

Some Aspects of United Front Politics and Party Work

In a study class of our party in Calcutta on July 30, 1969, Comrade Ghosh took up this discussion in answer to some questions raised by some party workers. At that time, CPI(M), a major constituent of the then second United Front Ministry of West Bengal, with a view to increasing its party organization and sphere of influence was coming out with its vile sectarian politics of using the governmental power and the police in destroying organizations of other parties, even its allies of the Front including us, the SUCI. Frequent clashes, bloodshed and killing resulted in rural West Bengal; cohesion of the Front itself was severely affected. A question arose among some people and even a few of our comrades whether we should remain in the Front. With Marxist approach on the United Front politics, Comrade Ghosh dwelled elaborately on how important the UF was as the instrument of struggle at that stage of the democratic movement, how and why, while exposing the highly aggressive policy of CPI(M) a revolutionary party should try, to its best, to preserve the unity of the Front like the apple of one's eye and such other questions. Apart from that, he placed invaluable guideline on several aspects of conducting the activities of the party and its organizations.

Comrades,

Requests have been made in this study class for discussing the present political situation, especially in the background of the situation that has developed within the United Front. Certain questions have also been raised on what should be our mode of functioning within the United Front as well as outside it. There are also some other questions relating to conduct of day-to-day organizational work. I shall first place before you my observations on the United Front. Afterwards I shall discuss some organizational aspects.

Historic necessity of United Front and our approach

To form a correct viewpoint about the United Front and our role in it, comrades should always keep in mind the basic point that, on the question of United Front politics, and in that sense on the question of directing a United Front and a United Front government, the objective and outlook of a true Marxist-Leninist party is fundamentally different from those of petty bourgeois social democratic parties. A true Marxist-Leninist party views the United Front as an indispensable tool to further the cause of the revolutionary struggle of the masses at a given stage of democratic movement. On the other hand, for the petty bourgeois social democratic parties of all shades, United Front is a mere exigency, a tool for serving their petty parliamentary interest and fulfilling their ambition. Thus, you would easily understand why, on almost every issue, on the question of fundamental principle, a revolutionary party has to wage a constant ideological battle with other petty bourgeois parties, even while fighting together from a common platform, with a common agreed programme.

You know that from their inherent class interest the patrons of the present capitalist state, the reactionary class and groups — the *jotedars*¹ and capitalists — are all opposed to us. On the

other hand, you would notice that the CPI(M) and the Naxalite friends sometimes support us and sometimes oppose us on different issues. Other parties within the United Front also occasionally support us and at other times oppose us. Most of the times they oppose us ; occasionally, on some issues, some of them agree with us. For example, on a particular issue the CPI(M) might agree with us, whereas the others would oppose us. Then, on some other issue, Bangla Congress, or Forward Bloc, or CPI or RSP would agree with us and others would oppose us. In any case, opposition to us is the dominating feature, and in this opposition all the parties within the United Front are at one against us.

It is true that there are conflicts among all the parties constituting the United Front. However, in obstructing us, in obstructing the progress of revolution, a common class interest acts in all of them. So they are all united against us, even though we are a small party. In the large all-India context, compared to many parties we are small. Even then, on the question of opposition to us they are all determined and they do it zealously. Actually it is class opposition. Hence, our conflict is not only with the Congress, with the capitalists and the *jotedars* — on the ideological plane the conflicts between us and the CPI(M), between us and the CPI, between us and the Bangla Congress and the other parties are expressions of a sort of class struggle. At the same time it is also a fact that a struggle is under way to develop a kind of understanding between the revolutionaries and other forces for launching struggle against that very reactionary class which, from among others classes opposed to the proletariat class interest, is its arch opponent against whom we are going to wage class struggle after having isolated it from others. Till these forces are completely isolated from the masses in the process of developing revolutionary consciousness of the people, this process of building unity with them will go on, and from revolutionary necessity itself we have to at least try to maintain this unity.

