

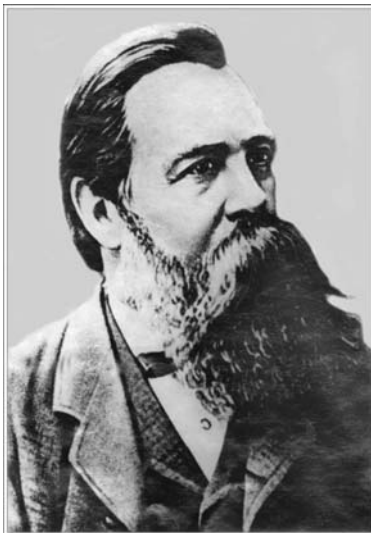
Proletarian Era

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Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA
Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

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REMEMBERING THE GREAT LEADERS OF THE PROLETARIAT



28 NOVEMBER, 1820 — 5 AUGUST, 1895

“It is the essence of bourgeois socialism to want to maintain the basis of all the evils of present-day society and at the same time to want to abolish the evils themselves.

...Whoever declares that the capitalist mode of production, the ‘iron laws’ of present-day bourgeois society, are inviolable, and yet at the same time would like to abolish their unpleasant but necessary consequences, has no other recourse but to deliver moral sermons to the capitalists, moral sermons whose emotional effects immediately evaporate under the influence of private interest and, if necessary, of competition.

...The gospel of harmony between capital and labour has been preached for almost fifty years now, and bourgeois philanthropy has expended large sums of money to prove this harmony by building model institutions; yet, ... we are today exactly where we were fifty years ago.”

— Engels : *The Housing Question*



5 AUGUST, 1923 — 5 AUGUST, 1976

“Whose interest do you mean when talking of ‘the interest of the country’? You assert, law and order is necessary in the interest of the country. Should the interest of the country be reckoned to the exclusion of the vast masses, it comes to mean either just about a patch of earth and water, or straightaway the interest of the owner class. ... On the other hand, if the country means the vast masses of people then law and order in the interest of the country cannot run counter to people’s interest, it just cannot deceive people, cannot be brutal in dealing with them, nor crush their legitimate movements, it cannot assert that to safeguard the owners’ interest is to serve the interest of the country itself, nor can it claim that conceding to the undue demands of the owners is to uphold law of the land and its provisions. The pleas of those who cry hoarse over law and order turns out in the final instance to be shameless advocacy for the owners’ interest ... in the name of the country’s interest.”

Shibdas Ghosh : *Independence on 15 August and the question of people’s emancipation*

On preserving unity in and establishing revolutionary leadership on workers' movement

(On the occasion of the 28th memorial day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our most beloved leader, teacher and guide, founder General Secretary of the SUCI and a foremost Marxist thinker of the era, we are publishing the English translation of his speech delivered on 18th March, 1974 at the delegate session of the Conference of Steel Workers' Co-ordination Committee at the Steel City of Durgapur.

In this speech, Comrade Ghosh dwelt on the various problems of trade union movement of India particularly the reasons for recurring splits in the working class movement, the imperativeness to maintain unity despite political and ideological differences among the parties, the revolutionary significance of preserving unity in the united movement and the higher moral, ethical and cultural standard required of the cadres of revolutionary mass movement and working class struggle. Even though 30 years have rolled by, the guideline provided and revolutionary teaching conveyed in the speech illumine the path even today.

Any error, inadequacy or faulty expression in the translation is the sole responsibility of the editorial board of Proletarian Era. — Editor, Proletarian Era)

Comrade President and Friends,

In this delegate session of the workers-employees starting here today, I will deal briefly with the present state of workers' movement in our country, and then discuss what ought to be the outlook guiding the trade union organization and the method of work in our country, keeping in view what should be your style of work and how you should conduct your political propaganda to help you achieve your task.

Disruption of unity in Indian trade union movement

First of all, workers' movement of India has a long history. Many big organizations and outfits have long grown in this country under the leadership of both the rightist and the so-called revolutionary forces. Ups and downs being natural in movements — workers' struggle in this country sometimes made bold strides ahead, sometimes went two steps back. What is to be noted is that after so many battles spanning over such a long period, what has been the general characteristic feature of the workers' movement. Workers' movement effectively began in this country in 1920. Since then innumerable strikes were organized. In every industry — by industry I do not mean a factory — be it engineering, steel, port and dock, railways, general textile, jute, sugar, mill or a small scale industry — trade unions, big or small, have been in existence and that too for long.

It is not that these unions have been there for name's sake, serving no particular purpose. That the unions exist means that there are struggles, sometimes of the other, on various demands and many such struggles had indeed been conducted. Despite political

differences, the workers have to build up trade union movements, which fall in the category of democratic movement, to fight against the injustice to and oppression on them and centring round their legitimate demands. In this exploitative system, these demands cannot be achieved without struggle. In this capitalist system, the workers have no other means but to develop trade union movement in order to extract anything from the owners or the management. Because, if the workers remain unorganized, the owners flout even the rules and regulations framed by

much influence or effective a role. So you see, the AITUC suffered a split in 1930-31 due to the confusions created by the protagonists of ultra-left politics, and B.T. Ranadive and others formed a new organization called Red Trade Union.

There have been repeated attempts to forge unity among the workers. Everyone said that he wanted unity. But if you ask me, I strongly feel that whatever may be the ideological differences, from the point of view of what ought to be, from the point of view of a model and an ideal one there should be a

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themselves — all these are known to you. Yet, at all India level, the very unity of the trade unions, by means of which we develop democratic mass movements, could not be preserved. Look at the central trade unions; they are split into so many divisions. But during the period of freedom movement and till the partition of the country or in other words till achievement of political freedom through partition, AITUC was the only central trade union. It was because of disruptive activities that there had been a rupture in it in 1930. It was 1930-31 during which this rupture finally came about. M.N. Roy's party once set up a separate organization, namely Federation of Labour. But it had not

single platform or forum of the workers for conducting democratic battles. It would have been ideal if everyone strived for that. My point is: let the political parties win over the workers. Let them convince the workers ideologically and draw to their sides. But the workers have to be ideologically won over — not made to toe their lines by use of force or compelled by coercion to accept their view. It should not be done by engineering "cliques" within the committees or forcibly capturing such committees. My view is, if any political party could win over the workers through its political ideology and thereby control the trade union through securing majority, it is welcome to do so. But

failure to win a person through ideological persuasion does not justify one's being enraged on that count and forming a separate trade union. Yet precisely in this way splits had repeatedly occurred and are still occurring. Imposing one's viewpoint, majority, politics or authority over others is tantamount to application of brute force. This cannot be allowed.

Cause of split in unity

Comrades, this is a serious problem. It is inseparably linked with the character and outlook of the political parties who provide leadership to the working class movement. Yesterday only, (in the address during the Open Session) I had mentioned that I do not find any reason for the recurring incidents of splits and disruption of unity in the trade union movements. Is there any plausible reason for causing a fissure in the instrument for the workers' day to day struggle, the united platform of democratic movement, the instrument, or forum for democratic battle as because there are political and ideological differences? I think there is no earthly reason for it. There is no reason for bringing division in the democratic platform or forum because of differences in political ideology. Such is not warranted for establishing party leadership, that is revolutionary leadership. Those who claim it to be so have never in any country accomplished revolution. Rather, everywhere, they have opposed revolution, fomented factionalism and created confusion among the workers. Those who have accomplished revolution have always striven utmost to preserve broader unity of the workers in the united platform of struggle based on a common minimum programme. In united democratic movement, it is very easy to arrive at an agreed minimum programme. There might be minor differences of opinion among the political parties over the various legitimate demands required to be raised on behalf of the people. But such differences are not wholly of fundamental nature. Therefore, that should not pose any problem in forging unity. An agreed common programme, a charter of demands

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can be worked out by the parties believing in different ideologies — may be not by all parties but surely the majority. Then why will unity not be achieved? And why shall we not be able to maintain that unity? Is it because the organization has to be built up under the leadership of the revolutionary party? No, for that purpose, there is no need to drive a wedge into the unity. On the contrary, for that, unity is a must. The more we can keep the workers united, the less will the non-revolutionary or the non-working class parties get scope of creating separate platforms to spread confusion among the workers — a thing they always indulge in.

