

Science of Marxism is the Scientific Dialectical Methodology

Emphasizing and re-emphasizing that the essence of Marxism is its dialectical methodology, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh spells out the task of the revolutionaries and all who seek humankind's well-being: to learn the methodology and process of thinking, to seek out the genuine revolutionary party and unite under it, to fight out vulgar bourgeois individualism and elevate the standard of culture, and build a well-knit strong organization to lead mass and class struggles to their logical culmination.

Comrades,

Problems confronting the country in every sphere at present, especially the left and democratic movements and all the various struggles of the people, have assumed very serious dimensions. The ruling Congress government is pursuing a dual policy for years together. On the one hand, it is trying to confuse people and create illusion in them with sugar-coated pseudo-progressive slogans. On the other hand, it has plunged into a murderous spree of fast annihilating all progressive movements, class struggle in the countryside, struggle of industrial workers and all progressive, leftist, revolutionary forces, seizing upon whatever confusion and illusion it has been able to create with its 'progressive' slogans — more so, taking advantage of the disunity among the democratic and leftist parties and forces in the present stage of democratic mass movement.

In this situation, while conducting democratic mass movements and class struggles in India, certain important lessons of the November Revolution need to be deeply recalled. Those among us who are conversant with these lessons and who realize, or those who knew some of them but have now forgotten them, should all recall afresh the experiences and teachings of the November Revolution. It is necessary to relearn them with all seriousness, get over the puzzles and confusions that have crept into our thinking. It is because, only to criticize the opponents without putting one's own house in order is a negative approach and harmful at the same time. With this,

the suffering multitude may be incited to an extent to serve some immediate interest, but one cannot really make any headway. By agitating the masses who time and again suffered onslaughts of oppression and tyranny of the ruling Congress, and are suffering yet, many parties or combinations of parties have reaped dividends using various means at different points of time in the history of this country, and they have managed to bag some short benefits, that is, they have increased their numerical strength — this much. But thereby democratic movements did not gain in strength. And this is because they made no efforts to build up the mass movements on a firm foundation. So, what is clearly evident today is that those who are getting confused by the sweet words of the pseudo-progressive slogans of the Congress can by no means be held together in the current of movement. And then those who are facing the tyranny and rampage of the Congress, directly confronting this onslaught and coming to know its character from direct experience, even if we try to organize them just against the Congress's oppression with some agitating slogans — and maybe parties having greater strength will do it better — it may lead to some temporary gains but that too cannot ultimately be maintained. How can we forget that a large section of people, whom the Congress has been able to confuse today, misleading them successfully with new radical slogans, had, once disgusted and disillusioned with the Congress oppression, become supporters of the left movement itself in increasing numbers? But they are now turning away from progressive, leftist movements — confused and misled in other directions. Therefore, even if with militant slogans against oppression we can temporarily hold together those who are directly facing attack and suffering onslaught — yet the movement will not make much headway unless the understanding of the problems is correct, the ideology, principles and the path of movement is correct, and unless the concept about the leadership is clear and the people are won back and made aware about the danger of continuing to trail the wrong leadership simply for redressal of oppression.

Cause of current despair and confusion

So, to reiterate, there have been many struggles in this country. Those among you who will be living many more years will witness many more struggles, no matter whether one wanted it or not. Struggles will build up. The suffering multitude who are at the receiving end will periodically burst forth on their own after a certain time, even if no one will be at hand to lead them, and a leadership of some sort will come up from among them. But even if some kind of

leadership springs up spontaneously, nothing tangible will be achieved ultimately. Again suffering will engulf them, confusion gather and despondency set in.

The root cause of this confusion and despair is that the approach towards the political-ideological-moral-ethical issues, so very essential for the solution of the fundamental problem of the country, remains unclear yet; confusion still continues to cloud these issues. That the well-being of the people is to be brought about, that the country has to be advanced — these are of course all true. Everybody says it. People nowadays think about it to some extent, they now speak out in whatever way they can, even if not correctly. Peasants and agricultural workers who earlier were not considered human beings — even they are using their brains in their own way. Under these circumstances, no political party can hold its sway and wield influence over people without holding out various captivating programmes or raising fiery slogans, as each party deems fit, pledging removal of the misery of peasants and workers. All these parties are waxing eloquent on these issues. But this in itself in no way makes clear what specific political-ideological-ethical-cultural concept is necessary to solve the fundamental problems confronting the country. Which is to say, the moot question remains unclarified — the question of what basic law is it that governs the social system we live in today in India, to reach this stage through change? All this has not come about overnight and all on a sudden. Changing through stages society has arrived at its present stage. There is a definite historical and scientific law governing this change. What is the law of this change? Second, what is the character of the present social system of India? What is the real character of the economic system of India? What is the character of the Indian state? Above all, what are the ethics and ideology in all this which exercise control over the mental make-up of the Indian people? Are these the concepts of indispensable ethics and ideals necessary to bring about the requisite radical change for this society? Unless we know these, if confusion continues to persist over them, if we are guided by fanciful theories, unhistorical ideas and concepts, and if basing ourselves on these we want to understand the issues arbitrarily, and yet we want to change this society and bring about people's all-round well-being, will that be possible? No, that is not possible. But this is exactly what is happening in our country in the name of bringing about social change.

Many hold that the problems of life arise from this society, this present social system. Some others, however, assert that it is not the case. Instead, they offer all sorts of fanciful theories.

Whatever that, even people who claim that the social system is the root cause are talking vaguely and in general terms. Such superficial talks will not do. You have to grasp in clear terms the nature of this society and how the problems stem from this society. If that is grasped correctly, then it will be understood in clear terms how this society is to be transformed and where the blow is to be directed for the purpose.

Marxism-Leninism, the invincible weapon

People who believe firmly that all the problems are arising from the existing social order, the state structure of the country, and who desire a radical transformation of this society through revolution and look for rapid radical change, who sincerely wish to discharge the responsibility for revolution, who do not just wish to comfort or confuse the people by agitating them somehow with talks of revolution — the first thing they ought to examine and understand is whether the state, the social and economic system of India have any progressive role left in it in the context of the present international situation, or whether, its progressive role having been historically exhausted, this order is just obstructing the road to progress. What is the character of this existing social system? What is the disposition of classes in this society, what is the nature of correlation between them? Which class is to be overthrown from the state power through revolution and which class is to replace it? Secondly, the question that comes up is how to transform the present social system. The course to achieve this end is not determined by any fanciful idea of any among us — neither mine, nor yours.

I said already, there is a historically determined scientific process to change society. Marxism for the first time revealed this road to man. Again, in the present era, the era of moribund world imperialist-capitalist system and international proletarian revolution, those who call themselves Marxists add the word Leninism to Marxism and emphasize that Marxism-Leninism is the only weapon with which to accomplish social revolution in this era. This weapon does not mean cannons, guns, pistols or bombs — it is a weapon far greater in power. Once mastered, this weapon generates such mighty spirit, it creates such organizing ability and capacity to plan, it elevates consciousness to such high a level among the exploited toiling masses which goes to arm them with an invincible power to carry on protracted battles. Those who seek to obstruct the

struggle of the exploited masses with the military might of guns and cannons are at a loss to understand the ‘mystery’ of the source of this strength.

Which is why, from Marx to Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong, all have stressed that this ideology is the most powerful weapon in the hands of the proletariat, the exploited masses — by far more powerful than, say, atom bombs or napalm bombs or such other weapons. For, it is Marxism-Leninism that teaches man to know and understand the real problems of his life, the character of those problems and the root cause. Other ideologies are busy covering up the real problems of life, diverting man’s attention to wrong tracks with skillfully worded arguments, elegance of language and amiable posture, using sugar-coated verbiage and catchy slogans. Their object is to disarm man by inculcating in him something as truth, which is not the truth. In contrast, Marxism-Leninism teaches man to grasp and to realize where exactly the malady lies, where the root cause of the problems lies, and what is the law governing the changes in this changing society.

Only with the grasping of this law can man direct the struggle to transform the society in the correct course just as scientists can harness a force of nature only when they have correctly found out and have known and grasped the inherent law of nature that guides a particular activity of nature; only when it has been possible to correctly understand the law governing a change can man control a force of nature, change a state of matter, or an order of society by exerting influence on it or accelerating the process of the change with his activities in accordance with the law governing the change. Before all this, any ideas of effecting a change, bringing about a change of the society, advancement of man are only figments of imagination, simply utopian fancies cooked up in the brain of an individual. By such acts people get deceived, human effort is wasted and all struggles become a fruitless exercise — society is not transformed. It is Marxism, the science based on dialectical materialism that has projected for the first time this truth before people.

