

On Some Vital Problems of Peasants' Life

Peasants and workers, and all sections of the toiling masses for that matter, are to free themselves from the false illusion created by the pseudo-revolutionary parties, and unitedly they are to organize their struggle on the correct base political line under the correct leadership, leading this struggle through to its logical culmination — the anti-capitalist socialist revolution. This is the message of the speech Comrade Ghosh gave in March 1974 at the open session of the South 24 Parganas District Conference, West Bengal, of the All India Krishak O Khetmazur Sangathan. The following is a synopsis of the speech.

Friends,

You have all assembled here on the occasion of the open session of the South 24 Parganas District Conference of Krishak O Khetmajur Federation (KKMF)¹. The present situation when this conference is being held is, by all means, very critical. The very condition of living of the entire people is confronted by a grave crisis.

What is the real picture of people's life, what magnitude the sufferings of the people have reached, how the prices of all essential commodities are rising in an unprecedented fashion and how alarming has become the economic crisis of the common people, are all known to you and you yourselves have had the bitter experience of it. Naturally, there is no further necessity for me to speak elaborately on the acute economic sufferings of the people or to deal with those things with narrations and statistics, the pinch of which you yourselves are feeling in your daily life. The question which I feel to be very important is : how is it that people of India have to undergo such tremendous sufferings in spite of the fact that we have abundance of natural resources — a very fertile soil producing rich harvests; below the soil minerals like coal, iron, copper, gold, etc., and forest resources — and above all, the labour power of about 530-540 millions of people? Twenty-six years have passed since the independent, national state has been established in India. So, today it cannot be argued any more that it is the plundering and exploitation of the wealth, the raw materials and the labour power of this country by the foreign imperialists that is causing the present distress of the common people. If there is any exploitation by the imperialists today, that too is taking place because the present capitalist government is giving them that opportunity, otherwise not. The Congress leaders, immediately after independence, started saying that it is not possible to remove the malady which had grown during a long period of two hundred years of rule at a single stroke. We admit that it is not possible to remove this deep-seated disease in one day. But is it not expected that we should have progressed at least by twenty-six inches during the period of twenty-six years? It is obvious from all counts that this expectation of the people has been completely belied. On the contrary, if you ask any aged person you will inevitably get the answer that the situation today has become worse than in the British period insofar as the question of price-rise, police atrocities, unemployment problem, mockery in the name of justice and all-round administrative corruption are concerned. All the elderly men will aver that the condition of life under British rule was not so unbearable and suffocating as it is today. In fact, the number of the unemployed and half-employed, which ought

to have been reduced during the past 26 years, has increased phenomenally both in rural and urban areas. Probably there is not a single country in the modern world, not to speak of the socialist countries, where the per capita income is so low. Knowing as we do that the point of per capita income is a deliberate trickery of the statisticians as it includes even the income of the monopolists and persons belonging to the category of financial oligarchy and therefore just gives the statistical average and not the real income of the lowest rung of our society, still then it was extremely meagre in our country just the other day. This value has been further eroded to reach a still lower figure if the price-rise occurring in the meantime is taken into account. Now if we exclude the income of the richest sections of our society then we can easily imagine what a disastrous picture that will present !

Wage increase alone is no solution

It is true that those who have some kind of employment have higher income in terms of money since independence. But the price-rise of all essential commodities and other costs of living in general have far outstripped the wage increase of the working people. It is known to all that the economic condition of the common people was very precarious because of the low wage compared to the price index even before independence. So today when the gap between wage and price index has vastly widened owing to the unprecedented rise of prices of all essential commodities and other costs of living compared to a very nominal wage-increase, if any, it is not at all difficult to fathom the depth of hardship of people's life. The standard which any family could maintain previously with much less income is not possible today to maintain in spite of earning more money. So it is not possible to grasp the nature of the problem correctly, looking only at the increased salary. To have a clear picture of the problem we will have to examine whether increase in the income of the working people in monetary terms has been commensurate with the price-rise of commodities or not. We will have to examine whether the wage has increased in the same proportion as the rise in price of commodities. Judged from this point of view it will be crystal clear that there has been a sharp fall in the real wage of the working people in spite of increase in wage in monetary terms.