If the workers work together on a common platform they will get the opportunity to judge by comparison the planning process, thoughts and ideas, methods of guiding the struggle as well as the conduct, habit, taste, culture and character of the cadres and leaders of different parties. This does ease and hasten the process of development of the party as well as establishment of revolutionary leadership over the organization. So, no genuine revolutionary party in order to establish its leadership over the workers' organization, wants to cleave a democratic platform, forum or union of the workers. Nor do we. Many might ask then why is it recurring over and again? To understand that, one must know as to why is it happening. It occurs on account of two reasons that we have referred to earlier no matter whether one admits the same or not.

It so happens that a party claiming itself to be revolutionary thinks that unless it has total control over the leadership of the organization, the reactionaries will be at the helm or that no united movement with such forces can be built up. Therefore it is found that if such party remains within the organization a divide is wedged as a sequel to this narrow outlook and fanaticism as was the case in 1930 when the party calling itself the Communist Party of India — now disintegrated into three factions — caused the split. It disrupted the unity within AITUC by forming Red Trade Union, a separate outfit with B.T. Ranadive as the leader. On the other hand, a party coming into the leadership of the union for whatsoever reason at one time, breaks the unity through its fascist like conduct by giving no chance to

others to express their views, imposing its views over others and fostering cliques and coteries. That party has not acquired the habit of moving unitedly, despite differences, on the basis of an agreed programme and maintaining unity while conducting ideological struggle. Once such a party grabs power by hook or by crook or usurps leadership of the union, it uses brute force to suppress others. This too is indicative of non-revolutionary petty-bourgeois outlook.

Revolutionary party tries utmost to preserve unity

Had it been a genuine revolutionary party, it would have realized that it is the party itself who needs most to preserve unity. More is maintained the unity among the workers and the better are they organized unitedly, more intensified is their struggle. Simultaneously, the workers are also better poised to judge different parties not by what the parties profess but by observing the character, conduct, the style of work of the leaders and cadres. They also get a better opportunity to judge the views, ideologies, and the strategy and tactics resorted to by the parties while conducting the struggle. That is why, a revolutionary party never wants to break unity while in the democratic movement. It will spare no efforts to preserve unity — whether it succeeds in that or not. Because, despite its desire, it may not be able to maintain unity in all conditions. Everything does not depend on its wish. If the forces working against unity, the various forces and the environment that are opposed to it, dominate in the balance of power and if that dominant power acts to disrupt and not preserve unity, then unity cannot be maintained everywhere notwithstanding all-out sincere efforts on the part of the revolutionaries. Because of this, it is a historical fact that there had been repeated ruptures in unity; rather ruptures were brought about. So it is evident that because of this very outlook of the leading parties in the working class movement, unity could not be preserved. Divisions have occurred time and again.

Such divisions have not stemmed from the differences in political ideology. Since the genuine revolutionary party which alone truly realizes the need of maintaining unity, does not command adequate strength in and

influence over the leadership of democratic movement or working class struggle in this country, splits in the labour movement have recurred again and again. It is only the revolutionary party with adequate strength and power that can keep all other forces united. It is a fact that the party that knows the correct objective process of preserving unity lacks the necessary strength uptil now, but on the other hand, the party which clamours for unity but in reality is itself a force of breaking unity, possesses much more strength. Because it is swollen with power which suppresses others by sheer force, it holds, "if I associate with the non-revolutionaries, I would loose my

worth examining and they should have been pressurized to speak out why and in the interest of what kind of revolution they have formed a separate union. What purpose would it serve? No doubt, they know very well that by this, the power of struggle of the workers will be weakened. The workers will be deprived of the opportunity to judge with ease all those parties from the platform of united struggle. From separate platforms the workers will isolatedly listen to their respective leaders and go on applauding them. This does not help to free the workers from confusion. It is impossible to glaringly expose the wrong politics of other parties or lay bare their falsehood by simply

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revolutionary character, my revolutionary image". Actually, it is no revolutionary party at all. In the name of revolution, behind revolutionary verbosity, what it cultivates is truism. That is why, I was saying that there had been disruptions in the revolutionary movements, working class movements because of parties like these, trends of these kinds. So, what ought to be your task?

Whatever I have known myself and have come to know after studying your document is that the split which has occurred here, the division that has been created, also have the same very reasons behind it. Right from the time we separately set up a union prior to formation of the united trade union, I have been keeping myself informed of the developments in Durgapur. Not that all details are known to me but I am aware of certain things. If someone alleges that a particular political outlook, or let me put it straight, the supporters and organizers of the SUCI are responsible for breaking unity, I cannot, on the basis of whatever I know, accept that. I cannot accept because such is not true. If it were true, then certainly it was an issue

criticizing from outside. Despite being untruth it is taken to be truth and thus goes on confusing the people for quite a long time. Otherwise, how could the Nazis and a vile fascist leader like Hitler befool the youth? Did Hitler's Nazism reflect truth? Or was it not an evil philosophy and a political ideology totally inimical to mankind? Yet not only the unsuspecting youth, even intellectuals were at a time quite befuddled by this. So, is it not that falsehood does score victory, even though temporarily? This is not an unknown thing. Because, it is not that people can at once grasp the truth when it is impressed upon them from outside. It is not that easy. It is extremely difficult to read in between the lines and search out the truth by rejecting the falsehood. So, the opportunity to closely observe and judge one another from the common platform, is one of the main benefits of united movement. When we talk of unity, we never mean unity without struggle. Within unity, there is relentless ideological struggle, even existence of differences. So when we speak of unity, we speak of struggle as well.

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Similarly, when we talk of conducting struggle against each other, we strive to forge unity as well. If we fail to do so, then the struggle becomes useless, meaningless. You all will have to have a thorough understanding of this particular aspect.

High-handedness of pseudo-lefts wrecked united movement

A particular party has not allowed you to open your mouth, express your opinion. Whenever there was dissent or criticism of its leadership, it resorted to politics of muscle power. By that, I do not mean that, if it finds another party gaining at its cost, or its influence declining, it should not confront politically or it should do nothing to expose erroneous views of others or that it should do nothing to point out the ridiculous character of others. Let it do that. Let it win over the workers through ideological, political campaign. No one can oppose that. But instead what is happening in reality is that it does not allow any dissenting voice to speak out — be it by taking recourse to slanderous propaganda or through character assassination or by means of physical assault. Anyhow, it would not allow the opponents to raise their head. If the unity has been broken and you have been compelled to form a separate union because of such an attitude of that particular party, then also it will be wrong on your part to limit yourselves to just fighting separately because unity is

do not declare this unequivocally, then that will be a grave mistake. You will surely make the workers aware of the reasons behind break of unity and call upon them to take initiative for removing the obstacles that stand in the way of forging unity. If the party holding leading position in the union has strength and majority support behind it, it will provide the leadership. No question about it. Why should I be angry if I do not possess necessary strength? How is it that I would be extremely angry if I fail to secure votes of the workers? But I must get the opportunity to express my opinion even if mine is a solitary voice. This is one of the preconditions for maintaining unity in the united movement. This is very essential as that solitary force cannot remain subjugated to others. Then why should he be there? Either he will engage himself in factionalism or indulge in clique and coteries. That is a completely different thing. All these from the other side would facilitate the process of destroying unity.

