

RED SALUTE COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH



*Break the chain of dead-weights of
this society : Build up mighty
movement on correct political line*

(On 24th April, 1966, on the occasion of the Eighteenth Foundation Anniversary of the Party, the Socialist Unity Centre of India, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our departed leader, teacher and guide, an outstanding Marxist thinker of the era, delivered a speech at the University Institute Hall in Calcutta, analysing the then situation in the country and the principal tasks of the people. It was immediately after the historic food movement of 1966 in West Bengal, four years after the border war with China and a year after the 1965 war with Pakistan. The country was still under Emergency and DIR clamped by the then Congress Government at the Centre. It will be seen that the basic economic-political-social-cultural problems which afflicted this country at that time are essentially the same facing us now, only these have aggravated with time. The attitude which the so-called Marxist-Leninist parties reflected then on questions of 'national security', 'national planning' and 'national interest' are almost the same these parties reflect today—the difference being that they are more tilted towards the ruling class now. In this, too, their true colours get exposed very clearly.)

In view of its immense relevance, political significance and astounding brilliance of revolutionary analytical acumen and historic potential, we decided to publish this English version of the speech. Any errors, lapses and inadequacies which may be there in this rendered version are the responsibility of the Board of Editors. —Editor, Proletarian Era.)

Comrade President and Friends,

You have heard why this meeting has been convened today. There are many issues to be discussed. And it will take quite long to discuss them—so complex and intricate is the country's situation today. I said, so many issues need to be discussed, but I am afraid I can hardly devote all that time. I had better draw your attention to a few issues—I wish to highlight the basic issues here.

The first is that there are certain issues which everyone admits—you all feel strongly about them, you talk them everyday and make your own observations. It is that India has been politically independent since long, yet there has not been any solution to the basic problems plaguing the Indian society. Yes, some roads, say, have been constructed, certain industries have been set up. But while these new factories have come up, many others have closed down. There has not been any solution to the problem of unemployment. Previously, we knew that industrialisation in a country eased its unemployment problem—the beginning of industrial revolution brought down unemployment. But the scene is opposite here. There has been some industrial enterprise, and we are told that the country is making strides towards industrial revolution through recourse to five-year plans. But the more we try to advance through these plans, the more we find the unemployment problem aggravating—unemployment figures rising. What is the cause of it? This is one basic question confronting all of us.

The second is that day by day the moral standard of the whole nation is going down. It has become a matter of concern for people of all walks of life. The country is ours, so naturally we feel deeply concerned—

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we should. But take a look at the entire capitalist world. You will find that depravity has turned into a worldwide problem. In Europe and America—mind you, in the USA itself—teenagers have become a problem to deal with. What is the reason that the moral standard of that nation is fast declining? In our country we are crying ourselves hoarse that our cultural standard, the moral standard of the nation is going down. What is the cause of it? This is another basic question. I would concentrate mainly on these two questions. After that, time permitting, I could discuss a bit about how to try to solve these questions.

In the first place, although this country has been independent politically, we should keep in mind that the talk of the 'country', or of the 'country's interest'—whoever may be talking it—they are concealing a truth from themselves and from the people. The truth is that the country is not an indivisible whole today. Independent of our wishes—whether we want it or not, we like it or not—this society is class-divided, following the inexorable law of history. On the one side there is the owning class who own the means of production and wealth, who are appropriating all trade and commerce. On the other side there are the have-nots, those who sell labour, who are not the owners. It may not be to one's liking but one cannot simply brush off this social reality, invoking one's fanciful ideas. That will invite trouble and it is this trouble in which the country has been caught. We are simply suppressing this reality from ourselves as well as from the people, using such rhetorics as the 'country's interest', 'national planning', 'national uplift', and all that. We have not allowed the people to grasp the implications of all this. The question has not been put across in a forthright manner—no. When the Leftist leaders address people, write on these issues or participate in debates on, say, 'national planning', they never attempt to emphasize clearly in their daily exercises that any kind of 'planning' or 'national planning' in a class-divided society cannot be a planning free from a class interest. Either it is the interest of the capitalist class that goes with the label of the

'national interest', or it is the true 'national interest' representing the interest of the toiling people. If one is rash to deny this reality, he is simply deceiving himself—if he is an honest soul; it's a different matter if he is dishonest. The honest not only deceive themselves, they deceive the people; and the people of this country are being deceived this way.