Thus increase of salary in monetary terms has not only failed to improve the condition of the working people from what it was during the pre-independence period but their living condition has further deteriorated owing to the unprecedented rise of prices of all essential commodities.

So, you have to grasp one basic point: the vital problems of people's life cannot be solved only by some increase in emoluments. Both the workers and the agricultural labourers are engaged today in a grim battle for higher wages. Even if they become successful to increase their wage by a pittance through these struggles, for this they have to shed blood, sacrifice many lives – mothers have to lose their sons and wives their husbands because of indiscriminate firing, lathi-charge and all sorts of repressive measures resorted to by the government. But one thing is certain that this wage increase will never be able to neutralize the inflationary pressure and effect of price-rise that would take place in the meantime.

Not only the nominal wage increase the workers are getting at the cost of much blood-shed, but more money is sucked out of their pockets by the rise in prices of all essential commodities and other costs of living, on the one hand, and fresh imposition of direct and indirect taxes by the government, on the other. This is why increased wage cannot bring any relief to the people.

Under the circumstances, we will have to find out wherein lies the main problem faced by the workers, peasants and middle class of both rural and urban areas. If we fail to get answers to these fundamental questions then any amount of anti-Congress slogan raising, any amount of

fiery speech-making against the Congress will turn into a useless exercise. That the Congress has pushed the whole country to the brink of ruination is known to all. Most of the people understand what has been their lot during the Congress rule. I do not think that there is any honest, conscious and right-thinking man who really loves the Congress. Only some handful of persons — who are well off, self-seekers and social high-ups who act from petty considerations and are always seeking favours from the Congress or from the capitalist state — form the social support of the ruling party. Of course, it is true that after the split of the old Congress into the Congress (R) and the Congress (O), the ruling Congress has been able to create a so-called image of radicalism, a so-called Indira image among a considerable section of the people because of the support lent by both the CPI and the CPI(M) to the Congress (R), and due to the weakness of the revolutionary movement as well as the standard of political consciousness of the people. But this is absolutely a temporary phenomenon and already there has been a fast disillusionment of the people with the character of the ruling Congress during these years after there was instability of the government. So what we have to do is to remove the illusions of the people, clarify various misconceptions which the Congress leaders create every now and then by hoodwinking and bluffing the people. But the main question that you must understand is: what is the root cause of the distress of the common people and what shall we have to do specifically in order to free ourselves from all sorts of exploitation? There are some political parties who preach and claim that if people can oust the Congress and instead vote them to power then they would usher in a golden age. I say this is pure and simple nonsense and an out-and-out bluff. Those who make such claims are duping the people, no matter how vociferous they are against the Congress. There is a famous saying of Lenin about such persons that they are wolves in sheep's clothing. Lenin warned the exploited masses not to be misguided by the sweet words and fiery speeches of these wolves in sheep's clothing because they only want to hide the truth from them.

Capitalist exploitation —root of all evils

You must bear in mind that it is the capitalist state-structure, the capitalist economy that is responsible for the present exploitation and oppression of the people. Whether in mills and factories of towns and cities or in the agrarian economy of the villages, it is the capitalist relation of production that is at work ; everywhere the production is being governed by the capitalist owner and wage-labourer relationship.