The revolutionaries, it is true, have to do this at times to wreck the enemy camp. But here I am in the workers' movement. Surely, I am not considering it to be the enemy camp. Where I have failed to cement unity, where the task is that of freeing the workers from a union led by the reactionaries — if I am compelled to work within such a union, then only the question of undertaking factional activities arises. But when I am engaged in developing united organized

after listening to my views and instead prefer to choose someone else, then he will provide the leadership. Under this very leadership, I shall support the common agreed programme. At the same time, I will point out the differences, the problems and express my viewpoints. I must have this right to speak out. If this outlook prevails, then I at least do not see any reason for the parties claiming to be leftists, Marxists-Leninists, to form separate trade unions or forums in the arena of working class movement as well as democratic movement. Rather, it is harmful. So, even if you are compelled to build up separate trade union, you will have to highlight these aspects for the need of unity, raise this slogan of unity. It is no tactics, no manoeuvre, nor a mere propaganda to deceive the workers. You must really mean it. Unless you are able to win over the workers by convincing them, your progress will be retarded. You might show growth in terms of new recruitment of workers, might advance in the sphere of ideology. But from the point of view of organized united working class movement, from the point of view of establishment of revolutionary leadership over it you will be requiring too much time. You will face much more hurdles before accomplishing this.

Revolutionaries can work with anybody

Hence, in the united movement, we observe two main ingredients that work against unity: one is flexing of muscle and the other sectarian attitude. Apart from this, I want to discuss another aspect, the over-sensitivity of some of the revolutionaries who fear that if they associate and work with the non-revolutionary forces, their revolutionary character will suffer. The Marxists, particularly Comrade Lenin had sounded a note of caution time and again against this tendency. He once said that those who cannot work, if so is warranted from the need of revolution, with the enemies and non-revolutionaries, being oblivious of the need for unity that has arisen in the process of hastening it, are in fact haunted by their own shadow. They fail to recognize the need of revolution, the necessity of unity that is arising in the process of revolution. They in fact dread the source of fear lying within themselves. These people lack

firmness of character. They are no revolutionaries. They must know how to work with all, even with difficult people. Revolutionaries must have the ability and strong base of character to work with anyone. But the wish or capability to work with anyone does not mean, ipso facto, that working with anybody will be possible. The question of working with one and all depends on many a factor. These are the main reasons that time and again triggered splits in the unity of the trade union movement in India.

Some people say that since class struggle intensified after independence, different political parties have formed different trade unions. But what has intensification of class struggle got to do with formation of separate trade unions by different parties? On the contrary, with the accentuation of class struggle, the intensity of the united movement of the different parties ought to have further intensified today compared to what it was during the freedom movement. Such struggles ought to have assumed higher form. The ideological struggle among the various parties is expected to be intensified. But that has not happened. Rather there appeared cracks in the common platform of action. And such had been the fallout of two factors: sectarian outlook and flexing of muscle power — that is the attitude of not allowing others to function.

Meaning of a genuine leader

There are people who will speak of democratic norms in the governance of the organization, but will wield majority strength to bully the minority section in the committee, to cow down others and make them accept their politics, and then they would not mind to appoint such a blind, subservient follower as a leader. Many are found to be indulging in this kind of mentality. We may be citing Rabindranath and many other great men, and proclaim ourselves to be Marxists-Leninists, but we are not prepared to follow even the values reflected by the humanists. You must remember that those who like and give indulgence to sycophants, are themselves vile in nature. No man of worth consciously falls victim to debased mentality, nor does he tolerate flattery and sycophancy. He does not indulge in appointing these sycophants as leaders nor does he work towards

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... When we talk of unity, we never mean unity without struggle. Within unity, there is relentless ideological struggle, even existence of differences. So when we speak of unity, we speak of struggle as well. Similarly, when we talk of conducting struggle against each other, we strive to forge unity as well. If we fail to do so, then the struggle becomes useless, meaningless.

disrupted, to remain confined to its criticism, to just conduct ideological struggle, or to simply expose it. No doubt, you will have to do all this. But alongside, you must also repeatedly highlight before the people the necessity of united movement, must eliminate the conditions that cause rupture in unity. Then only you would not only be united but be able to preserve unity as well. If you, from your side

movement of the workers, where is the scope of raising the question of factional activity, no matter whether I get any chance to place my views or not? There is no connection whatsoever between unity and factional work. And that being the case, why should I not have the right to work here? Even if I am a lone man, I must have the right to speak. If I lack strength, if the workers do not support me even

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creating any illusion about them among the masses. Because you see the word 'leader' has a distinct meaning. A leader is a model. He upholds before the people culture, ethics and ideology conducive to social revolution. That is why one cannot make leader of a person who indulges in sickening sycophancy to come to the forefront. This cannot be done in the name of tactics as well. Then what a great harm will be caused! A bootlicker, a sycophant will be projected as the model of a leader — someone who does not hesitate to flatter anyone to fulfil his personal ambition. Yet many so-called Marxist leaders are doing this on and often. I do not want to name anybody here. They are not doing this for the sake of any revolution. Just because the sycophants flatter them, they provide a platform. They never consider even once what low a level will the political consciousness, outlook, culture and ideology sink to if such sycophants become leaders.

Mere slogan raising has not accomplished revolution in any country. Revolution warrants a healthy and strong moral foundation of the people. If people become slogan mongers who feel brave in gangs but cower when alone, flee like cowards when challenged by strong opponents but refuse to

and confounding activities are galore in the workers' and democratic movements today. A relentless struggle needs to be waged not only against the enemy outside but also within. Struggle must be conducted against anything that is filthy, that prevents man from attaining higher, nobler character.

What is the need to become a leader? Leader is an essential ingredient to inspire the people. So, in your movement, larger is the number of leaders you are able to create, faster will be the pace of your progress. But it is often found that one who has been made a leader, in no time falls victim to vices, popular gestures and various kinds of individualistic tendencies. You will have to go into the root cause of all these. Populism means to behave in such a way so as to gain cheap popularity. Seekers of populism direct all their acts, behaviours, day to day conduct, mannerism and stunts to elicit ready praise from the people. What do they achieve by this? Just as they cause harm to themselves, they also do just the opposite of what is expected of a leader in the movement. That is to say, even if the people are attracted towards such leaders, it is due to erroneous judgement. Generally, the people become victim of petty mentality and lower standard of culture that prevail in the society. So

coming in contact with such leaders, far from being lifted, sinks further. Hence, we need leaders, but only such kind of leaders who behave like true leaders, have sense of responsibility, can control themselves in any trying circumstances and provide guidance to others. They

favour of the workers. This is the objective existence of class struggle in our society. The prevailing thoughts and concepts of the bourgeois society do impact your mind in natural course. No leader or cadre can keep himself altogether out of bounds of this social

... we need leaders, but only such kind of leaders who behave like true leaders, have sense of responsibility, can control themselves in any trying circumstances and provide guidance to others. They teach others by their own conduct that even in a difficult or embarrassing situation, one cannot shirk one's responsibility. A true leader does not fight shy of his responsibility citing difficulties or problems as is done by an ordinary man. He must know that he is not an ordinary man. He knows how to handle, how to confront problems. Therefore the word leader does not signify a name only, it means ability to provide leadership. Relentless struggle has to be conducted to acquire such leadership qualities.

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Class-struggle in the realm of thought

The unceasing class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the present society is constantly influencing our realm of thought, ethics and culture. This class struggle is not confined to the economic sphere or the arena of movement of the workers against the owners only. It is equally present in the spiritual world or mental domain. Whether you like it or not, it is firmly entrenched in your mind. One aspect of it is of the owners, the capitalists. The other aspect relates to the workers. So it sometimes makes you tilt towards the capitalists, and some other time in

environment. Hence a leader, no matter how great he is, ought to remain ever-conscious. In order to protect himself, he must be alert every moment whether or not his mentality, conduct, style of function are conducive to the revolutionary objective and aspiration of the people.