I already warned that in the present situation attack was going to come against us, and I asked you to be prepared for it. I told that the going would not be easy for us in this United Front. During the last United Front government four of our party comrades were murdered. This time we have already lost four comrades, another four have barely survived, about fifty have been seriously injured. In most cases these have resulted from clashes with the *jotedars* in league with other parties of the United Front. These are happening because the other parties, to increase their strength, are supporting the *jotedars* with police backing. But you have to clearly realize that we must not entertain the idea of leaving the United Front just because of all this. Because, in the present situation the United Front is a historical necessity.

In view of the inadequate strength of every opposition party, not to speak of the strength of the revolutionary party, to provide single-handedly organizational and political leadership to the people in their struggle against reactionary parties and forces, a United Front of all the left and democratic parties and forces is the only alternative. In other words, so long as the present stage of democratic movement continues, that is, in the course of conducting democratic mass movements, till a revolutionary party along with its mass fronts gains enough strength to co-ordinate and lead all the mass movements single-handedly towards their historical goal of anti-capitalist socialist revolution, the United Front is not an exigency, it is an indispensable instrument of struggle in democratic movement.

Unity-struggle-unity — basis of United Front politics

From another angle also you must try to fully comprehend the real necessity of the United Front. In fact, the United Front is a historical and objective necessity to free the mass mind from the ideological and organizational influence that the different bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties still have over the people. A United Front acts as an instrument of struggle to organize and mobilize in the united movement that section of the people who suffer from illusion about the petty bourgeois social democratic parties and are still under their spell ; as a result, on the one hand, the movement gains strength, and at the same time it offers an opportunity to the vast masses drawn in the vortex of movement to get more and more acquainted with the revolutionary politics, and be imbued with it. Of course, coming in direct contact and close proximity with the higher cultural, moral and ethical standard reflected by the leaders and even the general workers of a revolutionary party in their day-to-day conduct helps the people a lot in identifying the revolutionary politics and ideology. You should remember that the pernicious influence of different varieties of reactionary bourgeois thinking in society acts as a strong deterrent for the people to join the revolutionary politics. This is the only objective way to make people free from this pernicious bourgeois influence and to attract them to the noble ideology of communism. That is why, while the United Front is but an exigency to all bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties, to the true revolutionary party the United Front is an indispensable and invincible instrument to serve the necessity of advancing the revolutionary struggle.

It is for this reason that a revolutionary party attaches so much importance to protecting the unity of the United Front as the apple of one's eye, while conducting at the same time a fierce and intense ideological battle against the non-revolutionary politics of the other constituents of the United Front. Conducting united struggle against the common and the main enemy on the basis of an agreed common minimum programme and with a code of conduct, while unleashing at the same time within this unity an uncompromising ideological struggle to resolve the ideological differences between the different parties that are reflected in the adoption of the programme of movements and its implementation, and thereby strengthening the unity of the Front more and more — this is what is called the principle of unity-struggle-unity. This is the essential revolutionary principle of United Front politics. Therefore, until, through the development of very wide and deep mass consciousness, other constituent parties of the United Front are completely isolated from the people, we do require this United Front. Stray criticism or expression of discontent by the people here and there does not mean that in terms of the people's consciousness the roles of these parties have been exhausted. This I have pointed out in many earlier discussions. But still there is some confusion among a section of comrades. They think that the people have no more illusion about these parties, that they have strong disaffection towards the United Front, that we should immediately come out of the Front and start opposing it. But this is to be assessed by critical analysis on the basis of each one's individual experiences, and is to be proved by concrete incidents. It is to be proved that, in the present situation, if we oppose the United Front we shall actually enlist the support of the broader masses and not just the outward appreciation of a handful of people and some frustrated youths. Only then we may conclude that the United Front is no more an instrument of the people, that it is an object of their hatred. But the reality is not like that.