That is why, before the emergence of Marxism a great many people, starting from among the clergy and priests, pious men and saints, religious preachers and great thinking personalities had preoccupied themselves with the question of why this humiliation of man, why this oppression of man by man, and why all this pettiness and mean-mindedness of human mentality; and they

wanted and tried to remove all these. But they had not been able to show the path of revolution that is essential for emancipating man from his present plight. Some talked of socialism even. But those were either systems of utopian socialism or else crude or wrong concepts of socialism — pleasant dreams that all men would be equal and lead life in equal comfort, share the same quality of food and dress. In the concepts of socialism of theirs also worked the idea that since all men were the children of God, they would have to be made equal. Such like thoughts guided them. In the name of socialism, of the welfare of man, some of them raised a storm, even went to lay down life in pursuit of these ethereal, unhistorical, unscientific, charming utopian dreams. But they achieved little or nothing. They could not change the condition of man and society, because they failed to understand the law governing the development and change of society. It was the Marxian science that shed light on these issues properly and for the first time. Unless one grasps the laws, processes and course of social change and progress — for example, why and how wage earners came into being, in what process did capitalism rise and in what process its decay has set in — if certain aspects of a social system, the harmfulness of which can be seen even with the naked eye, are sought to be remedied through quackery, the disease will not be cured, the patient will die. The scientific method of treatment is to diagnose the cause of the disease. So, we have to know the basic cause of the social problems. We have to know the concrete law of social change whose operations may be beyond common knowledge. The Marxian science enables mankind to comprehend the inherent laws governing a given social system, its economy, politics and the state administration, as also the inherent laws of development of political principles of a given state.

Once the toiling masses can correctly grasp this science, they will know the truth and come to possess the power of knowledge to change society. No longer will it be possible then to crush their struggle with cannon and bullets. That is why you can find, whatever the military might that the capitalists-imperialists use against the revolutionary struggle of the working class, Marxism-Leninism is the target on which they constantly concentrate their real attack. The tactical line of the bourgeois attack is to distort Marxism-Leninism, to misdirect it, to pass off such things in the name of Marxism-Leninism as would bury the true Marxian science and its concepts, by giving a burial to its quintessence. It is because they find that the influence of Marxism-Leninism is ever on the rise. This is inevitable, for, the irrepressible inclination and desire of people for emancipation draw them towards Marxism-Leninism.

You should keep in mind that Leninism is a method of analysis, a total outlook in this era to comprehend the process of revolution in each and every country under the imperialist world order, aware of the concrete differences of time and place from country to country. It is Leninism that has projected what should be the fundamental strategy of revolution in every country in this era. For this reason, Leninism is called the Marxism of the present era, the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. It means that in the present era, when capitalism is decadent and moribund and has become utterly reactionary having reached the highest stage of its development by giving birth to imperialism and is crushing freedom and democracy in one country after another, it is Leninism that has held aloft the fundamental guiding principles to comprehend the concrete process of revolution in the capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries of the imperialist world order, and to work towards social transformation.

Perspective of November Revolution and the fundamental principles it highlights

By wielding this Leninism as the weapon, the working class of Russia led by the Bolshevik Party organized revolution. The character of November Revolution was not national but international. November Revolution has thrown up before all countries a perspective of revolution and its fundamental principles in this era. November Revolution has demonstrated: the working class is capable of organizing revolution. This revolution has conclusively proved that the era of world bourgeois democratic revolution has come to an end and world capitalism has entered the phase of decadence, become moribund, opposed to progress, to national freedom struggle, to individual liberty and democracy, and thus, it stands as the obstacle on the path of social progress. Despite all technological developments and modernization extreme crisis has gripped production, which the capitalist class cannot do away with. Owing to the competition among the capitalists and the two-pronged exploitation of people — by the domestic capitalists as well as by the foreign imperialists — the squeezed-in market compared to the augmented productive forces is continually engendering crisis in production. And further, as its inevitable consequence, this crisis is casting its shadow on the entire process of advancement of knowledge—science, technology, arts, philosophy, literature, culture, ethics, which are stemming from the ongoing contradiction between man and nature — and is curbing their growth. Thus, from all angles, capitalism is decadent and stands against progress. So, it is to be overthrown with the force of revolution. Of course, it is the proletarian class which will lead this revolution. Therefore, the

present stage of revolution internationally is the stage of anti-capitalist socialist revolution led by the working class.

Secondly, in the backward capitalist countries the world over — countries which are underdeveloped compared to the advanced capitalist countries in the sense of capitalistic development, where capitalist state has been established and the progressive role of the bourgeoisie has been exhausted — socialist revolution is to be made successful by overthrowing the bourgeoisie forging alliance of worker and peasants under the leadership of the communist party on the soil.

Thirdly, even in the countries where the bourgeois democratic revolution has not been accomplished, or those countries which are still in the stage of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial national freedom struggle, or national liberation movement, a national liberation front under the leadership of the working class with workers, peasants and any section of the bourgeoisie that is willing to join and has that kind of disposition, is to be formed to organize the national liberation struggle. But it is to be viewed as part of the world socialist revolution, the proletarian revolution, and it must be conducted under the leadership of the working class, the proletariat. If some people think otherwise then they would commit a mistake and would have to pay dearly for this mistake in the sense that their revolution will not be successful at all. It is because, if the working class cannot establish their leadership, the bourgeoisie of the country would usurp the leadership and as part of the reactionary international bourgeoisie, it would obstruct the path and progress of the revolution. Thus, the bourgeois democratic revolution would end up in a truncated and half-baked way. As a result, people's emancipation would not come about, capitalism would rather get consolidated and even the national freedom, after having been attained, would run the risk of being endangered. Even the neo-colonialism that is being talked about today is recognized in Lenin's analysis of imperialism. He himself has spoken about it. To me, it is not the point whether Lenin used the term neo-colonialism or not. But the main feature, or the essence of neo-colonialism, that the imperialists in this era would virtually exert political and even military control over the backward independent bourgeois states through exercising economic domination, is to be found in Lenin's analysis. Imperialism, old style, will not continue; it will appear in a new form by establishing and expanding the sphere of economic domination. Therefore, in this era, the national freedom movements can reach proper and

successful culmination, achieve the main object only if working class leadership can be established over them. That is, it would be possible to lead revolution in these countries stage by stage and gradually elevate it to culminate in socialist revolution, and then national freedom also will be fully attained and protected thereafter.

Parroting Lenin's utterances is no indication of understanding Leninism

But these and many other important teachings of November Revolution and of Lenin are written down in books, anybody can learn these by rote and reproduce these; and these teachings are known to all the parties calling themselves Marxist-Leninists. Many who are informed more or less and have read Lenin's works can repeat his words. No doubt, it is necessary to know these. It is undoubtedly necessary to teach these to all as part of elementary education. How can revolutionary workers of today draw the masses towards them if they do not know these, or lack this elementary knowledge of history? The point I like to stress concerns whether a party is really Marxist-Leninist, whether its understanding of Marxism and its thinking and theories are correct or not, cannot be judged by noting whether its leaders and cadres can merely reproduce these teachings nicely or not.

Think how many years have passed by after those big parties were formed in our country in the name of Marxism-Leninism! How many movements have been conducted under their leadership! But what has been the outcome? I am not raising the question whether they have succeeded in organizing revolution or how far they have progressed on the path of revolution. That revolution could not be accomplished yet, itself, does not prove that their revolutionary theory or thinking was wrong, because correctness of thinking alone does not automatically bring about a revolution. The endeavour to advance towards revolution on the correct course is not the only force acting in the society. Just as there is the force in favour of revolution in the society, so also there are the forces to obstruct revolution, forces which constantly act against revolution in some or other ways in the given condition of the society. At a given time how strongly this condition and the forces opposed to revolution are acting is to be kept in consideration. If it were true that being in possession of a correct theoretical and strategic line would automatically ensure the growth of organization in favour of revolution and result in accomplishment of revolution, then Marx could have himself achieved revolution in his country. In that case, there could be no

instance in history of a giant revolutionary facing defeat in his lifetime, notwithstanding his struggle on the basis of correct theory and correct methodology. Such ideas are simply childish. Those who grasp the theory correctly are in the know that even as a revolutionary theory may be correct, it does not depend on the theory alone whether the progress of revolution would be rapid or slow.

This is not my point. My question concerns the realization based on which these big parties were formed. Was that realization and the process of party formation adopted by the founders of such parties in consonance with Leninism? Are the analyses of the particular situation in India which they have made and the stage of revolution they have characterized on this basis in consonance with the science of Marxism-Leninism? This is the basic question. Suppose all these analyses were correct, yet they found it difficult to carry forward the tasks of revolution. Then that would have meant that even though their theory and course of action were correct, it is the adversity of circumstances that was hampering them. In that case, the main question would have been: how much and in what manner to intensify the struggle of overcoming the adverse circumstances so as to be able to hasten the progress of the revolutionary movement? But that has not been the case here.

