, are either landless peasants or agricultural labourers. In real terms that figure will come to about 60 per cent. Even then, let us consider the figure to be 53 per cent. Amongst these agricultural labourers there are some who possess 1 to 2 bighas of land, but most of them do not have even this. Again, taking the country as a whole, those who possess 3 to 5 bighas of land at the minimum is not less than 15 per cent. Now, these owners of 3 to 5 bighas of land cannot take advantage of the irrigation system even if their land falls within the irrigated areas as because their lands are uneconomic holdings. So, the owners of these small plots of land who have to support 6 to 7 family members — rural families are no smaller than this – in view of the high, soaring market prices of essential commodities today, for them it is not possible with their existing capacity to cultivate this small plot of land properly. And even if somehow they manage to do so, still that does by no means ensure their families' bare sustenance. So, if this 15 per cent of rural population are added to the 53 per cent landless peasants and agricultural labourers, a total of 68 per cent of the rural population are proletariat or nearly so, who possess

nothing, have no purchasing power, who cannot even procure two square meals. Despite being the owners of 3 to 5 bighas of land they are forced to leave their homes and work elsewhere, to take up earth-cutting work, thatching of roofs, etc., and somehow subsist by various means. For, none of them have any regular work throughout the year, neither the agricultural labourers nor the landless peasants and not even the lowest stratum among the poor peasants. Except for the time of sowing and harvesting, to what many odd ways and means this vast mass of village people takes recourse in order to eke out a bare living – those who remain isolated in their homes and do not go to the villages, who indulge in unrealistic thinking about village people, cannot understand at all how this huge mass of rural people go on living. So, this 68 per cent of the rural population are the have-nots, they are proletariat.

Next, let us consider those who own from 5 bighas up to 15 bighas of land in the villages. They constitute more or less 15 per cent. Those among them whose lands fall within the irrigated areas, can just barely procure some food and clothes, and that too very poorly. But those whose lands do not fall within the irrigated areas, cannot afford even this. They cannot cultivate their lands properly, their crops get badly affected. They also lack purchasing power. They are semi-proletariat. If this 15 per cent is added to the 68 per cent arrived at earlier, the total becomes 83 per cent of the rural population who are proletariat and semi-proletariat. And if you exclude the middle peasants and the well-to-do middle peasants who own 15 to 30, 45, 60 bighas of land within the land ceiling, you will find that 60 to 65 per cent of the total cultivable land in the villages has become concentrated in the hands of a very small minority – either through *benam*⁷ or resorting to foul means. This concentration of huge land holdings in the hands of a few – how has this come about? Other than the process operating in capitalism, are there any magic means that could have brought this about? Yet in spite of this, machines and tractors are still not introduced in the villages. Even though the bulk of the land is in the clutches of a few, machines and tractors are not being employed in cultivation. Many say that this is because of a feudal outlook and temperament. See, what a queer logic! Feudal temperament and outlook of man is obviously linked with a particular culture. Why should it hinder introduction of machines and tractors in the economic sphere? Rather, the introduction of machines and tractors would dispel whatever feudal outlook and temperament still exists today. So, there is some other reason why tractors and machines have not arrived in rural economy. The reason for this is that the capitalist state and administration are opposed to the widespread introduction of machines and tractors.

They are not introducing these except on an experimental basis where it is necessary to do so and that too on a limited scale.

Agriculture is not being mechanized due to crisis-ridden capitalist economy

At the Nagpur session of the Congress, Shastriji⁸ publicly went on record saying: are we such fools that we shall employ machines and tractors in agriculture? No, we are not such fools. Why did he say this? He said this because already people in the villages are becoming unemployed in huge numbers and streaming into the cities. The people, being uprooted from their land as a result of infiltration of capitalism into rural economy and having no work round the year, are swarming to the cities in search of jobs. On the other hand, unemployment as such is on the rise in the cities. Hence, the people coming from the villages are further swelling this army of the unemployed. Under these circumstances to the extent that these village people are tied up in small plots of one and one and half bighas of land, the ruling class is trying to keep them arrested within these small plots, even if that means wastage for the national economy and even if these people live in a half-fed, half-clad subhuman condition. At least those who remain tied to the villages because of their mental attachment to land – the ruling class does not want to dislodge them from the land. So, just see how in this way Shastriji has become so much devoted to these plots of land! What does it mean? It means if mechanized farming is introduced, then millions of those people in the villages who are still tied up with their lands would become unemployed at one stroke. No capitalist state can cope with and withstand the pressure of that huge army of unemployed. So, in the face of such serious unemployment problem, in order to protect the rural economy and the capitalist system as far as possible from the pressure of the unemployed, the land reform programme devised by the bourgeois rulers is designed to keep as many of the people as possible confined to small plots of land in villages in a half-fed and half-clad condition, if necessary by still lowering the land ceiling for this purpose, though whether they will be able to do this or not is a different matter.

So, when I hear even the so-called Marxist-Leninists of our country raising the slogan to stop introduction of machines and tractors on the ground that it will increase unemployment, I really feel amazed. Many of them, in their party programmes, speak about resisting introduction of machines and tractors as a part of their peasant movement and give the call for integrating this

resistance movement into the anti-feudal revolutionary movement. See, what a self-contradictory stand! In the struggle to overthrow feudalism, what is the necessity of a movement against machines and tractors? Introduction of machines and tractors would itself oust feudalism from rural economy. That is the way it happens. So, what is the meaning of saying that the movement to resist machines and tractors is to be integrated with the movement to overthrow feudalism? Is the use of machines and tractors being hindered by feudalism? This is similar to the bourgeois politics of resisting introduction of machines and tractors in order to save capitalism from the pressure of its unemployment problem or a programme similar to the land reform programme of the bourgeoisie. Of course, it is true that while conducting peasant movement in the villages, if it is seen that the peasants in some places as a result of introduction of machines and tractors are getting unemployed, then in that case it may be necessary to organize them against introduction of machinery. But even in such a situation when we would organize them and bring them into movement we would have to explain to them that the people as such are not opposed to introduction of machines and tractors as a matter of principle. Peasants desire introduction of machines and tractors or else how can the rural economy be uplifted, their penury eradicated; how will the market expand, the door to industrial revolution open and how will it be possible to produce raw materials for industries? It is therefore vividly clear that the introduction of machines and tractors is extremely necessary for ensuring the progress of the country and for removing the misery in peasant life. But there is no way of achieving this within the present-day capitalist system, within the capitalist structure – that is to say, this cannot be done without smashing capitalism itself. If this is attempted, the peasants will become unemployed. Whatever little they had for sustenance, even that will be lost. So, the peasants should prepare themselves for overthrowing capitalism, and so long as they are not able to achieve that, they should raise the slogan : either provide alternative employment or else introduction of machines and tractors will not be allowed. It is for their own development that the peasants will be keen to introduce machines, and in order to achieve that, they will have to overthrow the capitalist system. But these so-called Marxist-Leninist parties are raising slogans simply for resisting machines and tractors. A queer stand indeed!