Revolutionary concept of honour and disgrace

In spite of all such precautions, non-revolutionary bourgeois thoughts might sneak into your mind but heaven does not fall if so happens. The moot point is whether you detect that in time and rectify accordingly. This is important. If you can yourself make out infiltration of non-revolutionary thoughts in you, that becomes the biggest guarantee. On detection, you might cry shame on yourself and adopt necessary remedial steps. Because to a revolutionary, what is important is not whether people chide at him but if he himself feels shame from within. To a revolutionary, this ought to be the real and prime lesson. If it so happens that when people beat drum for him, he feels great, but if people cast aspersions, he is stricken with shame — then of course the revolutionaries cannot make a single stride. Because in a hostile environment, common men, being misled by others, may indulge in

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... You must remember that those who like and give indulgence to sycophants, are themselves vile in nature. No man of worth consciously falls victim to debased mentality, nor does he tolerate flattery and sycophancy. He does not indulge in appointing these sycophants as leaders nor does he work towards creating any illusion about them among the masses. Because you see, the word 'leader' has a distinct meaning. A leader is a model. He upholds before the people culture, ethics and ideology conducive to social revolution. That is why one cannot make leader of a person who indulges in sickening sycophancy to come to the forefront.

consider other people as human beings and assault them when endowed with coercive powers. Do they constitute a political force for revolution? This blood-thirsty maniacal trend acts as a counter-revolutionary force. This in turn, fosters growth of a fascist mentality in the society. In the name of Marxism-Leninism, such confusing

subtly they sense a similarity in the standard reflected by such leaders in day to day conduct and behaviour. This draws the people nearer to such band of leaders. Obviously, this fosters looseness and a lackadaisical attitude amongst the people. Their eulogy of the leaders also reflects a bad taste. As a result, the standard of political consciousness of the people

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vicious slander against a revolutionary. Does this undermine a revolutionary? People may even shoot him, beat him to death on the street. The same people, for whom he is ready to give up everything, may kill him. Does this in any way humiliate or dishonour a revolutionary? No. A revolutionary is not disgraced if the police drags him to the police station and beats him up in the lock-up. Similarly he is not honoured either if the very same police addresses him as "Sir". Those revolutionaries who consider such incidents as determinants of honour and disgrace, are wrong. Perhaps they are not aware that in it are hidden bourgeois individualism and "ego" of bourgeois society which in different forms are out to lead us astray. We did not aspire to become professor, engineer nor had we been after money and fame. We longed to become revolutionaries. Yet, we feel a tinge of pride at being addressed as "Sir" and lose face if beaten in the lock-up. This is no revolutionary concept of honour and disgrace, which is intrinsic to his own self. Otherwise his sense of pride will soar if someone praises him and will come down crashing if such extolments cease to pour in.

No revolutionary can behave in this way. Our workers must have this realization instilled in them. If this is done they will be inspired to build up unity amidst adversity and hostile surroundings. So the struggle to build up the self as a revolutionary, as a communist is a

different and complex one. Just to cite one example. The common knowledge is that the people and the working class will have to be freed from the concept of economism and made politically conscious to establish socialism and having made them politically conscious and by developing people's own political power in the form of high powered people's committees, capitalist state will have to be smashed through revolutionary upsurge. But it may so happen that a revolutionary worker having knowledge of all these facts, on losing his job, starts talking nonsense, muddles up revolution, party, union everything. In other words, so long as he had a job to support himself and his family, he was for revolution. It never occurred to him that for the need of revolution and the party, he might have to quit his job. He never thought earlier that even if he loses his job for organizing trade union movement, yet he would still be in the midst of movement, would still live a life that the workers can afford to provide him. Many people know a lot. But seldom one thinks that even if one is an engineer, one might have to join a factory as an ordinary porter or a temporary worker to keep contact with the workers and mingle with them. But what do we find here? If an engineer cadre is asked to find a job from the necessity of building workers' organization, he would either search for a post befitting to his professional qualification or come back and express his

helplessness in getting a suitable job. It means he is a victim of white collar employee mental complex. He thinks that as an educated person it is beyond his dignity to opt for manual labour. So he would accept an offer commensurate with his professional degree implying thereby that he will work for revolution no doubt but will need alongside a job to his likes. Otherwise, he cannot undertake responsibilities needed for revolution. Wherefrom are these thoughts, line of argument, concepts and attitude coming to him? It shows that he has, despite knowing so many things about revolution, no less attraction for the obsolete bourgeois thinking prevailing in the bourgeois society centring round individualistic approaches. Both revolutionary ideas and bourgeois thoughts are co-existing in his mind. This is how, class-struggle is having impact in the realm of mind of every individual. A revolutionary worker must remain ever vigilant about it and conduct conscious continuous struggle to acquire a revolutionary character.

Grasp of revolution draws one closer to people

Another trend is visible in many in the initial phase of their struggle to become revolutionaries. As for example, one of my elders was telling me on the way about a youngman working in the steel plant. He used to be very sociable, very cordial, take much initiative in every social activity from helping one in distress to organizing festivals. He was endearing to all, their leader. But he lacked political orientation. After he got a first hand understanding of revolution and revolutionary politics, it was found that he stopped associating with the people, participating in the local activities. So he no more commands a following like before. But it was expected that after being imbued with revolutionary political thoughts, his leadership over the people would be firmly established and the people would have stronger affinity for him. Then why is the opposite happening? Evidently, there are two reasons for that. First of all, when he is engrossed in the struggle to become a revolutionary, he, owing to lack of experience and appropriate political awareness, began to neglect to some extent, may not be consciously, the people with whom he had had a bond of affection. He started considering the

people whose company he had so much enjoyed and who he was so close with all these days, as bad elements talking all intolerable things. As a result, those who used to come to him so often, could intuitively feel that he was no more their man. And so, out of some apprehension as well as misunderstanding, they began to distance themselves from him. Secondly, because he lacked experience, he immediately on being acquainted with revolutionary thoughts and ideas, began to lecture them whenever he found an opportunity. Who likes to listen to a friend giving tall lectures like a teacher? So being fed up, they run for cover whenever he approaches. Previously, they would have relished listening to him as many times as they could. But now as soon as they catch sight of him, they evade him for fear of being lectured. What do these indicate? These indicate that his grasping of revolution has been poor. Otherwise, he would have understood that it is of utmost importance to stay with these apparently bad, oppressed people — just what the missionaries used to do in the past.

And while closely mixing with them, he has to do it in such a way that even if they wanted to get rid of him, he would not let them. He cannot forsake his revolutionary existence, his revolutionary being. That is, he will be their friend, but not a flippant crony, nor a preacher. He should remain a revolutionary and at the same time their friend too. If the appropriate style of doing all these simultaneously is acquired there remains no problem to remain with any kind of people. But in many cases just the opposite happens. Either one becomes their flippant crony, unable to effect any change in them, or one loses one's revolutionary character in the process; whatever one had grasped of revolution, begins to fade. One becomes a fearful object to one's earlier mates. If we examine these deeply, make a psychogenesis, we will find that all these are misconceptions or confusions created by thinking, ideas and attitudes acquired from bourgeois society, which proves that he had not properly grasped revolution.

Importance of individual initiative

The task of every worker is to take individual initiative and affection. He started considering the

... A revolutionary is not disgraced if the police drags him to the police station and beats him up in the lock-up. Similarly he is not honoured either if the very same police addresses him as "Sir". Those revolutionaries who consider such incidents as determinants of honour and disgrace, are wrong. Perhaps they are not aware that in it are hidden bourgeois individualism and "ego" of bourgeois society which in different forms are out to lead us astray. We did not aspire to become professor, engineer nor had we been after money and fame. We longed to become revolutionaries. Yet, we feel a tinge of pride at being addressed as "Sir" and lose face if beaten in the lock-up. This is no revolutionary concept of honour and disgrace, which is intrinsic in his own self. Otherwise his sense of pride will soar if someone praises him and will come down crashing if such extolments cease to pour in.