Parties like the CPI, and subsequently the CPI(M) and the CPI(ML), were formed in this country enjoying recognition of the international communist movement and by capitalizing on the worldwide glory of the communist movement that was there. As a result of the irresistible attraction towards Marxism-Leninism naturally arising in the minds of the people from their yearning for emancipation, about which I have already spoken, people in huge numbers rallied behind these parties listening to their leaders speaking of Marxism-Leninism. You see, once a party grows big in size, on that count, a favourable attitude develops among the people towards it. Whether the party leadership is correct or not, the people, influenced under its impact, get carried away simply by the fact that the party is big. Their mind and thought process undergo a change. No longer do they want to examine and judge anything else. They are prepared to lay down their life in the struggle, but they do not want to enter into any discussion or analysis. If ever they enter into a discussion or analysis, even then their method of analysis becomes subjective, equivalent to just conjectures because the party with whom their allegiance lies, in the name of Marxism-Leninism nurses a thought process and follows a methodology of analysis

which is alien to Marxism-Leninism. Hence, because the process of thinking and analysis of the workers of these parties and of the people under the influence of their politics are non-Marxist, the conclusions they arrive at are unfounded and fanciful in the perspective of scientific law governing the social change. It is these very people who get frustrated when they subsequently find that their efforts have gone abortive, and turn away from movement, even if temporarily.

So, I was saying, even if the theory is correct, if organizational strength adequate for giving it the concrete shape cannot be acquired because of a host of attendant reasons, revolution will not come about. Again, if a party mouthing Marxist-Leninist vocabulary gains substantial strength by taking advantage of the favourable circumstances and becomes a big party with a large following; even then it cannot organize revolution by sheer force of strength, if its theory, process of thinking and methodology of analysis are wrong. Revolution does not come about that way. It is not so simple a matter.

Methodology of analysis and process of thinking : the most important matter

So, what I said about the method of analysis of a party leadership, the thought process of its leaders and cadres and the process of thinking of those under its influence, is a very important point. You will have to bear in mind here another important point, too. The science of Marxism-Leninism comes out to be the correct, scientific methodology of analysis — the dialectical, materialist process of thinking. Mastering it does not depend simply on the intellectual faculty, intellectual ability of an individual. Rather, how an individual's intelligence and intellectual faculty gets patterned, that is, what shape would these take depends on the particular individual's thought process. Take the example of the world communist movement. Those who were adherents to the views of Trotsky, Bukharin or others of their camp, or who were staunch supporters of Khrushchev subsequently, they quite easily believed and asserted that Stalin had done irreparable harm to the Soviet Union. They even said that Stalin was the devil in person. On the other hand, the adherents of the Third International, with their unwavering trust in and allegiance to the Lenin-Stalin-Mao leadership, held such a firm belief concerning the issues of the conspiratorial activities of Trotsky, and about the irreparable damage caused to socialism by the modern revisionists under Khrushchev, that they regarded this to be above scrutiny. Yet you see, the adherents of both the camps claim that they believe in Marxism-Leninism and

proletarian internationalism. Both these sides, you see, call themselves communists and are in general within the orbit of the communist movement. But the outlook and opinion of both on such important and fundamental issues are diametrically opposite. How does it all happen?

In our country, too, you know, many leaders and workers of the CPI, CPI(M) or other parties believe heart and soul that the politics of our party, the SUCI, is creating rift in the united left movement to the advantage of the Congress. On the other hand, there are many ordinary workers even in our party whose conviction about the true revolutionary character of the SUCI cannot be shaken by leaders of any other party.

So, the method of thinking is very important here. This is what defines the limits of freedom of thinking of an individual. Whatever may be the talent or genius of an individual, it must be remembered that his freedom is not limitless. He does not think or act at will; he can never do so. Everyone presumes that surely he has freedom of thinking, that he has a free mind. It is true that the human mind has freedom, but that freedom is not limitless, it is relative. Even freedom of the mind has its limits. These limits arise from two sides. One is the concrete surroundings. The other is the method of thinking, that is, the process through which one's mode of thinking has developed, in a manner known or unknown to one — that process limits freedom of one's mind or thinking. This is why each of us understands Marxism-Leninism differently and also expresses it differently. Many in the society consider Marxism correct and talk about Marxism in their own way. Many consider that since they have read all Marxist classics, so they know all about it. Their thinking is like this — they have had no difficulty in knowing Marxism thus, so there is no inadequacy or shortcoming in its understanding. If those who think like this, start a discussion on Marxism among themselves, it will be seen that on some point maybe their analyses tally for the first two lines but the third line, say, will show that there is no unanimity among them. But all of them think they know Marxism. Clearly, what one feels is not the real issue that matters, by that factor; the crux of the problem cannot be grasped. This is where the question of real understanding of Marxism-Leninism comes in.

Now, about real understanding of Marxism-Leninism — what does it mean? What do we understand by this 'real'? From a logical discussion, one can find that its true meaning is the real understanding of the correct scientific method of analysis, that is, scientific dialectical method of

analysis. Leaving out this correct method of analysis, if something appears 'real' and correct when discussing a point, and even if unity exists over it, nothing is gained thereby. What appears real and correct today may turn out to be erroneous in the light of an incident the very next day. So, what is achieved thus is only a temporary unity — what is called arriving at a general consensus. This can, however, happen even in the instance of two people having diametrically opposite processes of thinking. Even such people do often arrive at apparent, superficial, general agreement on many an issue. Even people who are at diametrically opposite poles of philosophical outlook do get united on a common issue on the basis of a generally agreed upon way of thinking and work together. Otherwise, how are united fronts of different parties and forces possible? The basic understanding of united front politics is to work out a broad unity on some general issues. But whether a party is genuinely Marxist-Leninist or not cannot be judged by this yardstick. When we try to understand whether a party is genuinely Marxist-Leninist or not, whether its realization of Marxism-Leninism is correct or not, then it becomes very important to understand the character of its methodology of analysis and thought process — whether these are in consonance with Marxism-Leninism or not. But this point has not been clinched in the Marxist-Leninist movement of our country. At first, there was only the CPI. Then it split to give rise to the CPI(M), which again split further on to give birth to the CPI(ML). The CPI(ML) is, of course, undergoing rapid splits again and again. What is the understanding of Marxism-Leninism of the CPI and the CPI(M), the two parties created from the split of the original CPI, which went in our country under the label of Marxism-Leninism and became big parties basing themselves on the recognition by the international communist movement and by capitalizing on its glory? No one is going into this crucial aspect. When examining their political resolutions and conclusions, at every step we find that except on some minor issues, their main analyses, their political stand have all through been totally incorrect. If we examine any fundamental issue like the economic system of India, the country's state system, stage of revolution, or the concept of the international communist leadership, it can be seen that the theories, analyses and stands of both the CPI and the CPI(M) are all wrong on these issues.

In any case, I wish to draw your attention to a point even more basic. For, what is meant by correct Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory is not just correct determination of the stage of revolution in a general way, although that is very important, no doubt. To a party that has to work among the people on the basis of a revolutionary programme, a party which has to organize

the masses and draw them into movements against the state, the questions of the character of the state, the stage of revolution, and which classes have to combine to dislodge which class from state power are all very important and major questions. Without these, a political movement cannot get a firm footing on the soil. These together constitute the concretized form of revolutionary theory guiding a political movement. But my question is whether we can say that the theories of the two parties have become identical simply because their stands are identical on these issues? Some might say that it is so. But I don't think so. This alone does not constitute identity. For instance, we, the SUCI say that India is a capitalist country and the revolution here will be anti-capitalist socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class. The RSP, the Workers' Party and the RCPI, too, say the same thing in this country. Even some individuals we will encounter here who pride themselves on their theoretical knowledge and when questioned, they too would reply: 'The Indian state is a capitalist state. The bourgeoisie is in the state power here. They would be overthrown by the workers-peasants-lower middle classes under the leadership of the proletariat. The revolution here would be anti-capitalist socialist revolution.' Can it ever be presumed therefrom that the basic stand and theory of the SUCI are identical with that of these parties and such people? No, we cannot say so. To come to a correct conclusion on all this, it has to be seen whether the method of analysis, the process of thinking, the understanding of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism encompassing every sphere, collective thinking, collective leadership and its concretized expression – whether on all these fundamental issues and aspects the very basis of their thinking is one and the same as ours. In other words, whether the base from which their ideas, concepts and thinking about Marxism-Leninism arise is identical with that of ours.