Providing round the year employment to all able-bodied persons is the crux of problem of rural economy

Besides, even a novice in economics knows what the criterion is to ascertain whether the economy of a country is advanced or backward. This is ascertained with the criterion of what proportion of the total population is engaged in agriculture in the rural economy and what proportion is engaged in the industries, the mills and factories. It is this that determines whether a country is advanced, that is to say, developed, or backward. So, the very people who declare that the country has to be advanced, industrial revolution has to be brought about, are prescribing a land reform programme designed to ensure that the bulk of the people remain attached to the villages in a half-fed, half-clad condition by alluring them with 2, 3 bighas of land. You should try to understand another simple point. It is true that if 2, 3 bighas of land were offered to those who have none, they would all like to get it. But would they be able to keep the 2, 3 bighas of land that they would receive per family? Would they be able to maintain their families by cultivating that land? No, they would not be able to do so. What would happen then? Because those 2, 3-bigha plots are uneconomic holdings, they would either lie uncultivated, or else those peasants would sell out their land and become landless peasants again. As a result this would be harmful in two ways. Firstly, even the landless peasant would not get any benefit. He would take the land simply out of temptation, yet he would not be able to maintain his family on it. Secondly, the production in the country would suffer. But a host of so-called leftist politicians, simply for the sake of extending their organizational base, are trying to keep the peasants tied down with this utterly false political line. Therefore we are totally opposed to this false political line.

You should keep in mind that we are not opposed to the programme of land distribution to landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers. But we hold that taking into account the total area of land in the country, even the total cultivable land area that can be made available through enforcing the land ceiling, recovery of *benam* land and making fallow land arable, it would not be possible to provide an economically viable amount of land to each of the landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers living in the villages. Even if 9 bighas of land are allotted to each family, even these would not be economic holdings at the present time. I remember that at an all India conference some 25, 30 years back we had assessed that only 12

bighas of land per family could be considered to be an economic holding. And taking into account how much the prices of commodities have risen today, a land holding, to be economic now, should be at least 15 to 20 bighas. Even if that is dropped, with the total available land in the country, a mere 7 to 9 bighas of land cannot be distributed to even half of the rural population. Then the remaining half of the people would get no land at all. Again each of those families receiving 7 to 9 bighas of land would still have at least 3 children, notwithstanding all family planning norms. So, the share of each descendant in the next generation would amount to maximum 3 bighas of land. Would they be able to make do with that paltry amount of land? So, we see that although the distribution of land among the poor and landless peasants and agricultural labourers is an important programme of the peasant movement, yet the basic problem of rural economy cannot be solved by it. The real problem of the rural economy is the problem of providing work to the ever-increasing number of people who cannot depend on land and who are thus rendered excess in the villages. Where can they be employed? If they are to be provided with work in mills and factories, then the gates to industrial revolution will have to be opened up. Why is it not possible to open the gates of industrial revolution? What is the factor that is causing hindrance to industrial revolution? Why is it falling flat again and again? The reason is, under the capitalist system production is always done with an eye to profit.

If you closely observe you will find, and letters and articles published in the English daily, *The Statesman*, also show that the formula with which the pundits of bourgeois economy after much brain exercise have come out, states that the question of efficient management of industry can be determined by looking at the issue from the angle of its profit earning capacity. To ensure profit — that is the task of an efficient management. This is an unadulterated, true statement. With whatever economic theories and jargon they may have presented it, they have let out the truth that unless there is profit, production is not done in a capitalist country; the capitalists will not produce if there is no profit, it is not possible. Then wherefrom will this profit of the capitalists come? That comes by selling goods in the market. Then again what does the market signify? The market signifies the purchasing power of the people, that is, the capacity of the common people to purchase commodities at prices fixed by capitalists. You have already heard that the real wages of workers have gone down. Although wages have risen somewhat in monetary terms, in view of the price rise of commodities their real income is decreasing. In every family in towns and cities there are unemployed persons, and their numbers are increasing day

by day. They have no purchasing power at all. And 83 per cent of the rural population is half-fed, half-clad. The inhuman day-long effort they have to make to procure just a morsel of food, to provide just a rag for the womenfolk to barely cover themselves, saps them of all their life force. Where such is the condition of the country, how can there be expansion of the market here? How can the purchasing power of the people increase in this country? And in such a situation if the purchasing power of the common people does not increase, what do the capitalists do? They produce fewer commodities, sell these at higher prices and reap their profits. On the other hand, the foreign market too is not proving to be much favourable for the Indian capitalists. In such a situation without the modernization of the rural economy on a scientific basis the plight of the rural people cannot be removed. And if their plight is not removed the door to expansion of market cannot be opened. And again, modernization of agriculture cannot be undertaken, that cannot at all be initiated if the gate to industrial revolution is not opened, and this cannot be done without doing away with the capitalist production relations and dismantling the capitalist state structure and establishing a social system based on socialist production and socialist motive force of production.

Industrial capital itself has been transformed into monopoly capital in India

So, this is the condition of our country. There is no access to foreign market. The domestic market too is dwindling. The bourgeois rulers claim that this crisis in the country is but temporary. I have been reiterating since 1949 and also pointed out in various writings that though all the plans adopted by the bourgeois rulers are progressing somewhat no doubt, yet the shadow of crisis is stalking all this planning all the time. They are emerging from one crisis only to plunge into a more complex and deeper crisis. The bourgeois rulers are thinking up various ways and means to extricate themselves from the recession with which they are seriously threatened today also. I reiterate that they will come out of the present recession only to prepare the ground for getting swamped in a more severe one still. Capitalism has no way to come out of this impasse today. And is Indian capitalism that simple capitalism? Capitalism in India is reactionary capitalism. Its economic relations are no longer progressive. I request all those friends claiming to be Marxist-Leninists to consider one point. All admit that Indian capitalism has given birth to monopoly capital. All are clamouring that monopolists have to be fought against. Excepting the Naxalite friends, all the other so-called Marxist-Leninists hold that this

monopoly capital is big industrial capital, that is, it is the industrial capital that has become transformed into monopoly capital. The monopolists here are not like the monopoly group of pre-revolution China referred to by Mao Zedong in his various documents, that is, the comprador monopolists who traded and carried on business with foreign goods. Everyone here accepts that it is the industrial capital that has been transformed into monopoly capital in India. The friends from the CPI say this, those of the CPI(M) and the other so-called Marxists also accept this. But then in political economy, what is the meaning of the term monopoly capital according to Marxist definition? If they claim to be Leninists, then according to Leninism, they would have to spell out at which stage of economy does capitalism become monopoly capitalism and reaches the stage of imperialism? This is a tested and verified truth, which no one can deny. History has established wherever capitalism develops it does so with two tendencies. At first it comes to develop capitalism on the basis of free competition, to create a national capitalist market and to establish a national state. And then, after that because of the internal contradictions of and exploitation by capitalism and misappropriation of workers' legitimate wages by it, the condition of the workers continue to worsen, on the one hand, while, on the other, more and more capital is gradually amassed in the hands of a few and this process gives birth to monopolists. Free competition becomes just an empty word. Some competition still continues under capitalism, but free competition, laissez faire, becomes a thing of the past. That phase of capitalism is gone. This first phase of the era of capitalism cannot be found anywhere, not even in India.