That the character of production in mills and factories in cities and towns is capitalistic is not very difficult to understand. Even the nature and character of our rural economy today has been mainly transformed into capitalist economy based on the capitalist relation of production. Although in a backward country like India the form of this relationship is different in different parts of the country depending on the prevailing specific conditions everywhere, the relation of production is basically owner and wage-labourer relationship. There are both owners, the capitalists, and wage-earners. Some workers are getting their emoluments on monthly basis while some receive their emoluments as daily wage; some others get a portion of their salary in kind, say food, and the rest in money; some get the entire wage in the form of share of crop. Whatever the variations in form, all of them are none but wage-earners. If you approach the problem from another angle, you will find that it is the capitalist relation of production that is governing the rural economy today. What do we mean by the term capitalism? The fundamental law of capitalism is capital accumulation by investing capital either in land or in industry, that is, investment of capital for production and raising further capital by selling the produce in the market. In the capitalist system the capitalists invest capital in mills and factories and produce

commodities which they sell in the market at a price higher than the money invested to earn profit. They earn this profit by exploiting the workers, by appropriating the surplus value created by the labour power, by depriving the workers of their legitimate wage. This we call capitalism.

Let us now examine the real picture of rural economy in our country today. Is it a fact that those who own land today produce, just as in the feudal system, mainly for their own consumption and they sell the rest of the produce in the local market which is governed by the law of localized agricultural economy? Is it a fact that the prices of agricultural commodities are being fixed by the law of localized agricultural economy which is mainly based on the principle of demand and supply of a particular local market? Or, is it that all agricultural commodities have been transformed into commodities of the national capitalist market? Even a layman can understand by listening to radio news that the prices of all agricultural commodities are being controlled by share market, wholesale market and stock exchange. The owners of land are selling their agricultural produce at prices fixed by these agencies and are amassing wealth thereby. Thus land today has been transformed into an item for investment of money in the form of capital just like industries. Investment of capital in land is creating accumulation of more capital through earning of profits. In this regard, we should also remember the Leninist teaching that it is the nature and character of trade and commerce governing the agricultural commodities that mainly determines the character of agricultural economy. Judged from that point of view, you will find, first of all, heavy concentration of land in the hands of a few; next, continuous increase in the number of landless peasants, agricultural labourers and semi-proletarian strata of peasantry having small holdings of land in rural areas; and, finally, transformation of agricultural produce into commodities of the national capitalist market instead of being commodities of localized agricultural market. All these conclusively prove that our agricultural economy also is a capitalist economy. Only those who refuse to fight the existing capitalist system and overthrow it through revolution, those who are interested in passing on the onus for capitalist exploitation and bourgeois class rule to less significant and less important forces, thereby distracting the attention of the masses from the real enemy to a fake one, and those who move with a sinister motive to protect capitalism, who allow capitalism to consolidate – they alone can deny this truth. It is not important at all whether they talk of Marxism-Leninism or not, whether they speak against the Congress or not, whether they shout slogans against monopoly or not; the revolutionary struggle of masses has nothing to do with any of these.

Because, one question must be thoroughly examined: why at all are we anti-Congress? Is it because of any personal animosity or because of the fact that we are not getting any share of the pelf and power that the Congress leaders are enjoying today? No, absolutely not. We are anti-Congress because the Congress is protecting by all means, by hook or by crook, the present exploitative capitalist state and the capitalist economy, which I have already shown, is the root cause of the sufferings of the people. So, there is absolutely no point in simply being anti-Congress if you are not at the same time anti-capitalist, if you do not adopt and pursue any programme of anti-capitalist socialist revolution. So, it is crystal clear that there is no difference between the anti-Congressism of those political parties who are not anti-capitalist, who do not have any programme of anti-capitalist revolution despite their talking of Marxism-Leninism and posing themselves as Marxist-Leninists, and the anti-Congressism of the parties like the Congress (O), Pragati Party², BKD³, SP⁴, SSP⁵ and others. People must not be misled by these forces — not only the latter but also the former — who are acting as typical social democratic forces, as forces of compromise between labour and capital. If the people are really interested in their emancipation, they must know that they can defeat capitalism only by inflicting total defeat

on all varieties of social democratism. I would request you to recall a well-known teaching of Stalin who said : “It is impossible to put an end to capitalism without putting an end to social democratism.” Those who do not understand the significance of this historic teaching will not understand why, while moving unitedly with the CPI, CPI(M) and others in united fronts or combinations, the SUCI constantly tries to politically expose the social democratic tactics and games of these parties in the mass struggles.