Therefore, the question of our coming out of the United Front does not arise at present, although it is true that by staying in the Front we shall have to face more assaults than we did

even during the Congress regime. Because, when the Congress perpetrated police atrocity, all the opposition parties condemned it in one voice. That was a disadvantage for the Congress. But now when the CPI(M) perpetrates police atrocity, it does not suffer from the disadvantage, rather it has become its privilege. You ought to appreciate this difference. When there was police atrocity during the Congress regime, the opposition parties, who enjoyed the confidence of the people and who are now in power in West Bengal, all loudly protested against it. If the police did so much as firing a single shot, all the opposition parties and forces and people at large unitedly stood against the police firing ordered by the Congress government. But today, with the United Front government, the situation is not like that. Among the people this government is considered a people's government. So if there is any such police atrocity, while a section of the people would condemn it, another section would try to find a justification for the government's action. They would think that there must be some reason behind the police action. From confusion they would say, 'How can this state of affairs go on ? If things go on like this the United Front would break down.' They go on discussing like this, which is creating a problem. When the CPI(M) uses the police, though some people resent it, among the broader masses the scale of resentment is not like what happened when the Congress used the police from the seat of power. So, whenever we see any opposition from the people, we should be careful not to equate its nature with the resentment against the Congress. The people's attitude now is more passive. The CPI(M) is not the object of people's fierce opposition, not to the same extent as the Congress was. Moreover, there is no united opposition against the CPI(M). Only we oppose, there is no united opposition from others.

Please keep in mind that this passive attitude of the people poses a greater danger for democratic mass movements. You have to deeply realize the objective reality in this regard today. For example, if we criticize some anti-people policies of the government, and if the Congress supports the criticism from petty political consideration, then the so-called Marxist and leftist parties immediately raise such a hue and cry as if we are opposing the United Front itself. So, when we criticize the CPI(M), the Congress support for such criticism does not help us. Rather, the few who would support us if we alone opposed it, would go against us if the Congress also opposed it along with us. They would argue, if the Congress is opposing it, there must be some justification for the CPI(M)'s stand, because the Congress is reactionary. Such cheap arguments are now bandied about and they will continue. Why is this so ? Because even the people who dream of revolution very easily avoid logic. Such cheap things would not pass in this country if the people, the very people who would ultimately bring about revolution, had even a little bit of revolutionary consciousness. Then the CPI(M) would not have had such an easy field. There would have been an uproar. But the people are getting confused, such things are simply happening easily. So we have to make our moves very cautiously, lest the Congress jumped in with us. This is the condition in which we are working. This is the level of consciousness of the people. It is a very difficult position, but we have to work amidst these difficulties. We cannot withdraw from mass movements, nor can we stop our work of sharpening the class struggle.

At the same time you have to realize that there are some advantages of our remaining within the United Front. At least, if we try we can minimize to some extent the police excesses by remaining within the Front. Because we are in the government, if the police commit excesses, we can bring about some restraining effect from within through our political stand, or at least try to do it. Although we are fully aware that, given an opportunity, they would put combined pressure

by isolating us. Still there is no denying that because we are in the United Front and in the Ministry we can exert some restraining power, however little it may be. Even that little bit we have to do in the interest of mass movement, because this is also important. Even if the Congress-*jotedars*-capitalists, on the one hand, and all the left parties, on the other, are against us, if by staying within the United Front we can put some pressure to curb the repression to some extent — though we may not be able to stop it entirely — then we shall use this opportunity to advance the people's struggle.