What is correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism?

This true understanding of Marxism-Leninism, that is, correct methodology of analysis cannot be acquired by learning by rote the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In Russia, too, many a pundit who tried to interpret the Russian society by quoting from Marx and Engels, failed to advance the Russian revolution. They, too, held that Marxism was not a dogma, but through their actual stand and activities they themselves reduced it to a dogma. In the perspective of his time, Marx thought that proletarian revolution would first come about in advanced capitalist countries. Observing the then liberal environment in the bourgeois democratic system, Marx

even said that revolution could be achieved through peaceful means in those countries. Many Marxist pundits in Russia tried to understand revolution by repeating those words of Marx. Lenin had to enter into an intense ideological struggle with them.

It was Lenin who pointed out the difference between the present imperialist era and the era of Marx, and showed how, because of the difference, advanced capitalist countries would not be the nerve centre of revolution; the centre would shift to backward countries, the weakest links of the world-wide chain of imperialism, and there revolution would come about. Lenin also expounded theoretically that since the bourgeoisie were now getting more and more attached to militarism and bureaucracy and less attached to freedom and democracy in this era, revolution in every country henceforth was bound to be armed revolution. Apart from these, Lenin had to confront sharp differences and debates with Plekhanov, Trotsky, Kautsky and others on many fundamental issues like the character and form of imperialism, the question of organization of the communist party and its concept of democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the role of the working class in the proletarian revolution and the role of the peasantry, and so forth. Why these controversies? We know that all of them knew the works of Marx and Engels by heart, why did the controversies arise even then? It is because a section considered the observations and conclusions of Marx and Engels alone to be the theory. But Lenin did not consider the observations only, or the conclusions Marx had arrived at in the perspective of their times, to be the theory of Marxism. He considered Marxism to be the science, the scientific methodology of analysis and reasoning by applying which Marx had arrived at the conclusions in his time. For example, seeing the liberal democratic environment in England, Marx had concluded that the proletarian revolution would be accomplished there peacefully and through democratic means. Subsequently, in the light of the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx himself changed his idea in his treatise *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. The time difference between the two was not much. Marx had reached a certain conclusion before seeing the naked aggressive character of the bourgeois state. The experience of the Paris Commune corrected him. Today also those who are used to quoting Marx out of context and arguing that ‘this particular observation of Marx has proved to be correct in history, but that particular remark has not’ – are they really Marxists? They have not understood Marxism at all. Lenin grasped correctly that these are not Marxism. In this way, Marxism can be neither understood, nor applied.

In the same way, whatever Lenin said in a specific context is not Leninism. The science applied by Lenin, the manner in which he did so and while doing so, the way he developed that science, that method of analysis, and on its basis determined the fundamental principles, those fundamental principles constitute the main basis, and that method of analysis is the essence of Leninism. Unless one can master it in this way, simply by memorizing Lenin's observations and parroting these, nothing at all is achieved; it merely is tantamount to copying blindly. Thus, the method guiding formation of the party during Lenin's time and in present-day India cannot be exactly similar, especially because the dangerous form that bourgeois individualism has assumed today was never like this during Lenin's time.

Current spate of bourgeois individualism the major problem

In the present society, the main problem is not one of development of individuality. In the stage of full-scale bourgeois democratic revolution, that is, in the stage of revolution for establishment of the bourgeois social order by smashing feudalism, the spurring of the individuality based on the urge for individual freedom had been a necessity. But in an established bourgeois society where bourgeois rule has been established for decades and where the bourgeoisie, be it from advanced or from backward outlook, has been trying to operate some kind of democratic institutions, since that bourgeois society has become an integral part of the international capitalist system, the same symptoms in the social sphere associated with the advanced bourgeois societies would appear in the social sphere even in countries which are relatively backward compared to advanced capitalist countries. Even in such a relatively backward bourgeois society, individualism has today become reduced to a privilege, like in advanced bourgeois societies. That is, the way an individual today thinks of, examines and demands his right to individual freedom – as the situation stands today, the question of fighting for and winning that right is no more like that. Attainment of individual freedom in the era of bourgeois revolution was a matter to be achieved by fighting against despotic rule, feudal stranglehold, religious bigotry and superstitious practices and feudalism. In that phase, this struggle for winning individual rights was complementary to the struggle for establishing a society based on bourgeois democratic concepts of ethics and morality. So, at the time, there was no question of individualism creating any major obstacle in the social movement. The sense of individuality did not appear as a powerful hindrance for democratic, patriotic and revolution-

ary movements. It might have created some problems here and there but those were no major hurdle for adoption of a social outlook — such individualism then was mainly confined to contradictions between individuals. But where class struggle has intensified in the established bourgeois system of today, in countries like the USA, UK, or France, the form individualism has taken — certain manifestation of which are visible even in India — shows that bourgeois individualism no longer upholds the slogan of revolution, it would discharge no responsibility in this regard. Instead of being an instrument to win rights, it has been reduced to a privilege — what can be said to be vile individualism. In the social environment, the influence of this ugly individualism is at work in every individual within society. Any communist party, its entire range of revolutionary activities and movements are not out of reach of this environment.

In India with the passage of time, as the capitalist system is gaining in stability and the reactionary face of the bourgeois society becomes increasingly revealed, the influence of bourgeois individualism in the society in the form of opportunism manifests itself more and more. The Russian or the Chinese Revolution did not face this problem in the present-day form. Hence, they did not perceive it as we do now. The Chinese revolution was an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic — a people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class, with the national bourgeoisie an ally of this revolution. Up to a certain stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia, the bourgeoisie there had advanced a few steps along the path of revolution and stayed in alliance with the communists. After that, before the bourgeoisie seated in power could provide stability to the bourgeois class rule, the proletariat in Russia rapidly overthrew the bourgeois class from state power and made socialist revolution successful, and thereafter, it is under the leadership of the working class that they accomplished the unfinished tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution. For this reason individualism there had a relatively progressive role at the time. And here in India, it is the bourgeois rule that is being lengthened. Had it not happened and had we been able to organize socialist revolution successfully after exhausting the stage of bourgeois democratic revolution by 1930, or say, by 1947, then at the time of forming the party we would not have the need to pay such close attention with all this importance to the problem of individualism so nakedly manifest in this prolonged bourgeois social environment. But it has been necessary for us to pay utmost attention to this issue, because the bourgeois rule in India has not been short-lived. We cannot forget, therefore, that unless we do pay close attention to this aspect of bourgeois individualism, all our

endeavour would come to nothing in the end. However painstaking it may be, we shall have to make our strides, keeping a constant watch on the problem and shall have to exactly point out where lies the danger. Dialogues and polemics, criticism and self-criticism within the party, its internal democracy — all these are to be protected from the influence of bourgeois individualism. It should be pointed out and explained how, where and in what form individualism rears its head in these spheres, how it pollutes an individual and how the atmosphere of proletarian democracy in the party gets destroyed thereby. It is to be shown how individualism eats into proletarian democracy to reduce it to a privilege. Proletarian democracy is neither for obtaining any individual benefit nor for awarding any benefit to any individual in exclusion (of society). On the contrary, it is for educating all individuals to work selflessly in the aggregate interest of the society. Proletarian democracy is for protecting and for freeing the democratic process from the influence and attack of individualism in the overall interest of the movement of the entire working class. The present day revolutionary movement cannot take a step ahead without understanding the problem in this light.