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constantly increase mass connection. By individual initiative I mean that I will of course discharge my duty when the organization entrusts me with some specific responsibility for carrying out a programme, but even if I am not assigned any particular work to do, I will create my own work. It is not that I sit idle if I am not assigned any particular work and say: you didn't give me any work to do. Because, a conscious worker not only carries out all the work assigned by the organization, but over and above he creates some work on his own. It is because I being a conscious revolutionary political worker, staying with the people with the my particular ethics, morality, culture, political wisdom and my ability to provide leadership that there is some influence of mine over them in matters related to thinking as well as organization. Hence I also provide guidance to them in overcoming many problems in their life which are brought up and not regarded to be within the purview of the organizational programme. In this respect also I guide and help them and in the process I transform them into conscious political workers not remaining confined to trade union activities only. I work for the union, but I also give serious attention to the personal problems of every individual. Without having to be asked I jump into action — do any work and resolve any problem. This kind of existence I have in mind when I talk of individual initiative of a worker. Yet what we often find is a diagonally opposite mentality. Many think: you see I am a leader, they haven't informed me — so why should I go? They argue: did you inform me? Yes, if they didn't inform what can I say of such lifeless formalistic frame of mind! If they didn't inform me that is surely wrong, but by failing to discharge my responsibility to the people, I did commit a further wrong. What right do I have as a conscious worker to shirk my responsibility towards the people — a responsibility that is constant and continuous — by pointing to others' mistakes or defects in their planning. As because I am conscious, I perfectly know and understand the programme and principle of the party and the union, so whether I am asked or not, it matters little, I cannot but discharge my duties to the people, cannot but

help them. If the executives do not call me, if they avoid and slight me, if they do not assign a task to me, they commit a wrong, no doubt; but can the object of finding out others' faults ever mean rationalizing one's own failure or one's own defects? On the contrary, the real objective of my pointing out their mistakes is to help them learn not to repeat them in future. Or else, under the plea of pointing out a wrong act on someone's part, I do not have any right to commit another wrong act, while pointing to their mistake. Why will I not discharge my obligation towards the people? You see, things like these also happen.

Revolutionaries are purposive in their discussion

Another defect frequently observed among the workers is that we go on discussing for two hours what should not take more than ten minutes to be disposed of. Once we have started a discussion we do not want to stop. What is found is that while in a discussion meant for chalking out appropriate plan and action, we indulge in useless and irrelevant talks. We go on dragging issues and in this way instead of disposing of matters clearly and quickly we quite unnecessarily prolong our discussion. As a result what happens? The time that we could have gainfully used for some work we waste by getting ourselves embroiled in meaningless exchange of words centring round trifles and creating bitterness among ourselves and blaming one another. This also causes erosion in our ability to take initiative for building up organization, to a certain extent. We must learn the art of collective functioning. Our motto shall be: constant common discussion and association, constant common activity which means to undertake work on the basis of individual initiative and at the same time to learn how to work collectively. This again means that as I can easily work together with my juniors, so do I with my senior comrades and maintain unity. Both I do with ease. These are to be learnt. That is why revolutionary training is necessary, for which training camps and cadre camps are being organized. Even after formal education, even after acquiring a college degree, or Master's degree, workers need to undergo theoretical training, cadre training, because these things cannot be learnt in schools and colleges. These have to be learnt

through intense practice. How to work together, collectively, without bitterness has to be learnt. If anyone wants to precipitate a confrontation with me, why should I let it happen? Why should I get trapped? I must know and learn how to bypass it. Many may want to avoid me, or slip out of reach. But even if someone wants to do so, my task is to draw

and do some work. Let's postpone the discussion. Let it remain pending for the time being. The heaven will not fall, if we do so. Because, you see the discussion has been dragging on anyway. What only drags on but doesn't get resolved is something which can be dispensed with. Better do some work or go somewhere! Everyone

... What right do I have as a conscious worker to shirk my responsibility towards the people — a responsibility that is constant and continuous — by pointing to others' mistakes or defects in their planning. As because I am conscious, I perfectly know and understand the programme and principle of the party and the union, so whether I am asked or not, it matters little, I cannot but discharge my duties to the people, cannot but help them.

him close in this way or that, and involve him in some work, in a programme of struggle. When someone acquires these qualities, he picks up organizational skill as well. But often we find that just the opposite happens.

We waste time in discussing accusations and counter accusations, like: "He said this to me, so how can I work with him? Can anybody work under such a condition?" We waste valuable time in discussing who is right and who is wrong, instead of utilizing it for some productive work. Thus, we impair our ability, and do nothing to help the other also. This, however, does not mean that we should not discuss things at all. Without discussion we cannot advance even a single step. Constant common activity, constant common discussion — this is what our slogan should be. But these discussions should be impersonal, objective and purposive.

If these discussions are not brief and precise and if they do not help in doing the work better, cementing unity and bringing about better mutual understanding, it means neither I, nor he, none of us is capable enough to guide the discussion in the right direction. Whenever discussion drags on unnecessarily we must understand that the discussion is taking a wrong turn. In such a case using common sense we should immediately stop the discussion and propose: Come, let's have a cup of tea, and then go

should acquire this kind of common sense and presence of mind, the ability to understand what turn one's discussion is taking. Only then can we lead people's movement.

Revolutionaries keep their learning mind open

Or else, such things spoil the good relationship between friends, and animosity would arise centring round mutual criticism. If there is a difference of opinion and I point out your mistake, you feel unhappy. But why should you feel unhappy if your mistake is pointed out for your own benefit? If it were not pointed out, what would have happened? Your false sense of prestige would have been left intact. But you would slide down further in the process of repeating this mistake. But how could it be that you feel happy if further harm is caused to you by not pointing out your mistake? What is the meaning of it? It means you do not know yourself. You don't even know what is good for you, not to speak of revolution and the interest of the organization. That is why Marxism stresses that a critic is a teacher. Marxism says - learn even from the enemy and also from a layman. Can a layman express something as well as you can, or understand as much? Then, why do the great thinkers say like this? It is because sometimes a layman can say such startling things from which you have much to learn - something which did not occur to you even

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after your knowing so much. At that moment the few words from the layman may, if you are alert, bring clarity to many aspects in your thinking. But if you close your eyes and shut your mind, thinking, 'what does he know', then extremely useful an observation from him at that moment that never struck you despite your vast knowledge, will remain unknown to you. This will do wrong to you only.

Keep your eyes open all the time. Have an open mind. Learn from the enemy, even when they are beating you up or trying to kill you, if there is anything to learn. In this way, be open and change yourself. Perhaps the critic may criticize me with an ulterior motive. But though he may not have been sincere, I should probe if there is anything in me that I need to rectify. But if his ulterior motive agitates and clouds my mind, even if there is some partial truth in it, that will escape my attention. So even if he criticizes me motivatedly, I can fight it out later. This is the correct approach to accept criticism and the critic. That is why a critic is a teacher, too. These are not my own words. Don't think that I, Shibdas Ghosh, have made all these up myself and am lecturing you like a preacher. Study Marxism

as if people are attracted towards this ideology because they are suffering from the pangs of hunger, poverty or misery. But one does not become a Marxist because one is starving. It is boundless love and compassion for the humanity that have impelled great men and thinkers of this era to embrace Marxism in different countries. Many of them were from well-to-do families, many were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Many hailed from the rural kulaks and exploiting class. So were Mao Zedong, Engels and many others — none of them experienced any want. They became Marxists because they could not find anything in the world that was even greater, nobler, loftier than the ethics, ideology, and values of Marxism. The appeal of Marxism is not such that a man feels attracted to it just because he is starving. We find an American lobby — a group of technocrats-experts, trying to convince the American politicians that the miseries of the people are the real reason for the revolution by the 'reds'. And revolution can be destroyed if these people can be turned into pet 'Alsations'. Provide them with a better living standard, affluent living condition, open a few night clubs: and see that there is

joining hands with people of the whole world against the savagery in Vietnam, against the conspiracy to loot and rape the humanity.

Correct politics must guide workers' movement

Hence, from what I have been trying to tell you by referring to certain common happenings, there are two things you have to understand very well and keep in mind in order to expand your organization. One is, the question of building organization cannot be separated from the question of politics. If you contemplate organizational expansion divorced from politics and even make some progress at a particular juncture due to individual initiatives, honesty and sacrifice of some individuals in building up certain movements on people's demand, you will not be able to sustain it. An apolitical organization cannot last, will not last. So we have to understand the politics of the organization we are building up. And we should understand that this politics has two aspects — one relates to active politics of the party, the other relates to political line. Even if someone is averse to be engaged in active party politics, he must determine whether the political outlook guiding the trade union movement is right or wrong. Without this you cannot organize either workers' movement, or workers' organization or workers' revolutionary battle. If you think that these are mere empty words, you will commit a terrible mistake. With such an attitude you cannot create anything, you would only — how should I say — indulge in a kind of self-deception.