Indian capitalism has attained imperialist character

It is those capitalists whom we call the monopolists who control banking and through this exert control over the small industrialists, over those who operate with small capital, over their commodities and their influence ; simply over everything. In the beginning banking capital and industrial capital existed separately in India too. They competed with each other, and again benefited each other. The situation we find today where one integrated group controls banking and industry at the same time – this situation did not exist earlier. That integration is complete today. Banking capital and industrial capital have merged, and with this merger, one section of capitalists now controls both banking and industry, in this way a group of financial oligarchy has arisen. It is at this stage of the economy that finance capital is born which, through its control over the banks and share markets, spreads its web of influence over the entire economic life of

the nation, from the agricultural commodities to small-scale production and carries on its exploitation. Now, compare this with the state of affairs in India. Is not this financial oligarchy in India exercising control over the entire market here by controlling the banks? And last but not least, the very important point that should be considered is export of capital. All capitalist countries naturally export commodities. Other countries do too. This is necessary for development of industries in the respective countries. But simply by exporting commodities, a capitalist country does not at once become an imperialist country. A capitalist country, even if backward, when it engenders excess capital which can no longer be gainfully employed within the home market, then it starts exporting its capital along with export of commodities, that is, it takes out its capital to exploit the foreign market. Suppose, by exporting commodities to foreign markets and in competition selling these there, the capitalists may bring back some profit. But simply the export of commodities does not provide the opportunity to exploit the labour power and raw materials of those countries. And what does export of capital do? Through its export capital is invested in those countries to exploit their raw material and labour power in order to swell the coffers of the financial oligarchy of the home country. Herein lies the fundamental difference between export of capital and export of commodities. Once capitalism reaches the stage where it begins to export capital – in economic parlance we call this imperialism. So, even though Indian capitalism is still backward in comparison to the rich capitalist countries of Europe, are not the features of imperialism becoming vivid in its character? Has not this imperialist character appeared even amidst its backward condition? If it has then it is not just capitalism, it has already lost some of its national character and attained imperialist character. It is true that it is still quite backward. But if the character of export of capital, development of monopolies and the birth of financial oligarchy are to be explained, and if Leninism is to be adhered to, it can in no way be denied that Indian capitalism has acquired imperialist character.

Indian revolution is anti-capitalist socialist revolution

Then this being the very capitalism nurtured and patronized by the existing Indian state, the pertinent question arises: is that state not a capitalist state? Those who seek to muddle the question of this capitalist character of the present Indian state through any other interpretation are muddling up the base political line, that is, the ultimate political objective of the struggle. That is why I have been telling you: you do desire to fight, but to overthrow whom? You are ready to lay

down your lives, but against whom will you fight? Who is the main enemy? If imperialism and feudalism are the main enemies, then for the struggle against it, the preparation, method of organization and the correlation of allies would be of one type. And if the enemy is capitalism, the bourgeois class, and if overthrowing the bourgeoisie from state power is the fundamental objective of the revolution, then the preparation, method of organization and the correlation of allies for the struggle would be different, and the level of political consciousness will be quite different. So, this is the crux of the issue before the struggle. This is not such a casual question to be dealt with in a manner such as: we desire revolution, and the others also desire it, so the correct path to revolution will by itself appear before us simply by engaging in struggle. This is the stand taken by demagogue politicians lacking principles, self-seekers or by the confused masses who do not know that the political ideology is of paramount importance before a struggle.

I would like to remind you here of a pertinent point raised by the Communist Party of China (CPC) at its tenth Congress. What is being said by the Chinese Communist party may not be liked by all of you; some of you may even dislike it. Many people may nurture feelings of anger about China, may have all sorts of misgivings about China. My point is, whatever may be your idea about or attitude towards China, it is however a plain truth that if anyone says something which bears truth, even if that happens to be an enemy, serious thought will have to be given over it. And of course, if a friend says something that reveals any truth it must definitely be given serious consideration. Even if a common man says something correct that should be seriously considered. Because not just the Marxists, but also great personalities of all ages who were seekers of truth, never failed to perceive that even an unlettered person might often say some such important thing which did not occur even to a great revolutionary with vast experience. So, a basic tenet of Marxism is to learn from even an unlettered person. And the CPC surely cannot be regarded devoid of any knowledge! Nevertheless, I reiterate, even those who have misgivings about China should think this over. The CPC, even though it is such a big party with so much public support behind it and despite having the state power in its hand and such formidable military power at its disposal, it has not put forth the argument that since it is so big, since it has successfully organized revolution and is in control of the state power, it is definitely in the right. Rather the Chinese party has said just the opposite thing.

Judging the base political line is the main issue

The CPC is saying and cautioning the people that if the base political line of the party is wrong, then whatever power the party may possess now, even if it wields the state power, in the long run it cannot be retained. If the base political line is incorrect, even if it has power today and is capitalizing on it, then gradually after causing endless harm to the people and the country, one day its downfall will be inevitable. The common people will suffer the consequences. But even if a party has no strength at the beginning and it is alone, if its base political line, its ideology, principles and the course pursued are correct, it will gradually gather strength, from one to two, from two to two hundred, to ten thousand, a million and so on to ultimately organize revolution and transform the society. I like this stand and that is why I have reminded you of it. This is a very important question before the democratic movement in our country too. You have taken part earlier also in many a struggle, in many a movement. Once you are in the arena of struggle, then it happens that you do not want to listen to anything critical, as if your reasoning faculty is gone. And then you are found to tilt towards that force that is numerically strong and appears as just the alternative force. You do not even try to ascertain whether those with greater numerical strength are on the right path. I say, if they are on the right path, then come let us all go along with them. But if those who are strong in numbers are on the wrong path, if theirs is a wrong line, one of guile and deception, then we should not step on that path. In such a situation one has to move against the prevailing current. Because if a strong force pursues a wrong course, then the harm caused is greater. It is you who will make sacrifices, face bullets and die, but the situation will remain unchanged.

In this context let me tell you something. Take the movements that are conducted here – the leaders remain unscathed. Nothing happens to us, it is you who suffer the consequences. So, if the path is wrong, then after being mauled in the struggle, your mind is clouded with despondency and a defeatist mentality. And then your attitude becomes: “We have seen you all; all the parties are alike; none of you can do anything good.” And taking advantage of this, the reactionaries, the capitalists, the ruling class get the opportunity of further strengthening the state machine. I expect you would critically examine what I have said, whether it tallies with your experience. You have actively participated in many a struggle. With all your great strength and might you flung yourselves into the united movement. We were all there in that united

movement. You rallied behind us in a sea of masses. You wanted to fight and lay down your lives, and you even defeated the Congress. That very Congress now has risen again from its grave. You could not forestall it. You have cringed again in fear. You are again beset with a feeling of despondency and a defeatist mentality for some time. Because you were not inclined to determine the correct course, the correct base political line. Your attitude was that the correct course would automatically evolve out of the struggle. Since you desired revolution – that is what really mattered. But what sort of revolution do you want? For example, many say that an agrarian revolution will have to be organized, because according to them it is the agrarian revolution that is the main focal point of the Indian revolution. I say, well and good. But I would ask the workers of all such parties to consider: if agrarian revolution is the main focal point of the Indian revolution, does that agrarian revolution really mean a revolution to overthrow a particular state? In other words, is that at all a revolution to dislodge a particular class from state power? Or is this agrarian revolution just an economic revolution as advocated by the Gandhites? If it is not so, if the agrarian revolution is a revolution for the overthrow of the state, then how can the unfulfilled task of the agrarian revolution, that is, the modernization of agriculture be possibly completed without overthrowing this capitalist state? Otherwise, the programme of agrarian revolution becomes reduced simply to a programme of land reform after forming a government through electoral process within the present state structure – a programme similar to the land reform programme adopted by the bourgeoisie but just worded differently.