How to combat the present ugly form of bourgeois individualism

Some influence of individualism was there within the Russian party too, but it had not assumed such an ugly form as in the present bourgeois society. There was individualism also during the days of freedom movement in our country, but in the background of the anti-imperialist struggle it had not turned into a privilege at the time. The slogan for individual freedom still signified a struggle. But today it has been totally reduced to opportunism and its influence now affects the intelligentsia, the middle class and the lower middle class, the youth and even the leftist political workers. Judged in the background of the anti-imperialist freedom struggle, it was not there in its present form. As capitalism gains longer lease of life, individualism goes on taking more and more an ugly form. Twenty or thirty years from now, a communist party in a capitalist country is sure to witness such ugly manifestation of bourgeois individualism as even now is not being seen. A communist party will now have to think closely about its organizational problems and their solution keeping this problem in view. In order to do this, the Leninist teachings in this regard — having developed these as may be necessary — will have to be correctly grasped and correctly applied in the respective countries. This cannot be accomplished by learning Lenin's works or observations by rote. All who try to grasp Leninism

in this way may think that since Lenin had not said something or had not made a point in this or that particular manner, there is no need to try to understand it that way. They might think that if Lenin's party could have accomplished revolution without viewing the concerned problem like this, why won't they be able to accomplish revolution in India today? If this be our attitude while trying to understand the question of revolution, we, too, shall get into disarray as has been the case with the CPI and the CPI(M). By this, I do not, however, mean to say that if our concept, understanding and theory regarding this is correct, then that is all and everything — that is, if that much is correct, there is nothing incorrect about us — we have no defects and shortcomings and whatever we are doing is correct! In my consideration we have lots of defects and shortcomings. But just because these are there, our theory or conception does not prove to be incorrect thereby, and it is meaningless to fight this theory by citing any such sort of defects and shortcomings. This is not the way to remove such shortcomings. The right method is to understand this theory correctly and to be able to provide the correct exposition of that theory. Only through this shall we be able to fight out our mistakes and shortcomings correctly. So, you see, to be able to accomplish the task of giving shape to a true Marxist-Leninist party on the Indian soil does not merely depend on the correct determination of the stage of revolution in India. Or else, leaders of the well-known, so-called Marxist-Leninist parties of our country knew very well what principles and constitutional norms to follow while forming a Leninist party as laid down in the books. But has this helped these parties to develop into a correct communist party? Rather, their leaders have become embodiment of the worst type of individualism. This is a matter which cannot be grasped by looking at their outward conduct only. Many are very polite outwardly and humble and apparently lead a simple and frugal life, washing their clothes, cleaning their rooms and maintaining their office files themselves. Such is their attempt for self-purification, such is their purity! But worms have eaten into their minds, there they wallow in mire. Vileness, envy, meanness, vindictiveness and conceit — all these vile traits have struck root in their character. And they are maintaining their purity only in their sparing dress and food! This is hypocrisy, not Marxism. As for those who are honest, such practice is nothing but a kind of masochism. Can individualism be expunged through this deceit? Through these, the ego of individualism is rather nursed and fostered. This is not the way to self-rectification of the Marxists. In reality, those leaders take to this conduct with an eye to gaining cheap popularity. The character of this phenomenon cannot be grasped unless there is adequate understanding of

philosophy. Such cheap, populist conduct deceives the people all the more. Those people need it who are weak and whose only recourse is to adopt populist behaviour and conduct of the sort in order to gain popularity. Examined closely, it gets clear that this is but bureaucratism in a reverse form. Does bureaucratism always mean holding the whip in hand? Do not seasoned bureaucrats indulge in sweet talks? Those who are experienced and have, say, gone to jail, those who have dealt with seasoned government bureaucrats have experienced that nobody else can talk in such a sugar-coated manner as they can. For this, I am saying that such outwardly simple conduct and sweet talks will mean nothing, bring no respite.

It does not follow that I am advocating a life of luxury and comfort. That question simply does not arise. The attitude of Marxists should be that voluntarily and smilingly they will accept all hardship in the interest of revolution and the party. Why should they be inclined to show off or make pretensions about this? If a worker in the party or a supporter, who may have the means for it, provides a leader with a good dress or a pair of shoes, why should that leader hide it away and not use it? He should use the dress, wear it but should never get attached to these things. But I notice, even some of our party leaders are getting attached to good living, without which they find it difficult to pursue day to day work for revolution just because a sort of disinclination for simple, frugal life has crept in them. Indeed, this is another form of the same vulgar bourgeois individualistic culture. What I wish to drive home is that Marxists have not prescribed any short-cut method for self-rectification. The method of self-rectification for the Marxists, the communist revolutionaries is to rid themselves of all sorts of mean-mindedness, pettiness, narrowness, vile selfishness and individualistic propensities, from the private property mental complex in every aspect of life.

Marxism-Leninism is to be continually concretized, elaborated and developed

Now the method with which the Russian and the Chinese communist party conducted struggle against the particular form of individualism confronting them – will that same method, those same formal constitutional rules and norms at all be effective in our country today? Should we want to copy those methods, we cannot advance, nor can we solve the problem correctly this way. Hence the urgency to correctly grasp and realize Leninism and its basic principles, apply

them in accordance with the history, social conditions and the particular situation of one's own country.

Lenin had in many ways brought into sharp focus this vital aspect for the working class party and the leadership, and again and again emphasized its indispensability. He never said that a party will be able to organize revolution just because it subscribed to Marxism-Leninism. Rather, he said that revolution could not come about without a correct revolutionary theory. By theory he meant the collective knowledge, the comprehensive knowledge of the party leadership covering all aspects; he did not mean merely a political or an economic theory because the serious problems of the society cannot be tackled simply with those. In order to correctly know the character of various problems and their origins, the knowledge of a leadership ought to be comprehensive and all-embracing.

There remains another fundamental conclusion of Leninism regarding the understanding of fundamental principles of Marxism. It is that the fundamental principles of Marxism that had been determined and espoused by Marx, Engels and Lenin through application of the Marxist-Leninist methodology of examining and analysing the fundamental conditions in their era — those principles shall remain valid as fundamental and guiding us as long as the era and the situation in the main remain fundamentally unaltered in the world in regard to class co-relationship. But the understanding of these fundamental principles does not remain static or immutable, this is because the actual situation goes on changing, and even though it takes time for a qualitative change to come about, quantitative change occurs every moment, therefore a difference, a contradiction is bound to arise while applying them. To drive home this truth among the common people, Lenin placed this point in inimitable political language. He said whenever a basic principle is sought to be applied to a particular case, a contradiction is sure to arise. This contradiction is between the general and the particular; that is, between the general understanding of the basic principles and their particular application. This means, whenever the basic principles are sought to be applied to a particular situation, their understanding does not remain unchanged as at the earlier stage. It grows more developed, gets elaborated and amended if necessary; the category of understanding gets changed, expanded and developed to a higher level. This is why so much stress is given on the particular analysis of a particular situation, that

is, of the objective condition. Otherwise, the whole question of revolution gets reduced to subjective day-dreaming.

Now, even if a particular leadership is quite aware about this theoretical formulation of Lenin, can it be presumed that simply by that awareness they can correctly apply the same in a particular situation? Lenin showed that due to uneven development of capitalism, the development in each country is different, with different characteristic features. Naturally, the application of the basic principles of Marxism would have to be made differently in England than in France, differently in Germany, than in Russia, and so on. Suppose one understands this theoretical formulation of Lenin politically and learns it by heart. But this does not prove that one has really grasped it and can properly adhere to it. Even many among us talk about this Leninist theoretical formulation, but we do not take cognizance of the concrete differences during actual practical work. It can be properly adhered to only when one can correctly understand and grasp the fundamental Marxist methodology of analysis and process of thinking basing upon which Lenin had arrived at this theoretical formulation. Only then can one realize the true essence of this theory. And once someone has realized it, he can identify and understand the particular contradiction, particular differences arising from application of the theory in the particular condition. Again, the fundamental Leninist principles do not get altered because of such differences. So long as they remain valid as the fundamental guiding principles, despite some differences in their application, these fundamental, general principles remain the same, irrespective of the situation. But this fundamental identity notwithstanding, in the details they would not remain the same. Then again how the fundamental principles remain unchanged, how, if viewed in detail this does not remain unchanged; how its frontier of understanding has extended and developed, how and when, having correctly grasped the condition of the country and the particular situation prevailing, emphasis will have to be given – correctly understanding all these is the correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism.

Distortion of Leninist concept of party, party leadership and authority by modern revisionists

Through November Revolution Lenin brought to the fore the concepts of the party, party leadership and party authority. Why is the question of leadership so important? Is it only for

running the party in a disciplined way? No, not just this. Leadership and authority are needed also to draw the masses into playing an active role. Centring round this concept of authority working within a communist party, many a question such as mechanical understanding and approach, bureaucratism, cult of personality, and so forth, have cropped up. We are fighting against such aberrations. We know that because of concrete conditions, a gulf exists between the level of consciousness of the highest leadership and that of the party cadres, the rank-and-file. There are gaps even in many respects at the minimal level of consciousness that the cadres should possess. Again, there is a lot of difference between the level of consciousness of the party workers and that of the masses. Can the leadership at will reduce this gulf of difference between the leadership and workers in respect of minimal level of consciousness? This will be narrowed down in the course of a long process. So long it does not happen, mechanical approach is sure to occur in the matter of understanding a theory and, accordingly, in practice as well. But just because this will occur, we cannot remain unguarded about it, nor can we allow it to go on increasing. The mechanical thinking that is there is an objective limitation. So, we have to understand its character and to strive continuously for uplifting the level of consciousness through struggle, discussions and dialogues, study classes, and the like. Creation of an environment of polemics and discussion in dialogue in the internal party life, and mass movements in the country in this way is the real method for continuous development and elevation of the level of consciousness, for combating mechanical thinking and keeping it under control. This is the concrete process to safeguard the party workers from mechanical approach and attitude and the defects stemming therefrom. But by that can we simply elevate at will the standard of every one on a par? To think like that is unrealistic. No Marxist thinks in this way. This difference in the level of consciousness, this limitation arising out of mechanical approach in thinking in the matter of realization of theory and its application, these will be there. And that is why the concept of authority is a practical necessity. Short of this nothing can be achieved, no noble objective can be attained.