Political power of the people must be developed

This capitalist exploitation is the root cause of all sorts of sufferings of the people. If we do not understand this point very clearly, if we fail to acquire this essential political consciousness then all our struggles for proper land distribution, higher wage and democratic rights will end in a fiasco and fail to ameliorate the sufferings of the people, and the emancipation of the working people and the toiling masses will remain a far cry. The movements which are being built up daily on the basis of different democratic demands do have ups and downs; sometimes you will be able to achieve your demands, some other times you will lose your battles. Sometimes you may advance two steps, sometimes you may have to move four steps backward, till the capitalist system and the capitalist state are finally overthrown and the socialist system and the socialist state established. But unless you acquire an appropriate political consciousness there will remain two possibilities — when you will win, you will count too much on that, show complacency and may even fall a victim to revisionist thinking. Conversely, setbacks may push you to succumb to all-out frustration and defeatism. What is most important for you is to have a correct idea of the nature of these struggles and understand from what political outlook these struggles are to be conducted. Your day-to-day struggles for achieving certain political and economic demands, for the preservation and extension of democratic rights, etc., shall have to be developed into struggles for overthrow of capitalism. When you will be able to grasp this correct political approach and adopt the correct style of work, it is then and then only that you will be able to change the present situation. Otherwise, by simply raising slogans against the Congress, winning elections and even forming an alternative government and also conducting innumerable battles for proper distribution of land and higher wages, you will not be able to bring about any change in the existing state of affairs. But these battles which you have to conduct on and off will bring about a change in the situation and mitigate the hardship of the people only if by conducting these battles you become politically conscious, remain firm on your political aim, can give such political shape to your organization that, with the help of it, you can ultimately overthrow the exploitative capitalist system, the capitalist state.

With this end in view you will have to build up committees of the KKMf — from villages and anchals up to the district level — in such a way that the members of the committees themselves can chalk out their own plans and programmes, can conduct the battles, can lead the village people, can confront any difficult situation, can keep themselves continuously free from the influence of sham Marxism, they do not miss the political direction by being perplexed in the midst of setbacks and they remain firmly convinced that in the process of conducting relentless struggles, sustained, protracted struggles, there will be an end to capitalism, today or tomorrow. To build up such an invincible, politically conscious organization means building up political power of the people. By the term political power of the people we never mean formation of a government with the representatives of the people. To build up political power of the people means only one thing, that is, the people have been able to build up such a politically conscious organization of their own that they can not only conduct local struggles for achieving certain

demands but can also at the appropriate moment start insurrection for seizure of power ; they are able to conduct their battle against the police, military and the government in the teeth of severe repression. Exactly this had happened in Vietnam where the aggressors wanted to smash the people to the ground by incessant bombing, but the people did not run away giving up their struggles.