So, I want to put the point in clear terms to you that the economic system and the state structure prevailing in our country today are capitalist economic system and capitalist state structure—no amount of rhetorics can succeed in hiding this truth. But, then, there are a few political parties here who claim to be Marxist-Leninists and all so often rend the air to pose themselves as diehard revolutionaries who but try to conceal this truth with all rhetorics and so-called analyses. In any case, I am not attempting to go into the political analyses and conduct of these parties, since it will not be possible to do that within the span of this discussion. We have discussed these in detail on many occasions and in many of our articles earlier. I shall attempt to discuss here in particular the character of the capitalist economic and political system that exists in this country today. I consider it essential at the same time that to comprehend correctly the problems of this capitalist economic and political system we are required to understand the character of the present-day capitalist world.

The capitalist world is plunged in an extremely acute crisis today and this is not an ordinary crisis. The capitalist crisis before the Second World War was of a different kind. Crisis has been there since long, and since the beginning of the 20th Century or since capitalism developed into imperialism it has been seized with crisis, but the crisis facing world capitalism-imperialism after the Second World War is of an entirely different nature. It differs from the earlier crisis in that despite all the crises of the pre-Second World War period including the world-wide depression of 1930-32, the world capitalist market enjoyed a relative stability. To understand what it means one has to realise that the capitalist world, the capitalist society and its production system are based on the law of market economy. The entire structure of the capitalist economy stands on demand-supply relation. Taking the needs of

the people into account and planning production and distribution on that basis—such is never the character of the capitalist economy. The pillars of the capitalist economy are demand-and-supply, people's purchasing power and earning of maximum profits. These are, in simpler terms, the basis of the capitalist system. That is, without stability of market the capitalist economy totters. Previous to the Second World War the capitalist world enjoyed a relative stability all along, despite its host of crises and depressions. But this crisis, following the Second World War, is a daily, hourly feature. The law of relative stability of the capitalist market of the earlier period is no longer operative. That law has disappeared. The world capitalist market no longer remains in that stage. Because of this, the capitalist economy anywhere in the world in the present era has stepped into a new world situation. Since the countries of Europe and America could develop along the capitalist course in the period of industrial revolution till the last quarter of the 19th Century, then if we take to planning why will not the capitalist economy of our country, too—this relatively backward economy—develop today in big strides, following the same process, in same pace and being guided by the same ideology as in the case of capitalist development of the industrial revolution of those countries in that era? To get an answer to this question the present world capitalist market and the international situation have to be kept in view. We, will be able to realize then why in our country crisis is chasing planning. We have taken recourse to planning but our plans are always associated with a shadow of crisis. Steps are being planned, on the one hand, to create employment opportunities for the people, while, on the other, existing industries are closing down—the wheels cannot be kept running. Within the structure of the present capitalist system we cannot undertake radical land reforms. If attempts are made to use technology and modernize and mechanise agriculture, then the surplus labour which will be created in a single stroke in the countryside will throng the cities. The army of the unemployed will simply run over the cities. The rules of the capitalist

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state can hardly afford to run that risk, because there are not the necessary plans for industrialization to absorb that surplus labour. In the present capitalist structure it is not possible to ensure that pace of industrial development by any means.

Of course, the rulers are implementing a few plans—for, a Government has to. But this implementation is suffering at every stage for two reasons. One is that the erstwhile relative stability of the world capitalist market is no longer there. Besides, competition has turned extreme. On the one hand, there is competition with the western imperialist countries. Think of the circumstances in which the traditional capitalist-imperialist countries developed. At that time the rest of the world was their colony. They grew and developed on the arena of a world wide capitalist market, dividing it among themselves. And what is the situation of the relatively backward capitalist countries like ours? On the one hand, there is the competition with the western imperialist countries over the market. On the other, all the newly resurgent independent nationalist countries are trying to develop themselves, each trying to build up its economy in the capitalist pattern. With the emergence of the socialist world parallel to the capitalist world a very large slice of the market went out of the hands of the capitalist-imperialists. In the remaining parts there are thousands of competitors. The backward countries are trying to present a united face in their competition with the western capitalist-imperialist countries. Again, there is rivalry among themselves, they are in tussle with each other. The big brother among them—one that is economically a bit consolidated—is trying to keep others under foot. He is trying to invest capital in the market of others and to increase his exports to those markets, reducing the latter into importing countries more or less. This is the point of conflict. This is one aspect—this antagonism, conflict and crisis of the world capitalist market.

On the other, what is the scene inside the country? Unemployment has assumed a staggering dimension. Labours are ill-paid. 75% of the people, who are peasants, have work for less than three months a year.