So, if there are any attempts to undermine the authority in any way under cover of tall talks on democracy and democratic rights, it would in practice mean putting an end to the party leadership, to the cohesion and unity of the party and pushing people into a situation where they are leaderless, causing thereby disarray and utter chaos. If the concept of authority is done away with, then that would reduce even ideological struggle to endless arguments and debates in a free

for all. That would degrade a revolutionary party to an aimless debating circle. For a revolutionary party this is simply inconceivable. So, any tendency or attitude to denigrate or undermine the authority in the name of fighting the cult of the individual or mechanical thinking and approach cannot be taken lightly, not to speak of giving it support. If I undermine in any way the party authority through a particular way of discussion, the manner in which I bring in a subject or raise a question, then I will be committing a serious offence. No revolutionary party can or should accept this. Here lies the limit. In the democratic process of the inner party life, the party accords an extensive right to discussion and debates on any question. But this 'extensive' does not extend across all limits. The limit is that, in the name of debating, no one can undermine the party authority. If anybody feels that an understanding of the authority is mechanical on a particular point, then he may bring it up for discussion, but his question should be posed centring round a specific instance. That is, he should raise the issue over which he feels that the understanding is mechanical, and should point out: 'It is here that the particular thinking is suffering from mechanical understanding; this is happening because the matter has not been realized correctly, had the issue been understood in this way, such mechanical approach would not have crept in.' That is how the question should be raised. Then only will it help the revolutionary movement. Instead, if the issue and the discussion over it are pushed along in such a manner, may even be under cover of high sounding talks, as to lead to questioning the party authority itself, then that is by no means acceptable, because that would inflict immense damage, as it happened in the communist movement at the hands of revisionists like Khrushchev. In the name of fighting the cult of personality, they undermined the authority of Stalin and in the process opened the floodgate of revisionism to the communist movement. After the demise of Lenin, the interpretation and understanding of Leninism found correct, concrete and definite expression through Stalin. Khrushchev and his ilk destroyed it. Thus the basic tenets of Leninism became a subject open to interpretation as per the fancy of one and all, which in turn paved the way for revisionism-reformism to infiltrate the ideological arena. Although it is a fact that at that time in many countries the communists had a record of self-sacrifice, struggle, revolutionary work and advancement. The world communist movement had advanced far and wide. From then on, for long, the movement has been stepping backward only. Dark times have engulfed the communist movement. In the name of struggle against the cult of personality, the Khrushchevites precipitated the disaster. To fight the personality cult is not that easy. To do that, it is necessary

to know the root cause of this cult. The Khrushchevites did not think about all this. By denigrating Stalin, they destroyed the whole concept of authority in the communist movement. Stalin was not just an individual. He was the personified expression of the concept of authority. With what crucial issue is related people's abiding interest in Stalin? Stalin's name brings with it a glorious memory. His name, prestige and authority are linked to the correct interpretation of Marxism-Leninism which people are very eager to know and learn. To learn Marxism-Leninism they have to tread on the path shown by Stalin. And hence the right or wrong of a proposition has to be decided on the yardstick handed down by Stalin. This very correct attitude of the toiling masses and the communists alike the world over was destroyed through the denigration of Stalin and demolition of his authority.

This concept of authority in the communist movement is also a Leninist party concept. If there is no clear concept about this in the party and if discussions on it go round and round in vague terms, then the word leadership carries no meaning in the party. There is a discussion by Stalin on this point. Explaining the concept of this leadership or authority during a discussion with Trotsky, Stalin said that in a communist party the concept of leadership is not vague or abstract; it is definite and concrete. Otherwise, the term leadership carries no meaning at all. The Soviet party led by Stalin proceeded this far on this point. They did not establish it theoretically by elaborating this point any further.

Our party has done it. We made no mistakes on this score. Having established a definite concept of leadership theoretically, we have tried to save our party from onslaughts of ultra-democratic tendencies, bourgeois individualism and revisionism-reformism, even as we may be suffering from all the many shortcomings and limitations of ours, so that the same consequences which have overtaken many parties of the world, including the CPI and the CPI(M) in our country, do not befall our party.

Problem of individualism in socialist society

So we see that the revolutionary theory, the concept of process of formation of a revolutionary party, and all such questions are not limited to determining the stage of revolution, or to chalking out some political and economic programmes. It is a total category of knowledge arrived at through integration of and generalization upon the particular truths culled by all the

branches of science and knowledge, namely, history, philosophy, politics, economics, arts, literature, culture, morality and ethics in the background of the contemporary world and the particular society. As long as a party does not attain this comprehensive knowledge, it can never have access to the correct revolutionary theory, however much might it talk correctly about the stage of revolution and whatever might it quote from the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In the countries where the revolutionary party organized revolution successfully on its own strength, that is to say, the revolutionary task was accomplished not by depending on the help of others, the revolutionary party had to master this comprehensive knowledge by coordinating and integrating the particular knowledges and truths culled by the different branches of knowledge and science. The party had to provide guidance to people on its basis in all spheres of life. We have two models before us in this regard. The Soviet party under Lenin accomplished this task. They were successful. In China, too, the party led by Mao Zedong effected the best synthesis of the knowledge acquired under Lenin and that derived by the Chinese party from the Chinese society. But it would be wrong to consider either as the ultimate. If in the face of the problems of today, the communists cannot further expand their knowledge by integrating the conclusions of different branches of science and of epistemology on these problems, they will not be able to tackle the problems that would be created in new forms by bourgeois individualism in the socialist society. Despite economic, technological and cultural advancement, the problem arising out of individualism has yet to be fully resolved in the socialist society. That is to say, questions and issues today prompting the urge for freedom of the individual are yet to be conclusively resolved. The theoretical propositions taking recourse to which light could be shed on these questions, or the problems arising out of the longing for individual freedom could be tackled before revolution – whether they can be useful in tackling and solving such problems in the post-revolutionary situation, or they themselves will create problems, have not been given thought to. Hence, if they cannot provide the correct theoretical approach and formulations on how to grasp the issue of freedom of the individual, what will be the correct understanding on how to conduct the struggle for realization of individual freedom in the changed situation – then obviously there will be serious problems. Although this individualism in the socialist society is essentially bourgeois individualism, in terms of character, its manifestations and pattern in the post-revolutionary socialist society are not, however, identical with bourgeois individualism. To point out the difference between the nature of the two, we call this form of individualism in socialist

society 'socialist individualism'. It has to be kept in mind that establishment of the socialist society has not *ipso facto* put an end to bourgeois individualism within the working class. The struggle for attaining individual freedom which the bourgeoisie had begun has not been finally settled. What has been attained in the name of individual freedom, is equal right of the individual in the bourgeois sense and nothing else, that is to say, every individual in the society would have equal opportunity according to his ability. Nobody will infringe upon that opportunity. But the question of freedom of the individual for which the individual had initiated the struggle has not been resolved. Hence, the question that individual freedom is being curbed will arise again and again. This question cropped up in the Soviet society even after all these years since establishment of socialism there. But it is not only because of revisionism that it came about in the political sphere. The question would have cropped up any way. There, as a result, the urge for individual freedom is getting expressed in this way: 'The way I want to express my ideas and thinking – I am not being allowed to do so'. The socialist society cannot really grant this right in practice and that is correct. Because, seizing this opportunity various counterrevolutionary ideas will raise their ugly heads. Hence, the socialist society cannot really grant this right. But that it does not amount to curbing true freedom and interest of the individual, why it is not so and how, will have to be explained clearly to the people.

Constant all-round theoretical development of Marxism-Leninism essential

To show this, it will have to be pointed out where and how lies historically the way to individual freedom and emancipation. It has to be shown why, in the socialist society, no separate struggle is necessary for attaining individual freedom. The character of the contradiction between social interest and individual interest and how this contradiction is to be resolved — these are to be explained. How will the social mental make-up conducive to the all-round progress of the socialist society be made possible unless a correct and comprehensive theory covering these questions is evolved? We have not come across any discussions on these issues in the Soviet or Chinese literature. For this, we say that after the death of Lenin certain deficiencies have been witnessed in the matter of coordinating and integrating ever anew the particular truths culled by the different branches of knowledge and science, as was done by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin. The new questions which quite naturally began to crop up in the spheres of philosophy and science, one after another, and the findings thereon could not be

explained and analysed viewing them from sociological and historical standpoint so as to raise these to the level of Marxist-Leninist theoretical understanding.