Our proposed programme of movement was not adopted

So these are the main issues before democratic movement in West Bengal too. We are again gradually advancing towards a movement, in whatever way it may be. But in this context I would like to remind you of something. When the people of this state were frightened by and intimidated by the despotic onslaught of the Congress, when the political workers of the different parties too were frightened and terrorized by the repressive onslaught of the Congress, when such a stifling atmosphere of unease and intimidation prevailed that the people did not find the courage to open their mouth — despite their grievances against the Congress people did not dare to speak up yet desiring that something be done, they could do nothing since nobody took any initiative to start a move – it was at such a time that our party proposed to the leftist parties including the CPI(M) around November last, that though right now the people do not dare to

come into the arena of struggle, they do desire a movement. But our party cadres, our volunteers are not afraid, so come let us organize violation of law to dispel this fear of the people. If centring round the various problems of the people we organize movement in the form of civil disobedience programme in order to confront the oppression then we will be able to revive the militant spirit of the people by creating an atmosphere of struggle. In such a situation, the people would again take the initiative and come forward. But at that time they did not accept our proposed programme of movement in the form of mass violation of law. Rather, when we placed this programme of movement before the different leftist parties, the CPI(M) leaders ridiculed us as “big revolutionaries”, saying, law violation programme is no movement at all, and suggested calling a bandh (general strike) instead. This means we the sponsors will have no responsibility in regard to the bandh. We will just give the call for a bandh from above and sit back at home. After all, the people do have strong discontent, if they respond to the call, well and good, if not, it doesn't concern us. You will have noticed how by repeatedly giving the call for bandh or general strike without any prior preparation this incisive weapon of mass movement is being blunted more and more. Since many fail to understand this, they are unaware of it, but such a conspiracy is going on here. In a similar way the sharpness of such a powerful weapon like gherao had also been blunted through its reckless use during the tenure of United Front government in this state. Despite our repeated warnings in this regard nobody paid heed to us then. As a result it is vividly clear that the people are experiencing the consequences of this disastrous course of action and in this way are paying the price for it every moment.

Then again see, what the situation is today. The fear within the people has now been much dispelled. They are eager for a struggle. They are beginning to open their mouth, to speak up. An atmosphere of struggle has been created. The ferment of the movements in Gujarat and Bihar are beginning to take effect on the people of West Bengal as well. People themselves are now asking why there is no movement in West Bengal. Clearly, they are strongly desirous of having a powerful struggle. In the present situation when the people themselves want to fight, these leftist leaders, instead of giving an organized form to people's struggle, now clamour, let there be a programme of violation of law. I strongly hold that determination of the form of movement to be adopted at a particular time is of prime importance. In my opinion to take a programme now of law violation is tantamount to pouring cold water on the zeal of the people for building up an organized resistance movement at present. In other words, it is clearly an attempt to blunt the

fighting spirit of the people desirous of having a struggle. It means the people would now be just onlookers while we violate the law and by doing so earn their applause. When a programme of law violation was necessary they had decried it as a Gandhite programme. Ridiculing us they said that as revolutionaries how we could propose a Gandhite programme, they could make neither head nor tail of it. And now again, when the people want to fight and it is necessary to build up people's instruments of struggle, at that time they have sought to impose a programme that stems from Gandhite way of thinking which again was a matter of creed to Gandhiji. When the people wanted to advance in struggle Gandhiji desired to fashion the process of struggle in such a way that the political power of the people based on a correct political outlook could never be developed. So at no point of time must the people be allowed to build up an organized form of movement. Even if people's accumulated grievances violently explode in the form of isolated, sporadic agitations in some places, throw cold water on it through *satyagraha* and let the *satyagrahis* become heroes. Let the people go on admiring them. As mere silent spectators let the people go on applauding them, while you derive capital from it in the political field, in elections.

Highly erroneous politics of CPI(M)

In the context of the present-day mass movement, the CPI(M) leadership is also moving in that direction. This is after all a question of basic political outlook. Then why in their case has this been happening again and again? When something is required to be done, they will never do it; and they are sure to propose to do exactly that which is not at all required to be done. For example, during the freedom movement, when the need was to isolate the national bourgeoisie from the Congress leadership and give shape to the Congress as an anti-imperialist people's front after having established the leadership of the working class over the Congress — and the possibility for that did exist — the leadership of the undivided CPI, the predecessor of the present CPI(M), did not do that. Instead under the leadership of B.T. Randive in 1930 terming the whole freedom movement as movement of the reactionary bourgeoisie, they kept themselves totally isolated from it and thereby helped to strengthen that very bourgeois leadership within the Congress. Then again by 1934 they extolled before the people the very same reactionary bourgeois class as being so progressive that they went to the extent of raising the slogan of forming a 'National Front' with it and in this way further helped the national bourgeois class to consolidate their leadership over the Congress. Even in the post independence period, they are

treading the same path again and again. Here I do not wish to present a long account of that. I have discussed this in detail elsewhere.

And today, you see again when the question of developing an anti-capitalist mentality among the people has assumed paramount importance in order to launch an attack against capitalism and successfully achieve the anti-capitalist revolution, the CPI(M) leadership is doing just the reverse and talking about an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution. But in whatever way it is considered and from whatever angle, there is no escaping the reality that the present Indian state is a capitalist one and it is the bourgeois class rule and exploitation that prevails in the country. I have briefly discussed and shown that Indian capitalism is not just capitalism, but has acquired imperialist character to some extent. In agricultural economy and land relations, nowhere do feudal relations exist. In this discussion I have also shown you that the problem of agricultural economy cannot be solved merely through the programme of distribution of land – although it is a demand of the leftist movement and we fight for it, and so do other parties. But along with it, the peasants are to be made conscious that their problem cannot be solved in this way. The basic question of a solution to their problem is linked up with the question of establishing socialism by overthrowing the capitalist state. For, a solution to this problem is linked with the question of modernizing agriculture, linked with opening the door to the advancement of industrial revolution. And in the path of these what stands as obstacle is the capitalist production relations in our country, that is, the owner-worker relationship, and the motive force of capitalist production which is to reap maximum profit. So, under these circumstances, in the course of development of democratic movements you have to ascertain which political force reflects this fundamental political outlook.

Three preconditions to be fulfilled in order to direct mass movements to achieve revolutionary objective

Keep it in mind that if you want to direct the mass movements to reach their correct revolutionary objective, first of all, you need this correct revolutionary political line. Secondly, for this revolutionary political line you need a revolutionary political party of that adequate standard that is capable to effectively give concrete shape to this revolutionary political line. It is not enough for this correct revolutionary political party to make its presence felt only

theoretically, it is to be seen whether from the organizational point of view it is adequately strong or not. If it does not have adequate organizational strength to effectively exert control over the situation, then it has to be provided with that strength. Just like a mother nurtures her child to make it grow stronger, so also you have to make it grow strong. This is the responsibility of the people. This is the responsibility of all. Remember, if the political parties who are wrong, whose base political lines are wrong, are organizationally powerful, then that is a cause for alarm. For, they will cause harm. So, it is your duty to strengthen a party if its politics is correct and it turns out to be the only place for revolution to fall back upon, but has less strength. Thirdly, you require an instrument of struggle to conduct and direct the struggles of the people — what we call it to be the people's united front. This united front is necessary because the bourgeois parliamentary system still exists in our country. Whether we like it or not, even if we consider it to be bunkum, it does exist and its clout is also evident. Within the country an environment for democratic movement, even if it is not an ideal one, exists and willingly or unwillingly, people are drawn towards it, and the political parties too have to move towards it. So, under these circumstances unless one wants to get isolated from the people at large, there can be no short-cut method of avoiding the process of democratic movement. At least I do not perceive any. Such being the situation it is necessary to form a political united front of different leftist and democratic parties on the basis of a common agreed programme adopted on the principle of the maximum common understanding. In this regard it is also necessary to correctly grasp what should be the principle of this common understanding. For, there also, if you care to observe, you will find least concern in respect to adhering to such a governing principle.