And who were those people who did not give up their struggle in Vietnam? Remember, they were all peasants, just like you. They fought with rifles on their shoulders, but when there were no enemy planes and bombers they would come out of homes and tunnels and start working in the fields. They faced the enemy with bullets, but when the enemy fled they were all engaged in the work of cultivation. When they could not withstand the attack of the enemy they used to retreat only to launch an organized offensive in future. But what they did not lose was their firm determination, courage, strength of mind and a clear-cut political objective. For them the goal was to oust American imperialism, to inflict defeat on Saigon government and to establish a People's Democratic State. For you it is the overthrow of capitalism, the capitalist state and establishment of socialism and socialist state. The Vietnamese people did never give an excuse : "How can we fight as we have no planes, tanks, bombers, ammunition, etc.?" They did not make such pleas. Were they not human beings? Were they not peasants? Did they not go without food? Did they not have to suffer from hunger, want and all that? You should keep in mind that their conditions were exactly the same as yours. Then what precisely did provide them this spirit and strength with the help of which they could sustain such a gigantic struggle? It was only because they were politically conscious. Because they did not commit any mistake in finding out the correct path of struggle and, above all, the correct political line and the correct political party. So, it is my earnest request to you all: don't forget that a party does not become a genuine Marxist-Leninist party simply by its label of a Marxist-Leninist party or because it raises slogans of "socialism" and "revolution". To shout slogans for revolution and to speak in vague terms about Marxism-Leninism can never be the prime task of a genuine revolutionary party. The fundamental task of a genuine revolutionary party is to provide concrete analysis of the concrete situation of that country and on the basis of that analysis to formulate the correct strategy of revolution and also link up the day-to-day struggles for developing an effective political organization of the people, capable of leading the revolutionary struggles. But the pseudo-Marxists of our country have often created serious confusions with regard to characterization of rural economy of India and it is my experience that most of their confusions are generally found to arise centring round the question of rural economy. Although I have already explained how the rural economy of India has been transformed into a capitalist economy with some remnants of feudalism having been carried over, still then let me take up this question again from another angle.

Problems of rural economy

Let us, therefore, examine the real problems of rural economy. For example, we very often raise the slogan — "Give land to the tiller." Your organization, KKMF, also raises this slogan and you have built up struggles on so many occasions on this demand. But you will have to understand — is it the main and fundamental problem in the peasant's life? It is true that we will have to struggle hard to recover the *benam*⁶ land above the prescribed ceiling and distribute the same among the landless peasants, agricultural labourers and poor peasants. It may also be necessary to organize struggles for bringing down the present ceiling so that more land may be distributed to the peasants. But if you think from all these that the fundamental problem in the

peasant's life could be solved by giving them some land, you would commit a serious mistake. Because, first of all, we should know that the total land that is available in India is not adequate for providing each family with at least that holding of land which would be enough for their sustenance. Naturally, a huge number of the rural population will not get any land even if we recover the total available land and distribute it among the peasants. Secondly, we know that population increases but land does not and there is a limit to increasing the productivity of land. Now, if we decide to allot only nine bighas of land then also we cannot give it to each and every family of landless agricultural labourers and poor peasants even if the total available land is recovered. Although the economic holding of land as calculated some two decades back came to twelve bighas which quite logically may be taken today as fifteen bighas due to rise of price index, etc., still then, I take it as nine bighas for my present calculation. Now, a particular peasant can somehow make both ends meet with nine bighas of land at present, but he will have children in course of time. If we assume the number of children to be three as per government's family planning, then also the per capita distribution of land will come to three bighas only for his children. Can anybody live on three bighas of land? What will happen when the number of members in the family will further increase? Thus it is clear that though recovery of land and its distribution among the peasants is still a very important programme of the peasant's struggle, it is not the main problem of rural agricultural economy and of the peasant's life. The fundamental problem is to provide employment not only to those who will not get any land during distribution but also to the ever-increasing multitude of population in the villages. This is the fundamental problem of the peasant's life.

But how can we open up employment opportunities for the ever-increasing population until and unless we are able to open the flood-gate of industrial revolution, pave the way for setting up mills and factories? But the fact is that, because of capitalist economy, all doors to industrial development have been closed in our country. Secondly, for increasing the productivity of land, for improving the livelihood of the rural population and for supplying raw materials to the industries, it is essential to modernize our agriculture. But here also it is capitalism that stands as the stumbling block. Nobody can achieve this modernization of agriculture maintaining the present capitalist system. Capitalist relation of production is acting today as a severe brake in the process, the capitalists are opposed to modernization and mechanization of agriculture. They can ill afford to do this. Why the capitalists cannot afford to do it — you have to understand that too.