Many people may hold that these are not necessary, that we may as well do without these. I do not think so. Or else, did Lenin write down *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* simply to show off his individual knowledge? I hold, if revolution cannot fully defeat the reactionaries at the intellectual level, then the actual revolutionary battles which are being fought in streets and in many other places, cannot, for obvious reason, make much headway, rather, as a matter of fact, would in the face of resistance simply collapse. Revolution does not mean just armed warfare, just winning an armed battle. Revolution means rapid radical change of society and thus keeping unhindered the process of continual onward advancement of society. Unless this is ensured fully, revolution cannot continue to advance. That is why the revolution in East Europe, after capturing power with the backing of others, having lost it momentum, has reached a blind alley today. The same thing may happen to Vietnam, too. What a glorious struggle against US imperialism are the Vietnamese people carrying on today! They have put up a struggle worthy of emulation in history. What a great moral strength they are showing! But I do not know how much they have achieved at the theoretical level. Maybe they have. But if it is like this that they lag in developing theory and are just fighting for national independence, then their problems will start snowballing to assume great complexity afterwards. Just like the Chinese revolution is encountering severe difficulties afterwards. The appeal of national independence is understood by all, and everyone responds. But if the overall understanding of even the communists remains good and correct only up to this and if, beyond this, everyone understands as per one's own fancy, then that revolution would not ultimately make headway, despite sacrifice of thousands of lives. Lenin also made this point. Following the teachings of Lenin, Mao Zedong declared during the Cultural Revolution : The enemy can be directly identified as such during revolution through to seizure of power, and with comparative ease it can be explained to people who are the enemies, who are to be fought against and how. But in the socialist society the issue grows much more complex. Because, there the enemy resides within the very self – in the different reactionary ideas and concepts of the old bourgeois society and bourgeois thoughts and culture that retain their influence over people's mind. There, when you try to explain what is to be done to people, resistance comes from within people themselves. This phase of revolution is much more complex. Herein lies our primary task while remembering November Revolution in our country today. Keep at the fore the basic tenets,

the methodology of analysis of Leninism that I have just spoken about. There are many other lessons of the November Revolution. It is not possible to deal with all these in one discussion.

Try to grasp and realize the Leninist methodology

Surely you have noted that I have made this discussion in a different vein. What I wanted to put clearly before you is: try to master the Leninist methodology of analysis, not just the observations of Lenin. Where the erudite would try to assert their knowledge and learning by just quoting from Lenin, you should try to examine and find out whether they have been able to master the methodology of analysis pursued by Lenin while saying these things, whether their way of expression bears out that they have truly mastered it. I am saying this to our party workers and leaders alike. This is the main thing. If you acquire this capacity, you have access to Leninism. If we acquire this, we would be able to apply Leninism to the concrete situation in our country. It is not enough if only the leaders acquire this capacity. Even if not all the party workers are able to achieve this capacity, that is, if at least a considerable section cannot achieve this, if we, the party as a whole fail to master this, then the progress of our work will be much slower. Despite our will and character and despite our main analysis and base political line being correct, we will not be able to generate the momentum which we could have even amid the prevailing adversities of circumstances and there will remain deficiency in the organizational capacity of our party workers.

Also, try to understand and grasp the Marxist-Leninist concepts and thoughts on the process of party formation that has been concretized and enriched by our party after having in-depth analyses and discussions. In a word, the struggle to give birth to the concretized expression of collective leadership is, in one sense, the struggle to build up a correct party. We have emphasized this to be a pre-requisite while explaining and elaborating democratic centralism. I discussed this point in detail in my treatise *Why SUCI is the Only Genuine Communist Party in India*. This had not been done to gain some advantage for us. It has been our effort to elevate it to the level of a theory through elaboration of Leninism.

The leaders and cadres of the party will have to understand all this. If a comrade finds any difficulty in grasping the issue, he should not try to oppose it instantly on the basis of his fanciful or confused idea. One should first endeavour to understand the interpretation or analysis of the

party. Even after repeated attempts to understand if one finds that the exposition of an issue is incorrect or defective, then one should point out the mistake on a theoretical level. The party, too, would benefit from it if the party is still on the right track. But to assert at the very beginning that 'it is not correct' and thus to approach from the other end is not the correct method to learn anything. Nobody can learn anything this way. Both yes or no, the positive and negative aspects, are inherent in the dialectical process of learning. Wanting to learn correctly means that the contradiction is coming into play in the right way. Without this, if one starts with dissent and distrust, how can one learn? To begin like this means one is, knowingly or unknowingly, disregarding the authority. With this attitude even if one says that one wants to learn, it will be only a verbal assertion and not a real attitude to learn. Had he truly wanted to learn, the attitude would have been different.

Suppose one has some reservation on a point. At the stage of learning some doubts may appear. My advice to him would be: Try to understand first, do not presuppose that you know everything already. Remember, one cannot learn anything without accepting an authority. And, of course, this authority is to be from within the party, not an outsider. Lenin began as a pupil of Plekhanov, he went to Plekhanov to learn from him. Beginning as a pupil did he begin by saying, 'what do you understand?', 'this is not correct', and 'that is not correct.'? No, no genuine student begins to learn from a teacher this way. Lenin went to Plekhanov with the mind of a student, with an attitude to learn. Through this process Lenin could later on understand the limitations of Plekhanov. We were in the Anushilan Samity¹ in the beginning. In the course of learning from the leaders there who initiated us into Marxism, we became aware of their limitations and eventually we moved away from them. Such is the dialectics. Those who have grasped the underlying meaning of debates or discussion through the dialectical process also know that any kind of debate or argument cannot be *ipso facto* construed as dialectical interaction centring round an opinion or argument. One main condition of dialectical debate and discussion is that it is conducted consciously and the participants are all guided by a concept of authority and a basically correct understanding of the fundamental principles of party and revolution. If one does not subscribe to this understanding, then acting upon one's personal ideas one will simply be enhancing one's antagonistic feelings and thinking.

The object is to keep the inner party democracy living and to elevate the level of consciousness of party workers within the framework of the concept of authority and correct understanding of the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism. There is no question of discouraging polemics. It is good for the party to allow the right to discuss any question. But this 'any question' is circumscribed by a sense of limit and that too involving method. From my mention of 'any question' please do not presume that we can raise any question in any forum, any time, without consent. What I intend to convey is that it is very much necessary to conduct discussion allowing ideological clash of opinion over the widest possible spectrum centring round different questions in different forms. For example, there can and should be debates and discussion centring round one opinion and another over a particular slogan, policy, programme, tactic or regarding whether there should be unity with a particular force or not. But if the opposition is on the very fundamental principles, then it ceases to be an inner party struggle, it becomes a struggle between the party and outsiders. So, there is no question of not accepting the basic principles of the party. There can be discussions to understand the fundamental principles, to understand these better and to clear the nature of confusion which one may suffer from. But the basic principles cannot be questioned because that would mean expressing doubt about the fundamental principles on which the party stands. This is not acceptable. Some comrades however, get embroiled in such talks, perhaps due to lack of proper understanding. They do not understand that the party authority is slighted by this even if unintentionally. What remains of the party then? No revolutionary party can accept this. However free may be the atmosphere of democracy within the party; that has no relation with this. This is a phenomenon of quite different category. This cannot go on. All comrades should remain alert about it. Otherwise, ultra-democracy and individualism will swamp the party in the name of Marxism. And all that will remain of democracy is just formal democracy. As a result, in this condition the party will degenerate into a bureaucratic outfit. It is to prevent bureaucracy and fight out blindness that authority is needed. Blindness is not generated by obeying an authority; it is engendered by a low level of consciousness. Blindness does not stem from emphasizing again and again the overriding importance of accepting and obeying an authority. It results from the proclivity to speak about things and issues, having failed to grasp it at all. Proper struggle against this blindness lies in seeing whether one who speaks has correctly grasped the issue or not, and if not, then to help him grasp what constitutes the correct understanding.

Some organizational problems

If we can consolidate the party on the basis of correct understanding of these questions, we will advance despite our shortcomings and the multitude of problems. Our problems are many. Perhaps the number of dedicated cadres in our party is more in proportion compared to other parties. We feel pride for the quality of the character of our cadres. From the point of level of consciousness, the capacity of our workers to discuss and debate is not inferior, rather better than that of workers of other parties. In case of a group of comrades, the standard in this respect is quite advanced, even better than that of the leaders of other parties. But despite this, our deficiency is that we lack adequate knowledge and capacity to tackle problems. If in this regard our capacity is viewed in the context of the necessity demanded by the objective situation, we are of course, deficient. We cannot advance if this weakness exists.