Our party holds that no democratic movement in the present time can be democratic in the true sense if it is driven on by a strong anti-communist bias. A party may not be Marxist, it may not be communist, but if it is a communist hater, that party cannot be a truly democratic one in the present times. No party can be truly democratic today unless it is anti-imperialist. So, the parties that would come into this united front should have to be anti-US imperialist and in general be anti-imperialist, and should have an attitude at least sympathetic to the Marxist-Leninist, communist outlook. In order to resist capitalist exploitation those parties who, based on this outlook would come forward to fight against the Congress – the Congress being the ruling party in this state today – it is with them that a united front would have to be formed on the basis of a common agreed programme, that is, by excluding the points on which there is no common

agreement and that front will be the people's own instrument of struggle. All the respective sections of the people under the influence of the different constituent parties of the front would unitedly come into the arena of struggle with the programme of this united front. Apart from this, there is another necessity for building up this front. By building up the united front, the respective sections of the people influenced by parties with different outlooks fight unitedly, and while doing so they can compare and judge for themselves the politics of different parties, the conduct of their leaders, their viewpoints and style of conducting movement, which of them wants to direct the people at what point of time along which path. In short in the course of united struggle, they are able to realize the difference between the true Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party and the pseudo Marxist-Leninist parties.

In this context, you should bear in mind one more thing. That is, social democracy nowadays operates itself as a powerful trend or stream within the communist movement, as a compromising force between labour and capital. Unless all these various social democratic forces can be isolated from the mainstream of mass movement by completely defeating them politically through intense ideological struggle within the united movement, it will in no way be possible to organize anti-capitalist revolution. In this connection, let me remind you of a famous observation of Stalin. He said: you cannot put an end to capitalism without putting an end to social democratism first. If this observation of Stalin can be grasped, then it can be understood why we conduct such intense ideological struggle against the CPI(M) leadership within the united movement, and if the CPI(M) workers and supporters could grasp this, they would have realized that our criticism does not stem from any feelings of malice towards the CPI(M) leadership. So, just as this instrument of struggle, the united front, is required to develop mighty, organized struggle, on the one hand, and, on the other, the united front can provide for common people, unable to go into so much theoretical intricacies, the opportunity to assess which is the correct revolutionary party by observing the actual day-to-day conduct of the leaders of the different parties within the united front – their taste and culture, behaviour, level of their knowledge, mode of life, style of work, way of conducting struggle, etc. So through the mass movement these three conditions must be achieved.

Build up mass movements conducive to anti-capitalist revolution

You should keep in mind that from whatever issue a movement starts – be it food, democratic rights, people’s grievances or struggle on economic demands, all these movements have to be directed towards building up anti-capitalist mentality among the people. Because, if we cannot develop these movements to the stage of overthrowing capitalism, that is, dismantling the capitalist system through revolution, then, however much we fight for democratic rights, whatever democratic rights we may obtain and whatever wage-rise we may achieve – there will be no fundamental change in the condition of the people through these. In this context, let me remind you of a famous comment of Lenin. Once he had told the workers that to whatever extent they may gain extension of their democratic rights and fulfillment of their economic demands through trade union movement within the bourgeois, capitalist system – and for achieving which they will have to shed much blood as it is; yet in no way will this bring about any change in their wretched condition. They will continue to remain the same wage-slaves that they were before. Their children also will remain wage-slaves and their grandchildren will remain the same too. Capitalism will not change by these and there will be no fundamental change in their condition. What they need is emancipation, that is, freedom from all sorts of exploitation. And to achieve that they will have to adopt the programme of overthrowing capitalism through all these struggles; and this constitutes the quintessence of the base political line. Hence, today those who are talking about people’s democratic revolution, national democratic revolution or agrarian revolution that are going on in India – if by that they mean a revolution for overthrowing a state then that cannot be anything but an anti-capitalist socialist revolution. Or else, under the label of revolution, none of these mean a revolution for overthrowing a state. These are a “revolution” for adopting some reforms after occupying the seat of governmental power. So, what have the people, who want a fundamental change in their condition got to do with such revolutions? But, you see, a united front will have to be formed with all these forces, under the banner of which the people will have to fight unitedly. All have avowedly come to stand beside the people in their distress. So it is by uniting all these forces that the struggle has to be conducted. Then again, the people through their struggles by correctly practising politics will have to give birth to the correct base political line, correct revolutionary party and the instrument of struggle.

Bourgeoisie is conspiring to break moral backbone of nation

Finally, what I would like to highlight is that a big conspiracy of the capitalists is going on in the country. It is true that we are subjected to intense exploitation, to financial misery. Everything is exceeding the limit of our endurance. But you should keep in mind that however acute a form oppression and penury may assume, the people of a country, a nation can still stand up firm and erect raising its head high even amidst severest of torture if its moral strength is not decimated. Look at Vietnam. The whole country has been laid waste through incessant bombings. Yet what indomitable spirit did the peasants, though unlettered, the people there, though unschooled, keep up to wage a real struggle – not just a one-two day demonstration or struggle, not the clever show-off of a gimmick of a strike – but a real battle against the terribly powerful US military forces. The people there could do this because they possessed moral strength and high level of political consciousness. The Indian bourgeoisie too knows it, they have taken this lesson from history that just through state oppression, through coercion by the state machine and brutal repression by the police and the military – ultimately they may not be able to keep the people subdued. So the bourgeoisie conspires to break the backbone of the nation; cleverly destroy the moral backbone! Foster base instincts and vile traits – greed, propensity for cowardly attacks, indecency, inferiority complex, sycophancy, flattery to satisfy personal need – flattery is an offense, but to favour a flatterer is an even more repulsive offense – and get all this accepted as being quite natural among the people of society. So in the name of freedom of culture they spin a web of gilded arguments to cleverly entrap people and help bring about all-round moral degradation of man. They want to break the backbone of the nation, they want to make man self-centred, develop antipathy to political movement among the people, and trample in the mud and destroy all sense of values.

So, you find that it is quite common for the youth in our country to say now-a-days, “One cannot work without payment. The Congress pays money, and so do the communists. Why should one work if not for money?” When they see the SUCI workers putting in long hours of toil, turning sweat into blood, to collect funds on the streets, they think that they are paid for this work. So, they ask our workers. Do you know who ask such questions? Not only do the Congressites, even workers of many so-called leftist, Marxist-Leninist and socialist parties ask our workers, “How much are you paid?” Our workers reply: “We are paid nothing. We fight for

our ideology.” They don’t want to believe this and say, “Can that ever be so?” Our workers counter-question, “Why, did not Kshudiram fight?” They retort: “Oh come, don’t talk big. All this sounds nice, but this is not at all possible.” Such mentality is spreading even among those who are in politics, who are connected with the political movement. They say: “Pay us, and only then shall we work. Pay us, and we shall become volunteers. Pay us, and we shall work for the party. Pay us, we shall paste posters. Pay us five rupees a day and we shall work for election. Pay us two rupees and we will rough up others for the party.” The political parties have turned into an employment exchange. It was the Congress that first fostered such a bent of mind. This is a very dangerous phenomenon. Fascism in Europe came in this way. It is from this vast army of unemployed that Mussolini and Hitler purchased a huge section with money and transformed them into dreadful fascist and Nazi forces. The Congress has initiated that same practice.