Along with this you ought to realize and make the people realize, too, that the struggle that we are conducting is not like the CPI(M)'s tactics of expanding the parliamentary party behind a smokescreen of revolutionary jargons ; hence we do not have to expand our party under police protection. When we organize the people to participate in the movements, our cadres will have to explain to the people that one aspect of our struggle is to try putting pressure on the government from inside the United Front to control the police, so that it does not commit excesses, and that the police does not interfere in legitimate democratic movements. This is the mode of using the parliamentary forum for extra-parliamentary work. But those comrades who are working in the extra-parliamentary sphere to organize people's movements, while campaigning for the movements, their attitude and mental preparation should be to utilize the pro-United Front mentality of the people at the same time for isolating the *jotedars*. On the other hand, along with the effort to restrain the police assault as far as possible, we are to educate the people that they can advance along the path of mass movements and towards victory of revolution only by fighting against police onslaught. They have to be told that struggle with police backing is no struggle at all. With such struggle one can win privileges, one can enlarge the party, but this will not lead to revolution. There is bound to be police oppression against the struggle that revolutionaries wage. They would not get the backing of the police for the very reason that they are revolutionaries. At best what can be done is that, with the impact of movements, by exerting some pressure within the United Front, by creating public opinion through propaganda, the police atrocity can be somewhat mitigated and in some incidents here and there they can even be restrained. But, we will wage struggle only if the police remains inactive — you can see this type of mock battles are being fought by the 'heroes' of CPI(M), not by us. If we think about struggle in this way, it has to be understood that this is a fake struggle. Outwardly it looks like a valiant struggle, but in reality this is a fight by cowards. This is the fight of a parliamentary party. Such a fight would never teach us revolutionary unity, revolutionary consciousness, revolutionary organization, or strategy and tactics of revolution. So we do not want to shy away from conflict, what we want to avoid is adventure. The only way to avoid it is to enhance the revolutionary consciousness of the cadres, to work according to a plan and programme. From the lowest to the highest levels, the party has to work as one man, as a soldier according to a definite plan and programme, so that it never happens that anyone acts according to his personal whims. Even at a moment of strong passion and excitement one has to act according to the leadership's directive, according to the leadership's plans.

You see, our politics and the Naxalites' politics are not the same. We do neither regard the movements conducted under the leadership of our party since the present United Front has come to power as amounting to revolution, nor as creation of liberated zones. Our fights are legitimate movements of peasants and agricultural labourers principally against *jotedars* on some immediate issues. In none of these movements have we lapsed into adventurism by turning violent on our own. In the incidents at Bharatgarh, Valeya, Madhusudanpur in 24 Parganas

district — the three areas about which the newspapers have raised such a hue and cry — nowhere has this happened. In reality in each incident there was police instigation. That is, in all the three cases, there was collusion between the police and either the RSP, or the CPI(M) or the Bangla Congress. In each incident, the police and the *jotedars* were against us.

Take the case of Valeya. In the Valeya village under Canning police station, we have organizational influence. The CPI(M)'s aim is to oust us organizationally from Canning, because in the last Assembly elections they got an inkling of our organizational strength. If there were no such strong waves in favour of the United Front in West Bengal, we could have ensured the victory of our party candidate in Canning (West) constituency even against the United Front candidate. Even a few days before the election date the situation was in favour of us. But in the last moment the strong pro-UF wave swept the polls. Even in the midst of this strong wave, our party candidate had a very good share of votes. As a consequence of this the CPI(M) has taken up the policy of ousting us from wherever our party is building up new organization. We already had some organization in that area ; the organization that is growing in new areas is being viewed by the CPI(M) as encroachment into their bastion. This they would never allow. So they are bringing in anti-socials from outside and are launching attacks on our organization with police protection. They used the police for their petty party interest in such a way that the *jotedars*, who generally supported the Bangla Congress, went over to the CPI(M) out of fear.

For, the practice of these *jotedars* is such that today they may support one party, but tomorrow if they find that another party has more power to give them protection, they would shift their allegiance. They come to a party only to seek protection. They do not come to be active members. If tomorrow the Congress comes to power again, they would discard the CPI(M) flag and flock to the Congress. Such is the character of the *jotedars*. This is their class character. Under this situation, in the Valeya village the CPI(M) threatened the peasants belonging to our organization to leave the SUCI and be members of the CPI(M). They went on telling that these peasants have to enlist themselves as members of the Krishak Samity², otherwise they would not be allowed to live in the village. On the one hand, they started to put pressure on the owners of those *benam*³ lands which the peasants had recovered through movements conducted under the leadership of our organization, to evict those peasants and, on the other hand, they tried to forcibly occupy these lands. This started the trouble there. But you have seen how the press has twisted the reports. At whose behest have they done this ? They have done it at the behest of the CPI(M), or elsewhere of the Bangla Congress or in the interest of the RSP. In not a single instance have we launched an offensive in an adventurous way. In not a single instance has the police come to our aid. Nowhere have we joined hands with the *jotedars* and attacked other parties. Nowhere has it happened that the administration was behind us, the police was backing us, and with their help and through violence we have expanded our organization. Nor have we expanded our party by enlisting the anti-socials and intimidating others, or by recruiting the *jotedars*. We did not want to enlarge our party by these means. Because, if we enlarge our party by recruiting *jotedars* the party would not belong to us. The *jotedars* would not come to the party for ideological reasons ; if any of them would come because of ideology, that would be an individual solitary affair ; as individuals some of them may come. Like Engels came to the party individually. He who comes as an individual comes as a revolutionary. He would not remain a *jotedar*, would not be considered as a *jotedar*. He would then lead peasants' movements against other *jotedars*. He would not belong any more to the *jotedar* class. However, that is not what we are considering here.