You must understand the real situation in our country today. About 75% of our total population live in the villages. About 51-53% of those who live in the villages are connected with agrarian economy in one way or another, they belong to landless peasants and agricultural labourers. Those who have one to five bighas of land are about 15% of the rural population. The lower-middle peasants with five to fifteen bighas of land constitute another 15% of the rural population. Thus, about 83% of the rural population constitute the proletariat and semi-proletarian strata of the rural masses and these people have absolutely no means for subsistence, no purchasing capacity and no means at all to live on. Please do not look up to government's statistics prepared by some specialized pundits who wrongly take only those as agricultural labourers who have no land at all. But peasants having one to three bighas of land who are engaged as labourers elsewhere also constitute a large section of the agricultural labourers in our country. A great majority of this vast section has no employment throughout the year, leading life in a half-fed and half-clad condition. Thus 83% of rural population have no purchasing capacity at all. They sell their own rice to buy wheat. How can they buy any industrial product? So, in a country like India, how can we think of expansion of market where 75% of the total

population live in the villages, out of which 83% again have no purchasing power at all? How can there be a constant increase in demand in the market? And if the demand does not increase why will the capitalists whose main concern is market and nothing else go for production at all? This is the main reason for which there is no urge for industrial expansion in our country. In fact, the social urge for investing capital in the industry is absent today. Sm. Indira Gandhi is, of course, carrying out a misleading propaganda and telling, in order to confuse the educated people, that it is because of dearth of capital that India is unable to achieve industrial expansion and set up big industries. I say, this is a blatant lie. Uninterrupted development of industry is impossible today as social urge for the same is absent due to low purchasing power of the people and continuous squeezing of the internal market. If Sm. Indira Gandhi's contention is correct, may we ask why has the capital that is being accumulated in the hands of the land-owning class by way of selling agricultural produce and the capital which is being accumulated in the hands of the industrialists, traders and merchants in spite of recession become bureaucratic and idle and is not invested for industrial development? Not only that; not to speak of new investment in industries, why is it that full utilization of installed capacity is not possible today? Why these lay-offs? Why do you find regular closure of industries? Why does a continuous threat of lay-off hang over the working class? What do all these things mean? Because there is excess production, in other words, whatever little is produced to meet human necessity, even that little bit is causing crisis in production because of lack of purchasing power of the people. This means precisely one thing that the installed capacity of industries and the labour power of the workers are forcibly kept idle. An elementary sense of economics will tell you that where there is an urge for production, where there is a continuous expansion of market such things can never happen. In a poor country like ours, where the people cannot even meet the bare necessities of life, owing to squeezing of internal market the economy is always threatened with the crisis of over-production if any attempt is made to fully utilize the installed capacity of industries. This very crisis of the capitalist system is obstructing the process of mechanization of agriculture. As it is, in absence of constant industrialization the problem of unemployment in towns and cities is mounting constantly. On the other hand, it has already been stated that the majority of rural population does not have employment throughout the year. Except for the period of sowing and harvesting they remain practically unemployed. This very situation compels them to leave home and hearth and migrate to the cities in search of employment. In such a situation if agriculture is mechanized then all that village population who are engaged today in agriculture will be thrown out of employment. Those who are half-employed, being very nominally engaged in agriculture, or who are small farmers having two to four bighas of land — all of them will lose everything. If big farming is introduced and scientific methods for cultivation are implemented then it will augment production no doubt. But the question is: how will the capitalist economy of India face the challenge of the problem of unemployment? So what do the capitalists want? They are clamouring for certain palliatives in village economy of the type of Green Revolution, etc., to keep the majority of rural population confined to and arrested within very small holdings of land in a half-fed and half-clad condition by pursuing the antiquated methods of agriculture. This is the crux of the land reform policy of the Congress, one they are trying to pass off as "progressive".

Now if we find that those political parties who are known as Marxist-Leninists are also suggesting the same type of land reform policy to tackle the agricultural problem, this in fact means that in a slightly different way, using a slightly different language, they also want to keep the multitude of rural population confined to and arrested within very small holdings of land in a

half-fed and half-clad condition. This is a ploy to have the village population immured within one, two or three bighas of land to languish in a half-fed and half-clad condition just like uncivilized men of the primitive age. This, I can understand, may be a task of the agents of capitalism who are trying to save capitalism, but how can it be a programme of those who claim themselves as Marxist-Leninists! The genuine Marxist-Leninists should plead for modernization and improvement of agriculture along with distribution of land to the landless agricultural labourers and the poorest strata of the peasantry.