This huge population in the countryside has practically no purchasing power—nothing. But in the capitalist economy nothing is to be produced that cannot be sold at a marginal profit at least. The capitalists do not produce what cannot be sold at a profit. They would rather produce less and sell this product at a higher price to a fewer people to earn maximum profit. As a result, scarcity is inevitable in countries like ours. Here production is made as per the basic law of the capitalist economy. You may have noticed that the internal market of our country is shrinking everyday. We cannot take clothing materials within the reach of the masses of our people—the women of poor peasants in particular. The point is we have failed to provide every person of the land with a piece of cloth to cover his body. But millions of bales of cloth which our workers produce with hard labour find their way to foreign markets. They make a plea of foreign currency and so argue that export had to be increased. Because, for the industrial development the country has had to import machineries from abroad. This is another big hoax of theirs. There is some need for the machineries, but there is another side to it. The fact is that if there is no access to the foreign market the industrial goods will get piled up here. Within the country practically there are no buyers. How many people have the capacity to buy goods at the prices charged here? Not that there are no buyers, but that there are no buyers who can afford to buy at the exorbitant prices charged. In other words, incomes of the people are so meagre compared to the rising prices of commodities that their purchasing power is continuously falling down. Ill-paid workers, a vast army of unemployed and seventyfive per cent of the rural population without purchasing power—such is the situation here. How can economic development take place under such conditions? Can it be effected by shouting on 'planning'. This is how the entire economy of the country has been caught in a mesh of crisis.

One more thing I wish to tell you here. And I wish to point it out to many economists as well. Many people, whatever the reason, do not want to admit it. However, this is my firm opinion, so I am placing it for you to consider. It is

argued that since our country is relatively backward so no trend of fascization and militarization of industry can develop here. But, I consider, even though it is a relatively backward capitalist country, precisely these trends have begun to manifest. There is a serious economic factor behind the demand to increase the military budget and also the fact that National Emergency still continues. The principal reason is that we cannot produce every kind of quality steel in the steel plants set up under whatever industrial planning has been made. Consequently, whereas, we have to import different types of quality steel to meet our requirements, much of the steel produced in these steel plants have to be sold in external markets. Because, what use will all this steel produced here find in the internal market? People cannot eat up steel! To consume this steel, a call for increase in steel production will not do. When will this steel find its use unless there is concomitant rapid growth of different sectors of consumer goods industry and the various light industries?

Because of the crisis in the external market, an artificial stimulation of the internal market has become necessary for consumption of the steel being produced. But consume it where? The internal market is shrinking in and the external market is blocked. The steel plants will close down, production will stop and products will get stockpiled in a day—so critical is the situation. The State has, therefore, to step in and itself be both the producer and the purchaser of this kind of production to effect an artificial stimulation of the internal market. This is why the demand is being raised for expansion of the defence industry—no matter whether the masses have two square meals or not. So, in the present situation of India where crisis has gripped both the external and internal markets, expansion of the defence industry and military constructions are a must to keep up the trend of industrialisation. Thus, with its base in deficit financing and generating inflation, the State is becoming the purchaser of steel and a host of essential products for Defence. It is the specific economic necessity to free the capitalist economy of the country from the crises of a internal and external markets which

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is largely acting behind the attitude which proclaims that 'we must strengthen our Defence'. But they cannot spell it out to the people. So is afoot the political conspiracy with all its cry of national emergency like "the country is in danger and threatened with foreign aggression", "alien powers are ganging up to over-run India, so we have to bend all energy for our Defence". But we ought to realise that the real cause behind all this lies in economy.

It is that our economy is a crisis-ridden capitalist economy. The capitalist class is trying to tide over this crisis to an extent through recourse to militarization. The fact of Emergency and DIR continuing even now corroborates this point of view of mine. People of all walks of life and all the Opposition parties have repeatedly demanded lifting of Emergency. Why is not then Emergency being lifted and DIR revoked? The northern frontiers are quiet for the last four years. The state of war with Pakistan has also ceased. And the Tashkent Treaty has been signed. To understand the political, economic and social implications of why Emergency and DIR are not being revoked despite all this and in spite of the repeated united demands of all the Opposition parties, we are to realise the significance of what I discussed just a while ago, although in brief.

This reveals the true character of the 'five-year plans' of our so-called socialist society—the real significance of 'national plans', the true colours of their inside. While raising our voice over want of food, denial of civil liberty and all the burning problems and while launching movements on these issues we should have a very clear perception of the prevailing economic situation and the character of the ruling class of India.

I wish to discuss here another point. When this country was being swept by waves of revolutionary upsurge following the Second World War it was stabbed in the back by the leaders of the political parties acting as agents of the Tatas and Birlas along with the British imperialists. At a time when this revolutionary movement was in its acme, very dexterously they duped us with an intoxicant called 'freedom'. The bourgeoisie—the capitalist class—usurped the fruits of independence.