It is not just that the Congress initiated this practice of getting some people to work for its Seva Dal by paying them money, but it is also abetting the practice of adopting unethical means of livelihood among the youth. It is my request to honest Congress workers who work for the Congress with a certain amount of faith and trust in it – please think it over. Many people question us: “You claim that the country is poverty stricken; in every house there are unemployed. Look here Mashai (Sir), if there is unemployment in every family then how is it that youngsters in every locality walk about sporting terylene trousers and shirts, smoking cigarettes, spending money on endless cups of tea and biscuits and go to cinemas frequently – where do they get all this money from?” That is what I also say – yes, from where do they get all this money? Even the father who has a Rs. 200 salaried job turns a blind eye to his son’s corrupt way of earning a livelihood. He does not protest at all. The father can see what means his own offspring adopts for his livelihood but pretends not to notice. Because he thinks his son at least brings home a little money, by whatever means, in such hard times. Now this money that he brings home – how does he get it? He gets it by procuring fake ration cards, drawing rations against those cards and selling these off in the market; by black-marketeering of rice and wheat, by becoming a wagon-breaker. Hundreds of thousands of people earn their livelihood by such means. Just as black-marketeering has become an open secret in our country, so also has the fact that in a civilized, democratic country the ruling class who talk of socialism are directly patronizing such unethical means of livelihood. What does this mean? It means they are out to destroy the moral backbone of the nation. This cultural degradation is a terrible thing.

Cultural degeneration of bourgeois society has infiltrated into leftist movement too

Keep it in mind, this is happening because the Congress indulges in all this, or this is inevitable since capitalism exists – the matter is not like that at all. To view it in this way is indicative of pessimism, fatalism. Just as there is capitalism in society, similarly, there are the workers, the peasants, the people as the anti-capitalist force and they are in conflict with capitalism. This class conflict is also reflected in the social mindset, social thinking – which may be called the spiritual world — and what we term as the superstructure of the economic base in Marxist-Leninist terminology. The conflict is even there in the realm of ideas and thinking. So in every society, the opposing force has a role to play. Hence you can see that even in the then prevalent feudal society in our country, a society gasping in the narrow confines of Brahminical injunctions, the youth did rise up, though temporarily, imbued with humanist ideals during the freedom movement, although that freedom movement could not keep itself free from casteism and religious superstitions. All these weaknesses notwithstanding, the nationalist ideology, being a higher ideology compared to the then existing ideologies, its touch inspired the nation, enkindled new vigour in the youth even if temporarily and led to rise of a galaxy of exemplary characters. That is why I was saying in society the opposing force has a role to play. If one simply holds that it is capitalism which causes degradation and so this degradation continues so long as capitalism exists, then neither can the character of the problem nor the correct path to its solution be determined.

Again recently I have heard that a leader known to be a Marxist reportedly said somewhere in a speech, one need not rack one's brain about cultural movement now, as according to him before the revolution it is never undertaken. Capitalism would have to be overthrown first and then the question of cultural revolution would arise. It seems that while speaking about a cultural revolution what is working in his mind is the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the only model. No. While after each revolution cultural revolution has to be organized, so also before each revolution a cultural movement conducive to revolution has to be developed inside the country to create a mental make up adequate for and in favour of that revolution. This is what Lenin meant by saying that cultural revolution precedes technical revolution. Before every revolution in order to develop a social mentality and moral strength adequate for and conducive to that revolution, the revolutionary party has to conduct a painstaking struggle in the cultural, political and

ideological spheres. This struggle is not simply a struggle of raising political slogans. Those who would raise these slogans and come forward to implement the same through movement – it is in their mode of life, taste and culture, in everything that this will have to be reflected. That the cultural decadence has taken such extreme form in our country is not just because of the conspiracy of capitalism, of the bourgeoisie, but what is of serious concern is that this extremely decadent bourgeois culture because of the calculated, conspiratorial move of the bourgeois class has in the meantime sneaked into the leftist movement, the Marxist-Leninist movement itself and is seeking to subvert it from within. Intolerance, indecency, abusiveness, not making genuine criticism of other parties to show up their mistakes but saying things that have no bearing at all, telling untruth and spreading falsehood in the form of storytelling, the propensity for cowardly attacks, aggressiveness – such sort of mentality is now-a-days found even in the leftist political movement. What do these prove? These prove that cultural decadence, though a rotten fall-out of bourgeois conspiracy has infiltrated among us, the leftists. By such conduct, the leftist parties, too, are accelerating the process of this decadence, which is eating into the very vitals of leftist movement, thus breaking the backbone of the revolutionary movement. So we also have to fight against all this.

Stem this current of decadence by building up cultural movement

You have to keep in mind, the angry flaying of arms due to hunger, hatred or grudge born from accumulated grievances of the deprived do not give birth to revolution. A revolution has to have a definite objective, it needs moral strength. No matter how militant the movement of the aggrieved people may be, it is bound to flounder again and again if it is devoid of a well-defined political objective and moral strength. So all workers and leaders of the political movement, whatever theory they may believe in, if they desire struggle, revolution they should in no way consider the question of morality to be secondary even in the midst of their political activity. Capitalism, the bourgeoisie, is out to destroy the moral backbone of the nation. We have to forestall this and firmly uphold it through our own behaviour, conduct, taste and decorum. You should think over one point. What happens to the country, if we, as political leaders encourage falsehood in petty party interest, make sycophants, servile flatterers the leaders? It results in lowering down the standard of leadership. Yes in that way such persons become ‘leaders’ and on hearing their speeches people may even consider them to be leaders; but you see, they are really

devoid of any tempered character and they do not have any firm political conviction. They only do whatever is needed to build their careers. They flatter someone today, another tomorrow, or encourage the tendency of cowardly attacks and the telling of outright lies. If a party worker scores over an opponent even by telling lies, such party leaders praise him. If any latitude is shown towards such things in the leftist movement, this will corrode the movement from within. You have to keep in mind that the bourgeoisie not only strikes at the revolutionary movement from outside using the state power but the degraded culture, conduct and decadent ideas of morality and ethics of bourgeois society surreptitiously sneak into the vitals of the revolutionary movement, causing immense degeneration in the sphere of habits, causing it to deviate from its principles and aims and ultimately leading it astray. So, we have to be vigilant about this.

In this context, although a detailed discussion is not possible here, I would like to briefly discuss the question that has arisen in many of you, as to why the Renaissance movement in our country could not influence the social life to a great extent. Although at the time of the freedom movement, we find that the self sacrifice of so many persons, the emergence of so many ideal characters and the example of Kshudiram, among others, were before us, today all these are not having that much influence on people's life, on society. The acts and deeds of all these great personalities temporarily exerted influence to some extent on the society, but it could not make much headway. Why? That is because the weakness lay within the dominant trend itself of the freedom movement, of the humanist movement in our country. As the humanist movement in Europe proceeded on the basis of secular humanism through uncompromising struggle against religion, a firm foundation of national character was laid there. But the humanist movement in our country did not develop like that. The freedom movement, the humanist movement in our country was religion-oriented; it compromised with religion, with idealism, with casteism. So, the national character of the bourgeoisie in this country could not develop at all on a firm foundation. That is why the freedom movement, the humanist movement of our country was not able to straighten up the backbone of the nation that was hunched, shriveling and crumbling under the age-old brahminic tutelage and injunctions, under casteist outlook, evil rites, customs and superstitions – it could not break it down and firmly re-erect it, infused with new vigour. Because of this they could only take forward some people in a half-way manner. And then, after the bourgeoisie acquired power, because of the weakness of our freedom movement and because the spirit of our Renaissance movement could not make a deep imprint in our society, the old,

senseless and spineless characteristics that had lingered on in the national life are again raising their ugly heads today and the bourgeoisie too are cleverly exploiting these in their own interest. In such a situation if we who want to bring about a social revolution do not build up a cultural movement against these and cannot bring the culture conducive to social revolution in tune with the everyday ongoing political movement and thereby stem somewhat this current of social decadence – how can we then create in the society the moral force required for the revolution? And if we cannot do this, we may perhaps be able to conduct militant movements of short durations on the economic demands, but can we build up a protracted struggle against the state power the way the people of Vietnam are waging their struggle, the kind of struggle that will be needed here to overthrow the capitalist state – that is, can we bring about the emergence of what we understand as the people's own political power? This cannot be achieved just through slogans nor by repeated chanting of Marxist precepts.