You have to tell the workers openly: listen, to be in politics is not so easy, let alone revolutionary politics — that is more difficult. Even to be engaged in politics as such, is not all that easy. It may be easy to fool around and indulge in worst type of activities in the name of politics, but to be in politics actively throughout life is no easy a thing. Well, why do you feel so perturbed? It is one thing to be in politics actively, but it is a different thing altogether to attempt and understand whether a particular politics is wrong or right, and accordingly determine what political line one should pursue. To determine this, one need not necessarily engage in active politics. Yet unless you identify the correct political line, you cannot guide a

battle, or develop a struggle centring round demands relating to real well-being of the people, or build up an organization worth the name. That is a myth. So you have to clarify these two things to them. You have to tell them: what's there to be so afraid? Why are you so apprehensive about getting involved in politics? Can anyone be forced to work for a party? This is more so with a revolutionary party, question of forcing one never arises there. So long you are not convinced, you need not worry. But what you really need is to understand politics. You may cry hoarse that you need not understand politics. But, your dislike for politics notwithstanding, if the wrong politics and political thoughts continue to prevail predominantly and go on increasing their influence over the country, then despite your utmost endeavour to stay away from politics, will you be able to save yourselves, your thinking, sense of ethics, culture as also the organization you are so earnestly trying to build up, from being marred by the impact of wrong politics? Every movement is influenced by politics. Nothing is out of bounds of politics, be it food, medicine or anything else. So how can you keep yourself isolated from it? You are a social being. Not to speak of the organization, even the individual's thinking cannot remain free from its impact. You may be unaware of it and think of keeping yourself aloof from it. You may think that you stay by yourself, not in touch with anybody. This means you lack awareness; you do not know how you enter into a relation with the society every moment, how the existing political environment influences your thoughts, your organization, and the style of functioning of your organization. What you call style of organization, that is the method or tactics of running the organization also reflects either bourgeois or the proletarian revolutionary concept.

With what outlook a revolutionary fights bourgeois election

As for example, say, an election has come, you have to take part in it. You are thinking that in this election you are fighting against the Congress. What is there of revolutionary politics there? Your idea is, any tactics to defeat the Congress is revolutionary. No. In election the Congress is on one side,

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... It is boundless love and compassion for the humanity that have impelled great men and thinkers of this era to embrace Marxism in different countries. Many of them were from well-to-do families, many were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Many hailed from the rural kulaks and exploiting class. So were Mao Zedong, Engels and many others — none of them experienced any want. They became Marxists because they could not find anything in the world that was even greater, nobler, loftier than the ethics, ideology, and values of Marxism.

thoroughly and deeply. Not just those booklets that you read. There are some so-called Marxist leaders who are fond of reading these booklets only. That will not do. Study Marxism thoroughly and deeply, grasp it. Try to get to know its ethics, values, philosophy. If you can do that you will find that it is the essence of Marxism I am dwelling upon.

Nothing is nobler than Marxism

If you do not understand Marxism in this way, it will appear

provision for rotten entertainment; and there you are! So what if they are workers, all talk of revolution will die away. But they fail to see that right within their own country, even after trying to hold the entire people and the youth enthralled in a feverish existence of artificial excitement with the slogan of 'eat, drink and be merry' — they have been unable to kill the people's urge for movement. The situation in the USA is changing. In the USA itself the people are participating in the worldwide protest demonstrations against their own government, are

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and the opposition on the other, and people are in between.

So long as revolution is not accomplished, whether people want election or not, like it or not, they get dragged into it, involved in it. By revolution, it means that people have come to realize that participation in elections are no more required. They are organized on the basis of this consciousness and hence boycotting election in an organized manner, not negatively but positively, having reached the stage of seizure of power, and they are saying: "No more election. Time has come to capture power." Only at that point, taking part in the election becomes infructuous, unnecessary. Till that time people do get enmeshed in the election. And in order to stay with the masses, both revolutionaries as well as non-revolutionaries have no other option but to be in the hustings. The genuine revolutionaries too have to do that. Everybody has to participate in the election. Only those who cultivate sectarianism, truism, those who do not engage in revolutionary struggle, may want to fight shy of it and remain out. But while participating in the election will everybody have the same approach? Everyone takes part in the election. From the outside, the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists, social-democrats, the genuine forces, the sham elements, the bourgeois parties, the pseudo-socialists, all look alike as contestants in the fray. And

argument, then there remains hardly any difference between you and the bourgeoisie in so far as class approach is concerned. In depth analysis will prove your argument to be erroneous.

What is important to note is that the method of conducting election battle, style, organization, methodology, approach towards election and tactics for winning or losing to be adopted both by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is determined keeping in view the stage of revolutionary movement and the level of people's consciousness in the country. The main objective of the bourgeois parties is to grab by any means maximum number of seats and ride to power. Once in power, their only business is to undertake some reforms, raise some slogans and in this way protect the existing system. Their purpose is to take recourse to whatever propaganda helps them to don a progressive cloak, to confuse and befool the people for some time, for at least some time in order to prolong the existing system itself. Hence, their main objective becomes securing maximum number of seats in the election by hook or by crook. Apart from this they also project some political programme, and an agenda of immediate tasks. But whatever be their programmes and slogans, the sole objective is to grab maximum seats.

On the contrary, when the party of the proletariat, moved by the object of revolutionary

tries utmost to win seats. But its main objective is never to anyhow grab maximum seats. The revolutionary party's focal point is to educate the people as to how to fight the election on the basis of a mass revolutionary line. In doing so, if we can win maximum seats, all the better. If not, or even not a single seat, so be it. If we can retain ten seats, then be it so. But the objective to fight election can never be to anyhow grab some seats.

What is that mass line and mass style of activity or struggle, which I will take to the people in the

only paying lip service while someone is doing whatever necessary for developing unity no matter if he is successful or not to bring out the fact to the people. Also bring before the people the fact that there is a force who talks of unity but in reality works for breaking the unity. You should bring home to the people that unity is necessary for two things — one of which is to strengthen one's own organization and the other to strengthen the movement. Apart from this, unity is necessary to establish the correctness of the

... If ideology is compromised on the plea of united struggle, such unity does not last : such unity can have only one meaning — that of throwing one's ideology to the wind and becoming someone's lackey.

election? I will take this message to the people: since you are taking part in the election, you should do so from the perspective of people's interest, based on revolutionary politics. While doing so guard your strongholds. Whatever may be the number of seats you get, as many as you can, say for argument's sake, all — you secure them only on the basis of this very line. But you should do so solely on the basis of this line — under no circumstances should you muddle up this question. But instead if you raise a slogan like 'do anything and everything to defeat the enemy', then you, too, on the pretext of fighting the enemy and by wearing revolutionary mask, will be adopting the same very tactics used by the bourgeoisie to fight election. Of course you would do all these in the name of revolution. Is this the way to become a revolutionary? Does this advance the revolutionary task? No, in this way no one can become a revolutionary, and there can be no advancement towards revolution. Does this help expose the bourgeois parliamentary politics, as we say, through election? Is it same to speak about something and to put it into practice? Some people merely talk, and others actually practise what they profess. So the people should be politically educated to distinguish between those who merely talk and those actually practice it.

revolutionary politics before the people and at the same time to free the people from the illusion of pseudo revolutionary politics. Platform of action and for that matter unity is necessary in order to free the society from illusion. But this unity cannot be viewed by giving up struggle or by discarding principle. In this unity, there must be due recognition of the ideological struggle. Whosoever consider this ideological struggle as detrimental towards unity, ultimately destroy unity themselves. There can be no compromise on ideology on the field of united struggle. It is simply impossible. If ideology is compromised on the plea of united struggle, such unity does not last: such unity can have only one meaning — that of throwing one's ideology to the wind and becoming someone's lackey. So if you are not ready to accept this position then you have to bring home to the people that there is struggle in unity. Having done it, with a clear understanding about the political outlook, with both individual and collective initiative, you will have to increase your mass contact, and in the process develop people's instrument of struggle and thereby give birth to people's political power. If you can continue this struggle then one day revolution will surely come about — nobody can undo the inexorable law of history — your dream of revolution will come true one day.