We danced in joy that we had won independence. I don't mean to say that the country has not been independent. But I say that the country has been independent politically. But, then, we did not aspire after 'national' independence only. We also wanted emancipation of the toiling people, true democratic rights of the people established—their right to live—in a word. Because, at that stage, too, we had the realization that this nation in struggle against an alien rule was not an indivisible whole—in fact, by then it had become divided into two mutually antagonistic classes. On the one side there was the owning class; on the other there were workers, peasants, and all other sections of the toiling people. Only liars and hypocrites could argue that when independence would come it would be an independence enjoyed by both the sides and together they would build up the country. The truth is that if independence came and its fruits went into the hands of the owners, once more the workers would have to wage their struggle for emancipation. They fought against the British imperialists for the freedom of the country, but the fruits went into the hands of the owners. So, once more now, the workers and all sections of the toiling masses will have to fight for their emancipation. Had the fruits of independence come into the hands of the workers, the toiling people would have won emancipation in a single battle for freedom. This freedom struggle had two aspects combined in it—independence of the country and the emancipation of the people. Independence has been attained, but not emancipation. Treachery has been committed against the people, whereas the owning class has been seated in power. Now, this system of private ownership, this capitalist system is driving the country to two positions in a planned way. One is that with attainment of independence from the clutches of imperialists we had to adopt an anti-imperialist role for a period—'we' means the national bourgeoisie. The agents of the capitalists—those political leaders—had to maintain this role in their own interest. Their argument was that they had to come to bargaining terms with the imperialists for the sake of economic development of the country. And in this bargaining game they expected to reap dividends from both the imperialist and the socialist camps.

Some people supported this role, maintaining that it was a clever manoeuvre to do so and that Jawaharlal Nehru was a very wise leader and we needed statesmen like him. I should say: Yes, quite an intelligent manoeuvre on their part. But, think, for whom is this intelligent manoeuvre meant—for the common people, or for the Tatas and the Birlas? Here comes the moot question. The manoeuvre is intelligent and it is yielding result. But who gained out of it? The masses of the people or the capitalist owners? Is not the rule of the capitalists getting consolidated, or is the cause of the people's emancipation advancing fast? Or, is not this cause falling far behind? The more the bourgeoisie is concentrating power in its hands, the more it is robbing the people of their democratic rights. They are ruling according to what suits their interest. They are taking away individual liberty, civil liberty, etc., not permitting the people to retain them. They are autocratic with use of power, whereas there is no solution to these basic problems of food, clothing, shelter hygiene and education. The emancipation of the workers from capitalist exploitation remains a far cry. I already told you that so many issues are involved, but even so I cannot go into each of them here. Take, for instance, the question of nationalisation of industries in a capitalist state. What does it signify? Does it mean socialism? Is it a step towards emancipation of the workers? Do measures as this one have anything to do with socialism? I want to give them a straightforward reply: No. Because, it is State monopoly capitalism, which is the rock-bottom foundation of fascism that has developed through nationalisation of industries in the capitalist state. The fact is that nationalisation of industries is laying the foundation of fascism in this country. It is not certainly paving the way for socialism although it goes with the label of socialism.

The essence of socialism is altogether different. It concerns the basic motive force of production—in socialism it undergoes a radical change. The principle underlying the concept of law and order—the moral background itself—undergoes a radical change. As against this, the structure of law and

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order in this country is still carrying its imperialist heritage even today. There is hardly any antagonism between the two. Take a closer look and you will see that let alone repeal the repressive laws of the period of British rule even more draconian laws have been enacted by the present rulers. This is because they feel that those British laws are not enough now. They are treading the same course and enacting every new law—more repressive and more oppressive—and all this in the name of the security of the nation. For this I raised the question right at the beginning of my discussion—you talk of nation but 'nation' in whose interest? Is it the interest of the Tatas or the Birlas, or is it in the interest of millions of working people of the land? If this talk of nation was in the interest of the working people then there could be no question of imposing draconian laws on them in the name of national security. Rather, these ought to have been enforced on the blackmarketeers, the anti-social elements, the Tatas and Birlas, and the imperialist agents. But exactly the opposite is being enacted. They are applying these laws as punitive measures to suppress the legitimate democratic mass movements. Who is disturbing law and order? The people themselves—if you believe them. We are to believe them that the people who constitute the nation are themselves endangering the law and order situation. Then this nation, in their logic, is not the nation of the people; it is the nation of the Tatas and Birlas. The people of the country who suffer under the grinding wheels of the oppressive capitalist rule cannot obey all their life the dictates of law and order in the interest of the 'nation' of the Tatas and Birlas. They bear it only as a burden to be endured for some time—out of fear, while panting for breath, and without the least of willingness to obey. But, as it becomes unbearable, they burst forth in discontent, they try to disown it, they try to demolish it. This is but quite natural. It is bound to happen like that again and again; and this is exactly what is happening in the country. People have fought before, they are fighting now, they will fight in future too. At times this struggle grows intense, it bursts forth like an explosive. At other times

this struggle goes on at a rather slow pace; but the struggle is on, it will go on.