Kernel of an ideology is ingrained in its higher cultural standard

Remember, the kernel of any ideology, be it Marxism-Leninism or any other ideology, is not to be found just in its words. The true essence, the kernel of an ideology is ingrained in its higher cultural, moral-ethical standard. Otherwise, even a mediocre person can read up books to learn the notable political sayings and repeat those. That is why, from Marx, Lenin, Stalin to Mao Zedong – all those who really built up and accomplished revolution – all stressed one point, that is, an ideology cannot be translated into reality just because it is a lofty ideology if those people who would materialize that ideology are not men and women of noble mind and adequately elevated, higher character. Hence, they gave so much importance to developing de-classed revolutionaries, professional revolutionaries in the Marxist movement. And that is why we find Mao Zedong emphasizing: the proof of whether one has grasped Marxism, whether one has been able to properly coordinate theory and practice, is not in the number of books one has studied, the number of books one has written or the number of slogans one has raised, not even how much imprisonment one has undergone. The only proof is, whether one has been able to acquire a higher level of culture and higher level of moral strength. This is what Mao Zedong said in his discussion before the party leaders and workers at the Yanan School. He said that this is the very touchstone by which to judge whether one has acquired correct realization of Marxism. But we do not attach any importance at all to this overriding yardstick in the Marxist movement of our

country. The principal cause as to why the leftist movement, the communist movement in our country has deviated from its path to the extent of losing its direction, despite having been launched long back, having been caught again and again in the clutches of different shades of opportunism, reformism and revisionism in this way or that way; landing in revisionism of one kind while trying to combat another kind, or falling into one type of confusion while trying to fight another type – the principal cause for this is that this essence, this kernel of Marxism-Leninism has been neglected here.

I have heard many a so-called Marxist-Leninist of our country even claim that morality, ethics, ideals are all bourgeois prejudices. They hold that such things as morality, ethics and ideals have no place in Marxist-Leninist and dialectical materialist outlook. I have not understood Marxism-Leninism this way. Had my understanding been that Marxism-Leninism was like that, I would have discarded it long back. As I have understood it, Marxism-Leninism is the loftiest ideal, the loftiest ideology of this era. In this ideology are found the highest and the most advanced concepts of morality and ethics of this era. There is no higher ideology than this. Its difference with bourgeois humanism, religious sense of values lies in the fact that bourgeois humanism and religious sense of values have an unchanging framework, are considered eternal, unchangeable, whereas the concept of morality and ethics in Marxism-Leninism continually changes its form as a result of the ever evolving life struggle. Its concept of morality and ethics keeps on changing in consonance with the concrete conditions and the true necessity of man. This true necessity of man is not the sense of personal necessity of an individual. The Marxist concept of morality and ethics therefore changes continually acting upon the very necessity that propels it. Just as society is changing, the production system is changing, the realization of man's necessity or his sense of necessity is changing, the process of struggle is changing, the class struggle is assuming different forms from one stage to the next, similarly corresponding to that, the concept of morality and ethics too is changing. But Marxism-Leninism does have a concept of morality and ethics and that is a very advanced concept, even higher than that of bourgeois humanism.

You see, once some people questioned Marx as to why he talked of communism, because they believed that there was no ideology nobler than humanism. In reply Marx said that the humanism they talked about was in reality bourgeois humanism. And the communism he talked

of was also humanism, but it was humanism freed from private property. He did not mean the term private property simply in the material sense. That is to say, he did not mean that houses, money, comfort and luxury, wife, children and family, all these constitute the category of private property. Those who have grasped his saying correctly, understand that by this he wanted to go as far as saying that even when there would be no private property, or someone gives it up, the mental complex grown centring round private property would still remain – as we find its manifestations in ego-centrism, professional ego-centrism. The humanism that can free one from even such a mental complex is communism. So, the leaders of these so-called communist parties of India – should they not first become true communists themselves and acquire this communist morality and ethics and then only lead others? But since many of these so-called communist leaders have not yet been able to give up private property even in the material sense, how would they free themselves from the mental complex grown out of private property? The matter is not so simple.

SUCI has developed as a genuine communist party on the edifice of communist morality and ethics

In India, it is only the SUCI that has developed as a genuine Marxist-Leninist party on this edifice of communist morality and ethics. You know that we received no backing of the press while building up this party, no support of any communist party internationally. In many a country, the communists had to organize communist movement under such conditions. This tragedy we find in the history of emergence of none other than Mao Zedong himself. The international recognition was in favour of those who were against Mao there, who ridiculed him as being but a peasant. It is by opposing them that Mao Zedong had to make the revolution victorious there. We too have built up our party in a totally different process as opposed to the other so-called Marxist parties existing in India. We held that Marxism is to be studied in such a way so that we can give it its own concretized form on Indian soil and apply it in the concrete Indian condition. As Lenin taught us, revolution will be organized everywhere based on the fundamental principles and teachings of Marxism, but because of the differences in conditions from country to country, a contradiction will arise whenever those teachings are sought to be applied in the particular condition of a particular country. So, in each country the communists

will have to resolve the particular contradictions found there and the complexities arising thereof on the basis of the concrete conditions in their country and organize revolution.

Those who don't do that, who try to resolve these by having recourse to the saying of this person or that person from outside, the quotation of this book or that book, should remember that those books too were penned by some one or other basing themselves on a science, an outlook. Hence, the party who by basing itself on that Marxist outlook cannot articulate the problems of its particular country in the very form appropriate to that country, that cannot write books accordingly, that cannot explain the situation obtaining – it is such parties only who copy, they copy with merely some cosmetic changes. If you examine the stand of the CPI or the CPI(M) – please do not take it otherwise – you will find just this same thing. How strange is it, you see, that their ideas, either about people's democratic revolution or national democratic revolution did not arise in their minds until such concepts came up internationally. This party⁹ was founded in 1924. But the idea of people's democratic revolution did not occur to them until Zhdanov spelt it out. Again, the present bourgeois national state in India was established in 1947. But until Khrushchev discovered that there is a stage of national democratic revolution within the people's democratic revolution, this did not enter the head of the Communist Party of India. And the moment Khrushchev proclaimed this, the CPI immediately discovered the concept of national democratic revolution. If you examine their programme, their terminology, everything, you will find that they have merely gone on copying. And whenever they tried to say something on their own their stand invariably suffered from strange self-contradictions.