For that purpose, they should strive to break the old moribund system that exists today. They will have to smash the existing capitalist system because it is capitalism that is acting as the stumbling block before doing all these things. While raising the slogan of “land to the tiller” they should at the same time speak of introduction of scientific methods in the field of agriculture, talk of seizure of power by overthrowing the capitalist state. Because, we all know that we can have unfettered development of industries only by overthrowing the capitalist state and thereby freeing production from the grip and tentacles of capitalist exploitation. It is only then that all persons who would become unemployed following mechanization of agriculture will be absorbed in the constantly growing industries. So, the village people who for their own interest want introduction of machines and tractors will have to speak for revolution and destruction of capitalism.

Anti-capitalist socialist revolution — the only way out

Thus, you see that you have mainly three problems before you. First, the problem of unemployment ; second, the question of modernization of agriculture ; and, third, the problem of industrial revolution and unhindered development of industries with which the first two questions are intimately linked up. Because, if we cannot open up the flood-gate of industrial revolution it is not possible to either modernize agriculture and thereby create a continuous expansion of the internal market or to solve the problem of unemployment. And for achieving this you will have to organize anti-capitalist socialist revolution in the country. So, those who evade this fundamental question and avoid this main task on any pretext whatsoever, espousing whatever variety of the theory of people’s democratic revolution, they represent in our country nothing but different varieties of social democratic trends in the mass struggle.

But in India, except the SUCI, no other political party which is known as Marxist-Leninist, e.g., the CPI or the CPI(M), is speaking clearly for anti-capitalist socialist revolution. No doubt, they talk of fighting against monopoly capital. When the entire capitalist system is responsible for the exploitation of the people, these political parties are very cleverly putting the entire blame upon a few individual monopolists with a view to hiding the nature of capitalist exploitation from the eyes of the people. In fact, monopoly capitalism is a particular stage of development of capitalism and nothing else. How can you overthrow the rule of monopoly without overthrowing the bourgeoisie from power and smashing the capitalist system? Under the circumstances, all talks of fight against monopoly capital are bound to be some kind of hollow, fake slogans. You all know that in her speeches even Sm. Indira Gandhi does not lag behind in hitting out at monopoly capital. Nowadays the Chhatra Parisad and the Yuba Congress quite ostensibly raise slogans against monopoly capital. So under the garb of national democratic revolution or people’s democratic revolution, if any party waving the red flag intends to shield the capitalist class as a whole by putting the onus of capitalist exploitation on a handful of individual monopolists, it is having a motive no different to that of Indira.

In our country, whatever be the condition of capitalism, however backward it is, capitalist exploitation is the principal cause of all misery, it is the main enemy of the people. The exploitation in agriculture is also exploitation by capital. Land here has been transformed into capital. By investing capital in the land it is possible to make profit, to appropriate lakhs of rupees as profit. The land here has just been converted into a means in which capital can be invested for producing commodities to be sold in the national capitalist market in order to make profit. In this process of agricultural production in land, owing to the backwardness of the country, some feudal features have got mixed up with the main capitalist relation of production and capitalist exploitation, just like impurities, just like gangue in gold. So the question is: whom to fight against — against this impurity, against this gangue or against capitalism which is the root cause of exploitation? Those who talk of fighting against this feudal remnant present as impurity, as gangue, because of backwardness of Indian capitalism, instead of fighting against the main enemy, the capitalism, are, in fact, pleading in favour of capitalist exploitation whatever fiery speeches they deliver against the bourgeoisie. You must understand it very clearly. You will have to understand that those who wield the state power, that is, the bourgeoisie, the capitalists are your main enemy. Those who try to confuse this fundamental question, mislead the people, hide the truth, try to pose trifling matters as serious questions in order to cover up the truth even if they call themselves Marxist-Leninists, they are the worst enemies of the people.