However, two questions always confront the struggle. One is the question of ideology with which to inspire the democratic mass movements over the issues of the day-to-day problems and some immediate demands in order that a clear political objective may gradually emerge before the fighting spirit of the mass movements. The other question concerns the different aspects of organisational problems which appear at the various levels while the struggle is being conducted. We are not being able to resolve these questions that confront our movements every time. To resolve them in future we need to clear up, in the first place, political outlook which is getting muddled more and more. Besides, the basic question over which our political consciousness gets confused is that instead of helping to grow and develop class consciousness in this class-divided society almost all the leaders are chewing the cud of 'national interest', 'national planning' and 'national uplift'. So we should have a very clear understanding about all this talk of 'national interest', 'national planning', etc. The political leaders should also be asked, particularly those claiming to be Marxist-Leninists, which class interest they mean—planning of which and uplift of which class they mean when they talk of 'national interest', 'national planning' and 'national uplift'. If their object is to inculcate an anti-capitalist revolutionary consciousness among the people then why are they apathetic to propagating the working class ideology and the working class objective during each and every democratic mass movement? However, it hardly matters what I may say about them, because they are the heroes—the 'national leaders'. Nobody among them poses himself as a class leader. They are simply afraid to do it—because after all, they have to win elections. For that they need the votes of the middle class, the votes of the upper middle class and the votes of the rich, too. They need the votes of all sections. But the votes of all will not come to them if they do not have ties with all. In contrast, class battle creates obstacles on the way of electioneering. So, consciously or unconsciously poll interest is acting as the biggest political factor in the conduct and

behaviour of these leaders. The people want to fight and they are fighting too but the very way these struggles are being conducted by these leaders makes it clear, when analysed, that the basic political outlook behind these struggles is essentially agitational in character. It may appear unpalatable, but the fact is that these mass movements remain basically agitational; these are languishing in the stage of election-oriented movements. So, all these talks of theirs for fight or struggle simply aim at raising the tempo of electioneering. Whereas, the chief goal of these struggles ought to have been acquiring the people's emancipation and the movements should have aimed at accelerating this process, educating the people in course of the movements and ultimately resolving the question of people's emancipation by rallying them gradually under the banner of movements. Thereby, either we win over people's emancipation peacefully, if the capitalists will give up their rule for the people to step in; or, if they resist, there will remain no other course than to resolve the question by the revolutionary means. We should keep in mind that we want emancipation of mankind. However much painstaking it may be, we have to win emancipation of humanity. That task of emancipation still remains to be realized, emancipation of the working people is yet to be achieved—the workers are yet to be freed from the capitalist exploitation.

But these leaders pose themselves as 'national leaders'. They never point it out to the people that these plans are all plans of the ruling capitalist class. These leaders confine themselves to pointing out where the plan is faulty and by, how much. My point is that this approach is rather ill-conceived. Because the whole motive behind all these plans is further consolidation of capitalism and freeing capitalism from its crisis. Wherever capitalism is seized with crises, means have to be devised to tide over the crises and win a fresh lease of life for it. Such being the case, why do people have to bother about how to effect some alteration here and there, or what suggestions should be advanced to effect alterations? It is not their concern; it is the headache of those who represent the class in power and defend that class interest.

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Your task is to make it clear to the people that the programme of face-lift of the capitalist order is not the sole object of all these plans. These plans are actually designed to undermine the country, to ruin the people of the country—this is a conspiracy to undermine the interest of the people and consolidate the interest of the capitalist rulers. This conspiracy is going on under the name of 'national interest' and 'patriotism'. If patriotism does not mean love for the people and defending the interest of the people then it is not true patriotism. The patriotism which professes subservience to the capitalist rulers is not true patriotism, it is unabashed slavery to monopoly capitalism and the system of private ownership. This slavery is being practised today in the country. When we talk of safeguarding the 'national interest', thereby, consciously or unconsciously, we resort to that slavery in most cases.