Self-contradiction of CPI(M)

For example, our CPI(M) friends say that the big bourgeoisie or monopolists constitute the main enemy in this country and the aim of the revolution is to overthrow them. Now, we should surely take it that by this revolution they talk about they do not mean an agrarian revolution, an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution like the economic revolution advocated by the Gandhites — that is, some reforms, some administrative measures, some laws enacted. If we do not assume their position that way, then we have to assume that they mean a revolution overthrowing the state by this. But see again what they say about these monopolists and big bourgeoisie whom they term as reactionary and whose overthrow they declare to be the main aim of the revolution,

in clause 108 of their party programme. They say there that not merely contradiction but even conflict exists between this big bourgeoisie and the imperialists. According to them, these conflicts are on the question of war and peace, on the question of sovereignty and the question of development of the country. And in such conflicts, they have promised in their programme unconditional support to this government of the big bourgeoisie on behalf of the workers-peasants, of the people. But in this conflict between the big bourgeoisie and the imperialists, particularly in view of the issues of conflicts they speak about, the question of extending support to the government of this big bourgeoisie arises then only if they admit that on these issues the big bourgeoisie play a progressive or nationalist role, or a patriotic role. This stand of theirs is even more revisionist than that of the CPI. And if they accept that the big bourgeoisie have a progressive role, then why would they overthrow them, organize revolution against them? And if the truth be that they consider the big bourgeoisie or the monopolists to be reactionary, then both the conflicts and mutual adjustment of the big bourgeoisie with the imperialists are parts of the process of struggle and unity between the monopolists of two countries, that means a relationship of contention and collusion, a relation of contradiction and conflict between a relatively minor imperialist country and a major imperialist country. So, how does the question of offering unconditional support on behalf of the working class, the revolutionary masses arise at all? All this is beyond my comprehension. My request to you: please ponder over this.

Any path other than the programme of socialist revolution is wrong

And along with this, I strongly urge you to ponder over it and after having a correct realization to get united on the basis of a correct political line. For, I find with pain, even when you are engaged in battles, you are fighting on the basis of wrong politics, and as its inevitable outcome precious time is being lost. If the conclusion is that the Indian economic system is capitalistic, if you hold that the task of agrarian revolution in India is the task of its modernization, bearing it in mind that in the realm of economic production relations, with respect to the mode of production, there is no feudalism today, whatever remnants of it may still be present will disappear through the course of modernization, and other than this whatever remnants of it are still there, these exist only in the sphere of habits and culture – if you at least come to this conclusion that the Indian capitalist class has set up the present Indian state as an instrument to consolidate capitalism and the Indian revolution is a revolution to overthrow

capitalism, then you will have to agree that this revolution can only mean a revolution to smash the state. Otherwise the word revolution turns out to be some reforms in the name of revolution, the peddling of economic struggles as ‘revolution’ which is simply a trick to hoodwink the people or a politics to confuse the people. Therefore, be it a struggle on the question of solving the unemployment problem, a struggle for increasing the workers’ wages, a struggle for democratic rights, a struggle for reducing prices of essential commodities or for getting rice at cheaper price – whatever struggle begins on whichever issue would have to be developed with an eye to the main political object of anti-capitalist socialist revolution. The ultimate object of all the struggles should be, that is, all these struggles should ultimately be directed towards ceaseless struggle against and confrontation with capitalism and through revolutionary struggle to bringing about a fundamental change of the capitalist system in order to free the economy of our country, politics, production, art, culture, literature, education – everything in the country from the capitalist exploitation and oppression. If you consider this to be the chief objective of all the movements, then excepting the programme of socialist revolution, all other paths are wrong. All other courses are in practice conspiracies to shield the capitalist rule, the bourgeois class rule which is at the very root of it, whether they admit it or not.

For example, the tactic of the Indira Congress is to raise an accusing finger at a handful of vested interests, monopolists, and by shifting the total responsibility of bourgeois class rule on to their shoulders, to shield the rule of the bourgeois class as a whole from the wrath of the people. So, even those among the leftists who raise slogans against the big bourgeoisie or monopolists but do not speak of anti-capitalist revolution, they too focus attention on the big bourgeoisie, on imperialism and feudalism in a similar way – whereas the fact is even if some feudal habits and some imperialist oppression may still persist, these can persist only because of the bourgeois class rule – and by this they seek to conceal the rule by the bourgeois class as a whole and the character of the bourgeois state from the people. That is, they too, in order to underplay the responsibility of the bourgeois class rule as a whole and to allay people’s wrath against it, are vociferous against just a few individual big bourgeois or monopolists. Otherwise, those who know the A B C of Marxism, they know it well that monopoly capitalism is a stage of capitalism itself. In that case can monopoly capitalism be overthrown without overthrowing the capitalist state machine? So, the matter boils down to this that they do not want to overthrow monopoly capitalism. For, monopoly capitalism cannot be overthrown in any country without overthrowing

the capitalist state. This is what Marxism teaches us. So the reason why Indiraji, Chhatra Parishad or Youth Congress speak against monopoly capitalism, that is in order to shield the aggregate class rule of the bourgeoisie from people's wrath, is the very same reason for which these leftists also raise their voice against them. If this is not so, I at least can't comprehend why they speak like this.

Strengthen the SUCI

You should remember, those in India who instead of anti-capitalist revolution speak of an alternative programme of revolution, do recognize in their minds a progressive role of capitalism, or else in this way or that way they are being maintained and protected by capitalism. I do not say that this applies to all of them, but at least to some of them. Therefore, they have to see to it that the people's fury is not directed against the bourgeois class as a whole, but at the same time, they have to speak of revolution too. Otherwise, if the struggle against monopoly capital is a genuine revolutionary struggle, then there is no other path to free the country from the rule, the yoke of monopoly capital except through overthrowing the bourgeoisie from power, smashing the capitalist state machine ; and it is the path which SUCI has been trying to show you. SUCI is trying its utmost to bring about a revolutionary transformation of the whole country, is holding aloft the banner of Marxism-Leninism and organizing the people on the basis of Marxism-Leninism in that movement to achieve that. My appeal to you all is, strengthen SUCI! Create an atmosphere of intense discussion and debates in order to make the climate conducive for the realization of correct revolutionary politics. Fight against blindness! My appeal also to the workers of the other leftist parties: oppose all sorts of blindness inside your party. I tell the workers in our party and am telling you also, do not indulge blindness on any pretext, because blindness prepares the ground for fascism and helps in emergence of the fascist force. So on no account should you indulge blindness, bigotry to serve any interest whatsoever. Determine the correct political line through cultivation of rationality and scientific reasoning.

In conclusion, once more my appeal to the people: you will sacrifice more, struggle more; you are going to be in struggle again, be it today or tomorrow when oppression will cross the limits of your endurance and hunger becomes too unbearable, you will again plunge into struggle; but do not forget three points. First, whether the base political line of the struggles is

correct, that is, whether the programme of anti-capitalist revolution is there before the struggles. Secondly, whether there is a correct revolutionary party and whether it is really strong enough to direct the struggles within the united movement towards the correct goal – if it is not, then strengthen the leadership of this correct party. Thirdly, create immediately a strong current of movement in order to form a united front on the basis of a common programme so that you may in course of time be able to build up armed struggle of the people. Only then will you be able to build up an invincible movement in West Bengal, a movement opening up new horizons, capable of showing to the whole of India the correct path.

With this, I conclude my speech.

Long live revolution!

*Speech on April 24, 1974,
Foundation Anniversary of the party.
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Notes

1. Siddhartha Sankar Ray, the then Congress (I) Chief Minister of West Bengal.
2. Student organization of Congress (I).
3. Youth organization of Congress (I).
4. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister.
5. One bigha is roughly one third of an acre.
6. Population as it approximately stood at that time.
7. Land above ceiling illegally held in fictitious names.
8. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Congress Prime Minister.
9. Meaning the undivided CPI before the split.