Strengthen SUCI, the only revolutionary party in India

Thus you can very easily understand that the three main questions — the question of solution to unemployment problem, the question of modernization of agriculture and also the question of industrial development are inseparably linked with the question of overthrow of the capitalist economic system and the capitalist state as a whole. So, the Indian revolution is a revolution for overthrowing capitalism, for removing the bourgeoisie from the state power. If we can overthrow the bourgeois class from the state power, then and then only we will be able to get rid of the exploitation by the monopolists and imperialists and eradicate feudal habits which are still prevalent in the village life. So, it is this anti-capitalist revolution that you will have to accomplish and for which of course you will have to find out a real revolutionary party. The SUCI is that revolutionary party in India. You should remember that up till now the Indian workers, peasants and youth have had no mean record of sacrifice, bloodshed and loss of life; on so many occasions they have burst forth in indignation and rallied behind so many political parties. Yet they have not achieved emancipation from all sorts of exploitation. Because, the political parties who were so long providing leadership to struggles at all-India level are all petty-bourgeois, parliamentary parties notwithstanding their lip service to Marxism-Leninism and revolution. They are mask-wearing revisionist parties. They raise slogans against imperialism and monopoly capitalism only to hide capitalist exploitation and repression by the bourgeois class. It is for this reason that all your struggles, despite tremendous sacrifice on your part, fell on the ground. So I appeal to you all to take the pledge from this conference that while conducting your day-to-day struggles you will build up village-wise, area-wise strong local committees of the party as well as of the KKMf with such political consciousness that they can face any eventuality, fight to any extent rising above their individual interest and can organize the landless agricultural labourers, poor peasants, and middle peasants in their struggle for emancipation on the correct line by making them free from the clutches of all other opportunistic forces. It is certain, today or tomorrow there will be revolution in India. If you take twenty years to strengthen the SUCI, the genuine revolutionary party in India, to build up village-wise strong

organizations of the SUCI then the Indian revolution will have to wait for twenty years. But if the Indian people can free themselves from the influence of these pseudo-revolutionary parties and within ten years organize themselves under the banner of the SUCI, if they can build up political power at different levels in every locality then there is no doubt that you will witness the prairie fire of revolution within ten years. Everybody wants revolution; the only thing which is lacking is the establishment of the leadership of a real revolutionary party and making that party sufficiently strong. If you cannot build up that genuine revolutionary party and establish its leadership then revolution will not come about automatically. The false illusion about the fake parties also cannot bring about revolution. Despite so much sabre-rattling at present, these pseudo-revolutionary parties will ultimately drag the people to elections only to occupy the seats of ministers and VIPs. So unless you strengthen the genuine revolutionary party all your sacrifice and struggle will again and again flounder as in the past and you will not achieve emancipation from capitalist exploitation. In this connection I like to remind you of a famous utterance by Lenin. He said to the down-trodden people that in spite of glorious battles, in spite of any measure of victory in democratic struggles, until and unless the exploited masses can find out three things, that is, the revolutionary theory, the correct revolutionary line and a real revolutionary party, they cannot free themselves from capitalist exploitation, tremendous sacrifice on their part notwithstanding. With these few words and appealing to you again to make the genuine revolutionary party, the SUCI, and the KKMf strong by all possible means, I conclude my speech.

Long live revolution !

*Speech on March 10, 1974
First published in Ganadabi in
abridged form on March 23, 1974.*

Notes

1. Later renamed All India Krishak O Khetmazur Sangathan (KKMS).
2. Pragati Party
3. BKD, Bharatiya Kranti Dal
4. SP, Socialist Party
5. SSP, Sanjukta Socialist Party
6. Illegal land holding under fictitious ownership.