This question has to be resolved, therefore, in a forthright manner. We should not forget that although the country has been independent politically but a capitalist system and a capitalist state structure with a pro-capitalist Government have been set up here. Therefore, anti-capitalist struggle for people's emancipation is our base political line to realise our fundamental political objective. We would have won this emancipation through our independence movement, but we failed to accomplish it because of the absence of the correct leadership. The question of leadership is, therefore, another important point to be resolved in course of democratic mass movement. I wish to discuss this question before I conclude.

There have been mass movements in the past in this country. Recently also, there has been a movement which is indeed unprecedented in our history; in fact, unprecedented in the history of mass struggles. Illness prevented me from taking part in this movement personally. I was away from here for medical treatment. But I did not miss to watch the entire movement. I am fully conversant with the entire course of this movement—all that has happened—because my party is a constituent of this movement. You know that our party has been involved in it all along. That is why I have full knowledge of it, I know every aspect

of it. I could draw one lesson from all this. What is it?

I do not know if you remember it. Many of you may have heard me speak about it on earlier occasions. I said it last year on 24th April on this occasion. In the political circles it was a common observation then that the people were apathetic to movements, that there was no popular mood for movements. The mood was for elections alone. I pointed out that it was wrong to say so. People would again take to the course of struggle and nobody knew when they would burst forth again in discontent. Don't say that the people are apathetic to struggles. The people placed their trust in the leadership and fought many a time. They suffered, they sacrificed their lives. They are yet to overcome the immensity of sufferings of the 1959 food movement; that spell continues. You are interpreting it as people's reluctance to fight. But again, when suffering will cross the limit of tolerance, these people will burst forth in discontent. But that same question will persist then, too. The people will burst forth in discontent, they will rally for struggle, they will be coming forward to sacrifice their lives, they will offer themselves, baring their chests, for the police to shower all the bullets on them. This will happen again. But this leadership is struck by paralysis—it is incapacitated like a patient who has suffered thrombosis. This leadership is an onlooker who likes to look on at the agitation. It does not know really how to organise the people who come out to rally, how to organise them into a well-knit army so that a protracted and disciplined battle can be fought, a militant struggle can be waged and that this struggle does not end up in a sporadic outburst. We cannot afford to fritter away our energy without any purpose; nothing should be done in a haphazard manner. If need be, we will retreat. But when we decide to strike, we had to strike organizedly which the military or the police will not be able to put down easily.

On the other, what becomes the consequences of spontaneous agitational outbursts? So long it has some momentum, this sort of agitational movements continue for a period. Then, after a lapse of time, these die down automatically. At this point, we—the so-called leaders—start arguing that

nothing now remains of the movement; we cannot go any further, so an honourable settlement is needed to save our face. And this agitational outburst is to be hailed with applause, people who fought are to be patted on their back and be cheered up with cries of 'bravo'. Whereas, the sufferings are always for people to bear. The attitude of the leaders is that if the battle is won, all the better. If it is lost and the demands are not realised, it is not so much of a loss. Because, even if the people get frustrated a bit they definitely become anti-Congress and their discontent against administration becomes stronger. And this discontent is to be cashed in on the elections. So the leaders exhort the people to raise the tempo of agitation. They boast of the number of people who rallied at their call, the number of those who died in the movement, how big was the battle, as if that sufficed all and that was all to be considered, and that was how a battle should be fought. This is how they ask the people to fight battles for them to cash in on ballot boxes at the elections. My question is: Is this how leadership is to be provided to the people? But this is exactly what is happening in this country again and again. I am constrained to observe that this leadership is fond of only agitational speeches.

Its object is not to educate people, it aims at winning cheap applause. When the task is to educate the people on organisation, on ideology, on the strategy and tactics of movement—how to conduct the battle, when to advance and when to retreat—all this leadership does is to agitate to raise the tempo and win cheap applause, and then back-track. This is the character of the leadership. I chose to make this observation because in this land people always look for a leader and run after him. After all, this land has its age-old tradition of blindly following in the footsteps of the preceptor. Even today we are not free from this habit and practice—we are still the victim of this blind habit.

So, I consider the question of the character of leaders, the level of their political consciousness, dedication to the revolutionary cause and personal conduct is all so important. In most cases, the people try to follow the traits of all character of the leader and their political standard. So, unless the

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leaders are able to free themselves from careerism and opportunism of all sorts the masses cannot develop their revolutionary character, political consciousness and sense of discipline. In the interest of strengthening the leadership of mass movements, therefore, I consider it essential that there should be strong criticism of these traits of careerism and opportunism manifest in many of the leaders.