... when the party of the proletariat, moved by the object of revolutionary purposiveness, being compelled by the necessity to remain with the people, participates in the election, it does so on the basis of mass revolutionary political line. It also tries utmost to win seats. But its main objective is never to anyhow grab maximum seats. The revolutionary party's focal point is to educate the people as to how to fight the election on the basis of a mass revolutionary line. In doing so, if we can win maximum seats, all the better. If not, or even not a single seat, so be it. If we can retain ten seats, then be it so. But the objective to fight election can never be to anyhow grab some seats.

everybody will try to say that he only is right and all others wrong. Since you are right, so any tactics or move to defeat the opposing party is justified. If this is your line of

purposiveness, being compelled by the necessity to remain with the people, participates in the election, it does so on the basis of mass revolutionary political line. It also

Unity-struggle-unity is the principle of revolutionaries

Likewise all are talking of united movement. But some are

Long live revolution.

Kumbakonam tragedy

Tiny lives perish in fire from criminal negligence

A heart-rending incident shook the country on 16 July last. About 100 children mostly between 8 to 10 years were burnt alive inside Lord Krishna Primary School, a private school at Kumbakonam town of Tamil Nadu. These innocents were trapped on the top floor of the thatched roof structure which caught fire from a nearby kitchen preparing, in grotesque irony, the mid-day meal for the students. The practice of the school authorities to bolt the door after all the children had entered the class rooms and the narrow steep stairway of the three-storied building serving as both entrance and exit added to the woe of the victims. 900 odd children were crammed into the school building when the blaze turned into an inferno that engulfed the building. While many of the older children, and the teachers managed to escape, the 92 odd younger children on the third floor succumbed to the fire with their bodies charred beyond recognition. Many others with serious burn injuries are battling for their lives in the hospital.

As usual, the ministers, bourgeois party leaders, government bigwigs and sundry busybodies came and went, shed crocodile tears in media glaze, offered sympathies, paid lip-service to the victims. It was a very familiar scenario. One would remember that 400 children died in a fire in Dabwali, Haryana, in 1995. No one was punished for that nor has there been any preventive measure to forestall recurrence.

But there is nothing surprising in it. With the prescription of globalization-liberalization-privatization, education has become a business proposition, a commodity to fetch maximum profit. While the governments run by the parties subservient to the ruling bourgeois class are making schemes to commercialize education, rob it of its essence by distorting syllabus and introducing faulty teaching methodology, restrict access to higher education, and perch servile, pliable and even corrupt people atop, the towers of academic institutions; the question of safety

and protection of students is buried underneath.

The protagonists of capitalist economic reforms including those so vocal in putting a mask of human face on it are encouraging schools as lucrative business proposition. All these schools need a space to convert into class rooms and some recruits as teachers to control the students. The sole concern is the fees to be charged. Municipal authorities clear the building plans of such schools without batting an eyelid. Fire brigade authorities follow suit. The police and government inspection machinery remain silent spectators. To the entrepreneurs and architects of commercialized education, human life has no value.

The question is not therefore of lacerating in grief, being overawed by pale and gloom, languishing in lamentation but to challenge such criminal negligence, the uncaring unfeeling attitude of the bourgeois governments and their stooges.

Statement of SUCI, Tamilnadu

Reacting to the terrible tragedy that took place today morning in a major fire at the Lord Krishna School in Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, where it has been reported that more than 75 school children were burnt to death and more than 100 more injured, the Tamilnadu State Organising Committee of the SUCI expresses its heartfelt grief at

the loss of lives and extends its deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the fire.

The SUCI also severely criticises the district fire authorities and the government education authorities for having permitted the school to function under conditions where a disaster was waiting to happen — cramped conditions, narrow exits, where thatched roofing in classrooms adjoining which a common kitchen was allowed to operate. The SUCI feels that the overall negligent attitude of the government towards education is also to blame.

Earlier this year at an inferno at a marriage hall in Srirangam, in January, over 50 people had died. The state government had then ordered that proper fire-fighting system be installed and fire prevention precautions be taken in all public buildings which the Lord Krishna School is reported to have lacked. The callousness of the concerned authorities and their indifferent attitude towards seeing that safety precautions were compulsorily implemented must be condemned.

The SUCI calls for adequate compensation to be paid to the families of the dead children and to the families of the injured, that exemplary punishment be given to those whose negligence has led to the loss of so many young lives, that all public buildings implement fire safety precautions which the government take steps to follow up and see that those are implemented to prevent any more such human disasters happening. The SUCI also calls for a judicial inquiry into the way schools are being licensed to operate in such hazardous conditions.



Condolence meeting remembering the school children died in fire at Kumbakonam in Chennai, organized by Tamilnadu SUCI on 18-07-2004

All Bengal Save Education Committee protests corruption in education

Deeply perturbed at the recent media reports of corruption at the highest echelon of the academic sphere of West Bengal, a delegation from the All Bengal Save Education Committee, led by veteran educationists Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee and Prof. Sunanda Sanyal, and the distinguished mass leader Manik Mukherjee met the state Governor in Calcutta on July 26, 2004. In the memorandum submitted, the delegation demanded an enquiry on incidents that involved a Vice-chancellor allegedly favouring recruitment of a candidate on the strength of fake and forged testimonials and another Vice-chancellor allegedly receiving material and social benefits of a degree that had never been awarded to him for more than two decades. The delegation also demanded a thorough enquiry on all malpractices and corruption in appointment of teachers, officers and others at all levels of academic bodies. It expressed deep concern at the increasing incidence of such events that pollute the academic and set up demoralizing examples before the students.

Assam mourns landslide deaths and deaths at TN school

AIDSO, AIDYO, UTUC-LS, Komsomol and the Gas Strainer Workers' Union of Guwahati, Assam observed July 19 as the day of mourning for the 13 people who died on July 15 in severe landslides in different hills of Guwahati.

The programmes included garlanding martyrs' column and a public meeting in the Bhagawati Prasad Barua Hall, Guwahati in which demands were raised in resolutions, for compensation to the relatives of victims and for effective and scientific preventive measures in landslide-prone areas.

A separate resolution sympathized with the bereaved families of the Kumbakonam school tragedy in Tamil Nadu and demanded of the Central and the state governments effective steps to see that such tragedies do not recur.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's letter to the Prime Minister on the crisis of Indian hostages in Iraq

To
The Prime Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

We are gravely concerned at the news of three Indian citizens, Antaryami, Tilak Raj and Sukhdev Singh, having been taken hostage by an Iraqi radical group, for, what it said, "transporting goods, weapons and military equipment that backs the US army". You are well aware that when the previous BJP-led NDA government showed inclination towards sending troops to Iraq in support of the US-led occupation army, the whole country rose in protest and demanded of the government to abandon any such move forthwith. In the face of severe public outrage, the BJP-led NDA government did not dare to deploy forces.

But when the report of beheading of captured occupation army soldiers by Iraqis made the headlines, it was revealed that besides regular army, the US-led invaders had employed a large number of mercenaries recruited on

contract basis from private army operators. At that time, it also came to light that several hundred Indians are also forming part of this private army let loose on the patriotic Iraqi people. This back-door help and assistance extended to the US-led invaders who defrauded the whole world by launching a unilateral armed aggression on sovereign Iraq under concocted pretext of destroying WMD, also received severe indignation and wrath from the countrymen.