So, this is the objective situation. In this situation, the fissiparous groups and religious fundamentalists like the Jana Sangh⁴ are waiting in the wings. As soon as whatever attraction the people still have towards left movement evaporates, they would come out in the open. The ruling CPI(M) leaders are not conscious of this danger. Throwing to the wind the communist ideology and its quintessence, they are going on misleading the people with tall talks and sweet words, just as the Congress did. They are thus pulling down the prestige of communism and maligning it. But this can continue only for some time. Soon people would realize that this is a new type of deception. This is like iron fists in velvet gloves. This practice is going on. They want to spread this type of politics. What else are they doing ? They are using the police to further their petty party interest. The police bosses are also thinking that the CPI(M) is the big party ; if they keep the CPI(M) in good humour, they would be safe and sound. As a result, irrespective of whether the CPI(M) has any organization at some particular place or not, whether it is just or unjust, they are following the dictate of the CPI(M). The police must be given to understand that we do not expect any favour from them. But what we demand of them is neutrality of action. If we break the law we do not beg any mercy from anybody. If out of necessity of democratic movements we have to violate the established law, we would be prepared to face the punishment. We only demand this much that if we slap somebody, the police would bring a charge of slapping against us and not of bomb throwing, which they frequently do. These are excesses. They are equating those who are doing wrong with those who are resisting the wrong-doing, and are submitting the report stating that both have indulged in rioting. And between the two they are arresting members of only the weaker party.

In this context I would like to draw your attention to another point. The essence of revolutionary purposiveness is that the revolutionaries do not, under any circumstances, lose sight of their ultimate aim and purpose of struggle, and placed in any situation or faced with any event they are not caught unawares. Remember that the ruling class, the vested interests and all the reactionary forces which provide social support to the capitalist state structure are against us. No matter how much the CPI(M), the Naxalites and other parties of our country which call themselves Marxists doubt whether we are a genuine revolutionary party of the working class or not, the bourgeoisie and those in the state power have made no mistake in identifying us. Since long they have gradually been realizing wherein lies real danger for them, and they have been keeping watch on us. After 1967 they have clearly realized where lies their real danger. Do not forget that the bourgeoisie brand some parties as posing 'danger' but they do not really consider them to be dangerous. They do not want to give publicity to the party which they truly consider dangerous, so that it does not gain much strength. The bourgeois tactics is to keep the people in the dark about that party which the bourgeoisie consider to be posing the maximum threat, till it gains the strength to objectively pose the threat and appears as a recognized force of movement. Because, if this is revealed, it will have such an electrifying effect that people would rally round the party, and the bourgeoisie would have no way to stop it. So they use all their publicity machinery in such a way that least publicity is given to that party. Unless forced by circumstances, the bourgeois news media do not give any publicity to that party, and when they have to, their tactics is only to spread confusion about the party. The bourgeois tactics is to let the parties, which talk of revolution but do not pose any threat, play at revolution ; and the bourgeoisie publicize the latter's mock postures of revolution as highly dangerous actions and at the same time, making law and order an alibi, they consolidate their repressive machinery. In this way they frustrate the preparations for revolution by the genuine revolutionaries. This is a special feature of the bourgeois class character.