We have to realise that all the parties which have been leading mass movements all these years in our country are basically election-oriented. Whether they move under the signboard of Marxism-Leninism, or wave the banner of the so-called Left or the so-called Right communism—whatever variants of 'ism' may they profess—they are essentially election-oriented parties. In the ULF committee, while organising movements, we emphasised repeatedly that we should build people's committees as people's own instruments of struggle and shape them out as the revolutionary organisation of mass movements; but these parties always insisted on setting up committees with the constituent parties of the United Left Front. They wanted the ULF committee at various levels with representatives from the different constituent parties. But such ULF committees cannot substitute the task of the people's committees. People's committees have to be formed by including persons from among the participants in the movements at different levels who have been tested in these movements in order that an organic link may be established between the leadership and those drawn into the fold of the movements. On the other, if ULF committees are formed with only representatives from different parties then these committees will have no other role than to issue statements to the Press and give some directions to the people. In that case it becomes that if the people are willing to fight they will rally in the streets, and the leaders, as soon as they get this news, will drive to the spot and if situation demanded will start delivering speeches. Thus, we, the leaders, do not know who are rallying in the streets and who are fighting; or where from are they all coming and where to are they going back. The leaders do not feel it necessary to have all this knowledge. Their attitude is that those people hail from

the streets—they gather in the streets and ultimately disappear in the streets. This is enough for their purpose. Why is it enough for them? Because, the sufferings to which the people are put in this whole course cannot but excite their disaffection towards the Congress, engendering hatred. Not that they do not criticise the leadership when onslaughts come on them. But the attitude of the leaders is that even if the people are critical or whatever else the people may do, the people remain, after all, basically anti-Congress. So, who else, other than the leaders, can they vote for at the polls? What does it matter if the people are bit critical of the leadership? These are the wily guys who are in the limelight of the political arena and who crowd in the leadership.

What I am trying to emphasise is that our struggle needs an ideology and we need proper organisational planning. Movement cannot be developed out of nothing; we cannot build up an organisation in void. There must be an ideology to guide. But what ideology have these Left parties held aloft? What is it other than a charter of day-to-day demands for food, clothing, education and all that? The Congress on its part, is trying to implant an ideology among the people which is national jingoism. They are passing it as patriotism. Some of the Leftists, on their part, are clamouring for people's democracy and some others are shouting for a vague sort of socialism. But what is this socialism to be exact? Where does it differ from or is in conflict with national jingoism? How does it compare with patriotism or with nationalism and where are the two in conflict. These Leftists do not consider it a task to explain all this to the people. But if these issues are not made clear the purpose of the struggle itself will not be clear to the people. There will not be any clarity in the people's perception. As a result, the struggle becomes one like throwing stones in the dark. A discontent—sort of hatred residing in their mind acts as the driving force when they burst in resentment against anyone coming across as representing the administration. That is, however, inevitable. The people have borne the brunt all the time. They plunge into struggles as they feel it and whether the leaders guide them or not they strike back.

So, there ought to be a clear ideology to guide our movements. What is that ideology?

It is the ideology of socialism and proletarian internationalism. There cannot be socialism—true socialism—divorced from proletarian internationalism. Socialism divorced from proletarian internationalism is the worst type of opportunism—the worst opportunism, perhaps worse than national jingoism. But this brand of socialism, too, has its followers among our Leftist leaders who have no obligation to proletarian internationalism. Yes, they do not feel any obligation. They feel proud to claim themselves as nationalists. Still they talk of socialism. Where lies the danger? They do not themselves know the answer perhaps and the people have also been kept in the dark. I have been emphasising constantly that the people ought to have knowledge of all this. Those who talk of socialism must be proletarian internationalists, because the concept of scientific socialism cannot stand being divorced from proletarian internationalism. Other variants of socialism are either Fabian socialism or Nehru's brand of socialism, or Morarji's, or Bertrand Russell's, or else, Nasser's of Egypt—or some such variety. None of these can lead to establishment of scientific socialism anywhere. In fact, nowhere it has. What has been established instead is either capitalism or its worst form, fascism. Hitler and Mussolini's socialism had brought in fascism. They also raised socialist slogans but brought in fascism—national jingoism but no socialism. You should, therefore, grasp carefully that the socialist ideology and proletarian internationalism are inalienable. Wherever you may be finding socialism without obligation to proletarian internationalism, you should not fail to pinpoint the deception. That it is deception is beyond all shades of doubt, and there can be no compromise on that. You should develop the ability to detect this hoax and then you can do the screening—see who failed to pass the test, in the first place, from among the so-called Marxist-Leninists. Remember, verbal allegiance or lip-service cannot decide the issue. The question which comes up now is: Have these parties correctly applied the socialist methodology to make a scientific analysis of the Indian reality, the Indian social system? Have they successfully analysed the malaise of this Indian society, Indian nationalism and the