Now there is a change at the Centre and the UPA government under your stewardship has taken over. But we regret to observe that your government too, apart from indulging in some apparent demagogic exercises, did not announce any reversal of policy on the Iraq issue. On the contrary, your government by allowing the puppet regime of Iraq to open a consulate in Mumbai, accorded de facto approval to the heinous crime perpetrated by the US-led occupiers. Moreover, when the Bush administration, under public pressure, had to, as a face-saving

device, bring UNO into the picture and sought to impress as if UNO would henceforth handle the affairs in Iraq including installation of a government compliant to US dictates, Shri Natwar Singh, honorable Minister of foreign affairs, in utter disregard to the nefarious US design, remarked that there was a change in the context and hence the question of sending Indian soldiers to Iraq could be re-examined. This, you know, created a furore among the people, expressively anti-imperialist in their views and the government, in the name of providing clarifications had to subtly dissociate itself from what Shri Singh had uttered. Further the subservient Allawahi government of Iraq also made requests to a few countries including India for deployment of troops. All these have naturally infuriated the Iraqi freedom fighters engaged in a fierce battle to free their motherland from the tentacles of alien invasion. The recent incident of abduction of three Indians connected with transport service provided to the US-led occupation army is a fallout of

turning the patriotic Iraqi people hostile by pursuing a brazen pro-US policy.

We demand that your government honours the voice of the peace-loving democratic-minded Indian citizens, pulls out all the Indian personnel pressed into action in favour of US-led brigands and puppet government of Iraq, withdraws all assistance and suspends all services committed to the occupiers and their protege government.

We urge upon your government to compel the US-led invaders to unconditionally release Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq and withdraw from Iraq forthwith. We also call upon your government to wholeheartedly stand by the freedom-fighters of Iraq waging a heroic battle to oust the aggressors and restore the sovereignty of their motherland.

Expecting early action and a reply.

Sincerely yours,
Sd/- Nihar Mukherjee
General Secretary
SUCI

Central Committee demands punishment of perpetrators of Global Trust Bank failure

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI in a Press statement issued on 27 July, 2004 expressed serious concern at the reported bankruptcy of the Global Trust Bank (GTB) causing severe hardship to its 1 million-odd depositors.

This incident once again proves that the capitalist economic reforms pursued by both the erstwhile BJP-led NDA government and the present Congress-led UPA government is liberally placing with the full knowledge of the government, hard-earned savings of the common people at the disposal of unscrupulous private owners, manipulators and speculators for all sorts of murky operations in connivance with the administrators, regulators and the power-that-be to commit palpable fraud on the public

exchequer for self-aggrandizement.

It is shocking that Reserve Bank of India which is posing to have detected the anomaly in time, itself, just 2 years back, gave clean chit to GTB despite several allegations of misuse, violations and manipulations of various nature including market rigging and piling of bad debt. It is now rescuing the defaulting management of a private sector bank by funding from the public money through amalgamation with Oriental Bank of Commerce, a public sector bank.

Comrade Mukherjee demanded immediate prosecution and exemplary punishment of all those responsible for this catastrophe and adoption of adequate remedial measures to forestall recurrence of such holding the common depositors at ransom.

SUCI condemns River Water Bill of Punjab Assembly

Haryana State Committee and Punjab State Unit of the party, SUCI in two different statements on 14 and 16 July respectively, have condemned the Punjab Termination of Agreement Bill, 2004 passed by the Punjab Legislative Assembly. There they made it clear that the way the Bill, which concerns construction of Sutlej-Yamuna link canal and sharing of river water among the states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, and has been passed as a law, violates all internationally accepted norms of resolving water disputes through mutual dialogue and peaceful agreement between the parties concerned. The issue, kept alive in the past by all the major power-sharing parliamentary parties simply for petty vote-bank interests, is now being raised with a view to fanning up

regionalism and mutual mistrust among people of the concerned states. Concomitant with globalization and privatization, pauperization of toiling masses, particularly the farmers of the region, and resulting discontent among them, are spreading fast. In this backdrop, the present move is designed to bring forth disunity among the struggling toiling people of these northwestern states of the country. In both the statements, the party units called for people's vigilance to maintain their unity and fraternity through building up a mighty mass movement against this move of the Punjab Assembly.

The people should come forward, the statements urged, and force their respective state governments and the central government to resolve the issue amicably.

AIMSS expresses solidarity with struggling women of Manipur

At the call of All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS), on the All-India Protest Day on July 19, women in different parts of the country came out in resolute protest against and condemnation of the Indian Army atrocities in Manipur and other crimes on women, including Dalit women in Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere.

The All India Committee of the organization, in an open letter to the President of India and in a statement from its General Secretary, Dr. H. G. Jayalakshmi, condemned the recent incident of abduction, rape and killing of T. Manorama by the 17th Assam Rifles in Manipur. Expressing solidarity with the grief-stricken protesting womenfolk of Manipur, the AIMSS pointed out that this incident of Manipur adds to the ever-growing list of countrywide instances of law-enforcing security custodians transgressing upon law and human rights including modesty of women. It demanded of the President of India to see that Indian Army and other security forces stop violating human rights and perpetrating outrageous crimes against women. It also demanded a judicial inquiry into the manipur incident.

On the same day, the West Bengal State Committee of AIMSS took out a procession and held a public meeting in Calcutta. Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, President, AIMSS addressed the meeting. Earlier, Comrade Sadhana Chowdhury, President, West Bengal State Committee, AIMSS, read out a memorandum addressed to the

President of India.

The Karnataka State Committee, AIMSS and its different district committees organized protest demonstrations and meetings at Bangalore, Raichur, Bellary, Mysore, Gulberga and other places. Everywhere the state and the district leaders of the AIMSS and other fraternal mass organizations like AIDSO, AIDYO addressed the gatherings which made vast number of people firm in their resolve to fight in support of the women in Manipur.

In Guwahati a massive rally of Assam AIMSS moved through the city. Members of Maira Paibi, Women's Association of Manipuri Women living in Assam, and other organizations also took part in the rally. It was addressed by Prof. Chandralekha Das, President, Assam State Committee, AIMSS, Champa Devi, Secretary, MPWA, N. Sarojini Devi, Vice-President, MPWA and others.

At Agartala in Tripura, defying inclement weather a protest rally was organized by the Tripura AIMSS.

Similar rallies and/or meetings were also held by different state units of AIMSS and other fraternal mass organizations at Shillong in Meghalaya, Patna in Bihar, Cuttack in Orissa, Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat and elsewhere.

The AIMSS, through all its programmes of the All India Protest Day, laid bare the reality that we live in a system that protects the interest of a few, harm the majority and nurture military and police

solely to destroy people's movement against injustice and oppression. The situation has come to such a pass that these forces themselves are perpetrating heinous crimes. Demanding severe punishment of the criminals, the AIMSS vowed to build up intensive and massive movements.



AIMSS demonstration in Guwahati, Assam on All India Protest Day

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee condemns Bombay High Court's imposition of fines for bandh call

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 24 July last expressed grave concern at the ruling of the Bombay High Court imposing a fine of Rs. 20 Lakh each on two political parties for organizing a bandh in Mumbai on July 23, 2003.

Comrade Mukherjee said, when the life of the common people is totally shattered and devastated by the mounting onslaught of the ruling capitalist class, the Bombay High Court let alone making any effort to mitigate the hardship, is taking initiative to dispossess the suffering people of the instruments for struggle to seek remedy. By this, the Judiciary, which is perceived to be the custodian of protection of democratic rights and interest of the common people, is fast losing its impartial character to align with the power that be. He characterized it as a highly undemocratic act and an infringement on the fundamental rights of the people.

Comrade Mukherjee called upon the Bombay High Court to forthwith rescind this most undemocratic ruling and exhorted the people to build up mighty democratic movement demanding immediate quashing of the order.

Central Committee deeply concerned at devastating flood in Assam and Bihar

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 16th July, 2004, expressed grave concern over the latest grim flood situation in Assam and Bihar. Comrade Mukherjee indicted the central and state governments for their utter failure in taking appropriate steps to prevent such types of recurring flood devastating the life of the people.

Comrade Mukherjee demanded that the state governments should undertake relief and rescue operations on war footing and urged upon the central government to extend large-scale financial assistance to the affected states as well as to take appropriate measures necessary to deal with the post-flood situation.



A view of the Quotation Exhibition from the works of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh organized in Calcutta on and from 29 to 31 July, 2004 on the eve of the great leader's 28th death anniversary.

(Inset) Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, member, Central Committee, SUCI addressing while inaugurating the exhibition.

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