The efficiency level with which the CPI and the CPI(M) can make do is inadequate for our party workers. First of all, our party workers suffer from financial crisis and privation. We cannot make them free from this problem. So, most of our active workers have to take care of their financial problems themselves, and, while being engaged in this struggle, they have to discharge their political responsibility. On the other hand, those parties keep most of their active workers free from financial hardship so that they can work somewhat like whole-timers. Secondly, those are big parties. They enjoy the backing of the international leadership. The media conduct propaganda in their favour. The people of the country know them to be big parties and over this a mentality of supporting them works among the people. Side by side, consider our position. What a hard time we had to prove to the people that we are communists! Today, after such a long time this has been proved to a section of people. But what are our aims and our stand, and what sort of a party we are — we have not yet been able to reach this to the larger section of people as clearly as we need to. On the one hand, we have to fight the bourgeoisie, its oppression. Along with this, there is a host of problems including those of financial constraints, conducting effective propaganda, and so on. Besides, there is the problem of explaining to the people why none of the two established communist parties is a genuine communist party and why we call them pseudo-communists. There is also the problem of freeing the masses from their influence.

In such a complex situation, can our party executives and organizers develop themselves as easily as those of the CPI(M)? Even if our party executives are possessed with a kind of greater intellect and deeper grasping capacity as well as organizing ability than the executives of that party, even then it will be seen, that in proving themselves to be experienced organizers they are not in a position to step in to the extent the executives of the CPI (M) can. So, we have to elevate our level. Besides, there is dearth of capable executives and leaders quite competent to conduct study classes in sufficient numbers. We need to hold not one or two study classes but on a wide scale, but we do not have as many comrades equipped to conduct these classes. Does this mean that we have dearth of persons who can conduct these classes on Marxism after going through the Marxist classics? No. We can find out such persons if we search. There is the professor circle and there are many others who can explain what Lenin said, book by book, and what is what in Marxism, as is done in the CPI and the CPI(M). In those parties, there are separate groups of people for running the party, for becoming the leaders and for conducting the study classes. A true revolutionary party knows that the study class is a powerful weapon for building up correct political consciousness. New workers would come to these study classes. So, it becomes very important how those who run the classes and explain and interpret Marxism, how they place the political line and policies of the party, how they draw the references into the discussion and explain them. Because, unless the outlook of the party, its concept about morality-culture-ethics, mental orientation, thought process and methodology of analysis can be inculcated in the workers through the study class, the whole effort gets wasted. Who can accomplish this task? Only those who are the leading organizers, who are themselves part of the party life, have imbibed and are inspired with the thought and mental orientation of the party and have no misgivings about the party authority. All this they do not just express in their utterances. This is clearly reflected in their work, conduct and behaviour, gestures and attitude, appearance — in everything in fact.

Can the responsibility of conducting study classes be entrusted to anyone except to such people on consideration that one is well-versed in Marxism? In that case, professors would have served the purpose. No, that cannot be the way, because by that the very uniformity of thinking of the party will undergo severe dilution. No revolutionary party can do this, or should do this. Considered from this angle, the number of such capable comrades in our party is meagre. We do not have the requisite number of people fit to hold study classes. Hence, we need more capable

executives. We need, starting from the level of local secretaries upwards, such leaders at all levels as can gain the confidence of the comrades. I mean organizers who, whatever their personal problems or problems in the mutual understanding among themselves, are more or less capable of gaining the confidence of all comrades at their respective levels and are each considered an authority in his own sphere of work — an authority not imposed from above but emerging naturally from among the workers and who are acceptable to all the workers. As a result, they can help comrades discharge their responsibilities efficiently. We do not have sufficient numbers of such organizers and executives. What is going on now? A committee is formed to look after the work and someone made its in-charge, and so the command does not work properly in many cases. Even if it works somewhere, the capacity to maintain mass contacts and influence the people is found to be lacking.

The question of advancement of the party is linked up with this problem. If we do not specifically and precisely understand the real problem and its character and then try to solve it, and if we indulge in ad-hoc and unplanned thinking, then the work of the party will not advance.

Shake off inertia and frustration, advance in bold strides

These are some aspects of the problem. We need to overcome these soon. Another point needs emphasizing. At present, our party is growing in importance. Already, one thing has happened. Internationally, no big communist party today is unaware of our party, whether they want to accord recognition to us or not. Many of them show interest in knowing our viewpoint, subscribe to our organs and exchange their party literature with ours. Although we are yet to reach the stage of playing a role in the international communist movement, not to speak of fulfilling the need of what is required of us, we have gained some ground. They have come to know at least this much about us that we think in the Marxist-Leninist line and we are a party of the communist camp. Whenever we have been able to send someone of us abroad, we got confirmation that a large number of parties are enthusiastic to have access to our publications and literature. So, if we can strengthen our party a little more and play a bigger role in the democratic movements of the country and continually strengthen the same, we can come to the position of playing some role in the international communist movement, too.

In conclusion, I should say a few words on yet another point. Some influence of the present frustration in the democratic movement and among common people is seen to be casting its shadow on the mentality of a section of our workers, among good workers. Although they do not speak about it, some inertia is manifest in their activities. This should not happen to the revolutionary workers. We have become revolutionary workers so that we may help the people most in their hour of need. The people are suffering from frustration, so are the workers of the democratic movement. This is the worst time for people participating in the democratic movements. In these dark hours, it is the cadres of the revolutionary party who should tirelessly work to help them, and should step up their own initiative. When a car runs smooth and fast, one needs only to hold the steering wheel. It is when the car does not run well, that toil and utmost care are needed. The same holds true on the question of the political situation of the country and of the mentality of the people. The more adverse the situation, the more hardworking, active and upcoming with initiative should be the mode of existence of the revolutionary political workers. Else, the design of the reactionaries will be fulfilled. If we truly have this conviction that the people, despite being victims of onslaught, would rally in the arena of struggle again and again, but the struggle would be fruitless again and again and political parties of all shades would continue to exploit the grievances and disaffection of the people to serve their petty interest becoming viziers and kingpins, while despondency would engulf the people until the revolutionary party, the SUCI, emerges with adequate strength to provide proper leadership to guide the movements and the militant people along the correct course towards the historic culmination — if our workers truly believe this, then they should pursue their work with even greater determination in the face of the present spate of frustration. Not only of the party workers, the attitude even of the supporters and sympathizers of our party who cannot always put in as much work as the active workers do, should be: whatever we can do, after fulfilling our family and other obligations, whatever monetary and active support we can provide for the party work, we will do it and we will never say ‘no’. Or else, how shall we tackle the problems if, instead, the frustration prevalent in the society and in the democratic movement creeps into the mentality of our workers, leading organizers and leaders somewhat and they become afflicted with the habit of hackneyed and stereotyped work? Even a big party will have been disheartened at this. And we are small still. Despite the expansion of the party we are small still compared to what necessity demands in the context of acquiring sufficient strength to lead democratic movements

in the country. Besides, there are attempts to corner us through all-out attack from all sides. In this situation, we must protect our strong bases and step up our activities and strengthen our organization by working among the frustrated and confused masses. If revolution is indeed what we mean, and we do not want to play with it, then it is time to stand up with great vigour and might. There is no sense in playing with this. If I remain in the revolutionary orbit but do not perform my duties, and I am with the party considering it to be correct but do not discharge my responsibilities — that will not do. This is fooling around, this has no use. You should deeply ponder over this point.

Lastly, in order to effectively tackle the present situation precisely what I intend to remind you is that we need a powerful instrument for that. This powerful instrument is, first of all, steel-strong unity and unwavering morale of the party workers. They will have to shake off any feeling of frustration. It has to be ensured that the despair pervading the society and democratic movement does not cast its influence on them. Secondly, supporters and sympathizers should be exhorted to put in as much work as they can in their own way, to think out themselves ways and means to help the party. Thirdly, strongly adhere to and uphold the vital concept of leadership of the party. Fourthly, go to the people all the time, stay with them and try to build movements on their problems. Successfully attending to these four tasks will lend you invincible power and equip you with a powerful weapon such as will surely enable us to overcome this difficult situation. With this, I conclude my speech on the occasion of observance of the November Revolution anniversary.

Long Live Revolution !

Long Live the Great November Revolution !

*Speech on November 16, 1971
First published in Special Issue of
Ganadabi on January 1, 1998.*

Notes

1. Anushilan Samity, a petty bourgeois revolutionary organization in India during the days of firebrand struggle against British colonial rule.