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moral degradation of this country? What is that malady? Crisis in ideology is the cause of malaise of cultural degeneration. In Khudiram's time, we know, in that period of freedom struggle the youths here were called the 'Flowers of Bengal'. Students of schools and colleges from almost every home gave up their career and took to the streets and joined the struggle for freedom. The gallows could not deter them, neither prison, nor repression. In every sphere in those days footprints of marching ahead were left—in culture, literature, science, arts, everything. Today we witness in every sphere unabashed attempts to curry favour for the capitalist owners—the ruling class. Unabashed subservience to ensure riskless progress. Steps must be so calculated that the progressive label remains intact and there be no risks to life, no risks of attracting punishment from the rulers. This is what these leaders are all after.

There comes the crisis—the crisis in ideology, the crisis in culture. This crisis has its foundation in the economic crisis I discussed earlier. The same is true for America. The teenager crisis over which there is so much of furore there is also a problem having its roots in the social system. The American society is lost in a mess today. It has lost its ideology—nationalism, patriotism and democratic ideals which leaders like Jefferson and Lincoln professed to inspire the American nation into a liberty-seeking people have become a privilege today. That personal liberty in the American society has been reduced to a privilege.

The point is that when one ideology is reduced to a privilege it loses its progressive and revolutionary character. Ideology is born in course of history through interaction of ideas and conflict and tussle between mutually antagonistic forces inside society, demolishing the old ideology and bringing in its place a new social system. But the new ideology of one day, in course of time, becomes an instrument in the hands of the vested interest. It gets reduced to a privilege for the vested interest. Being a privilege it

cannot inspire a nation or a people for anything noble. All it can do now is to create a band of slaves—a band of mercenaries.

In the literary field, in education, on the stage, among the students everywhere discipline has come to mean obeying the rules set down by the employers and dancing to their tune. The object of education has become one of securing a good position in Government services. Education has come to mean technical education in this system—how big a 'mistri' or how big an engineer one may become. One need not be concerned about how strong is one's humane sense of values, about one's understanding and knowledge of human history or how much of social consciousness has one acquired and the type of man one is. All these hardly matter. If one is an engineer who can turn nuts and bolts of machineries, one considers oneself highly educated, more so because if one draws quite a fat salary. This is the pattern of thinking ruling in society today and it is this which is wrecking the moral backbone of the people.

So, I was saying that there was a time when youths in this country would have been imprisoned or hanged if they talked of freedom struggle, patriotism or love for the motherland. Patriotism and nationalism were a progressive, revolutionary ideology in that period. But today bourgeois nationalism has become a privilege in the hands of the capitalist class. All who talk of nationalism today are actually using it as a smoke-screen for opportunism. In fact, service to the nation or service to the country has come to mean service to the employer—slavery and flattery of the master. Nothing like voluntary service exists today. But discipline, if it is not voluntary, has no meaning. The attitude of the employer is that he is paying wages or salaries and so all are his wage slaves and have to obey his regulations, otherwise they need to be removed from service. It means that others are obeying rules and regulations for fear of losing employment. Can this be called discipline? Surely not. Discipline

has only one meaning—it is voluntary submission and is based on self-respect. Our national character has almost lost this trait of voluntary discipline. How can one expect it really? The ideology which imparted this sense of discipline one day has become today a privilege for the capitalist owners, the ruling class.

We need a new ideology. This society is pregnant with the possibility of emergence of a new ideology. What is that? What it is that can break the chain of dead-weights in this society? It is the ideology of scientific socialism, proletarian internationalism, proletarian revolutionary ideology, that is the ideology of anti capitalist socialist revolution. If we can inspire and imbue our people with this then we are sure to witness again a ferment in the country. The spirit of Khudiram will rekindle our people, our student community, but not until the new ideology comes in. This has to be borne in mind. Finally I have to sound a note of caution. Don't lend uncritical support to any and every movement. When a movement starts everybody has to join hands. People must fight, even if the line may not be correct. Everyone has to be in the struggle. But be alert and watchful. Try to understand who is going to reap dividends. It is we, the common people like you and me, who are in the struggle. However, the dividends are being reaped by some political touts—some career-seekers in elections while the people are making sacrifices. If we view these movements as a prelude to development of a mighty struggle for the emancipation of the masses, we should take into consideration the organisational and ideological aspects to prepare the masses for this battle of emancipation on the edifice of the correct ideology and higher proletarian culture. With these words I conclude.

Long Live Revolution!

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