You have witnessed how the publicity of the Naxalbari movement has spread throughout the country. How has the news spread so quickly ? Has this happened through their organ *Deshabrati* ? How much is its circulation ? So the publicity has not spread through their organ. I would ask my Naxalite friends to seriously think over it. Who has made Naxalbari a well-known name throughout the country ? It is the bourgeois press. Why have they done it ? The objective is to arm the fascist state power in India with more repressive machinery. They do not give any publicity to the movements which they are truly afraid of, which they think, if they spread, may lead to revolution. They do not give any publicity to such revolutionary ideas. They do not publicize such leaders. Check my words with what is happening. So many parties organize rallies much smaller than ours. But the press gives big publicity to them. Whatever they say gets published and conveyed to the people. Hundreds of thousands of people assemble at our meetings. But do the newspapers give publicity ? They do not. They publish only the least bit which they are circumscribed to do. About us they publish some news centring round our differences with other parties within the United Front, which they twist, and use to incite one party against the other in their attempt to wreck the United Front. The history of Marxist movements shows that the bourgeoisie tries first to keep under wraps what it fears — by not giving it any publicity. So the revolutionary party carries out what propaganda it can, basing itself on its strength. Engaging its cadres it raises funds from the people to carry its ideology to them. And the bourgeois newspapers are full of fanciful stories of revolution and romantic tales of the pseudo-revolutionaries, who talk big about revolution and sometimes even carry out adventurous actions.

I am not saying that a revolutionary party never gets any publicity, but it gets the publicity only to the extent that it can force the bourgeois media to give it, under pressure of its organizational strength or of the movements, which stand out so much as a glaring fact before the people that the media cannot but publish it, which neither the bourgeoisie nor the press can deny. But even then the bourgeois media try their utmost to minimize its importance, to belittle it, to give it a twist and to distort it. This is the mode and style of action of the bourgeois class, of the reactionaries. In this situation our party stands alone inside the United Front government and also outside it in the context of the different political parties and forces and the press. But in the context of staying with the people we are not alone. We are with the people, though we do not command enough public support. A large section of the people still do not know much about us or are wrongly informed. May be people are getting to know somewhat more about our party and perhaps they are getting attracted to us now, but there is also some confusion along with the attraction. For instance, on the issue of our stand on *gherao* there is both appreciation and deprecation. The appreciation, too, has not stemmed from the understanding of our party's stand. Many of those who are attracted are not acquainted with what our party is trying to convey.

Taking advantage of the low level of consciousness of the people the bourgeois press raised a hue and cry over *gherao*. Their sole motive was to confuse the people and malign the progressive labour policy of the United Front government — the policy which was first promulgated by our party at the time of the first UF government in 1967. At that time I had repeatedly and elaborately explained that we should never give indulgence to any irresponsible and aggressive action in this matter. Because, we were conscious that the UF government would have to function within the constitutional framework of the capitalist system. But the question that arose was, 'How should the revolutionaries view the issue of constitutionality or legality ?' Surely, they should approach it only from the point of view of people's interest. I had then explained that

every student of ethics and jurisprudence knows that in this exploitative social system, what is legal need not always be legitimate, justified, moral and humane. Similarly, everything illegal in the eye of law need not be illegitimate, unjustified, immoral and inhumane. On the basis of this outlook we proclaimed that the task of the United Front government should be to encourage all legitimate and democratic movements of the people. With this aim and objective, the United Front government will, on the one hand, ensure that police do not interfere in the legitimate, democratic movements of the people. This would give a breathing space to the legitimate, democratic struggles of the people, which were always ruthlessly crushed by the erstwhile Congress government. On the other hand, along with this struggle and in the background of this struggle, we should try to courageously enact new legislation and amend old laws in conformity with the interest of the people. With this outlook, if the United Front government, with courage, conviction and firmness, can bring in reforms that are possible within the constitutional framework, if it can eradicate corruption, control the bureaucracy and create a congenial atmosphere for the growth and development of legitimate democratic movements, then that would be an act in the people's interest. But taking advantage of the excesses committed by the other constituents of the UF in the name of *gherao*, the circles with vested interest are wrongly interpreting and wilfully distorting this policy.

In fact, what has been taken by most people as our stand is not what our party has said, but what the bourgeois propaganda has been publicizing as our stand. This has happened because we do not have the requisite organizational network among the vast masses of people, we do not have the necessary propaganda machinery. Compared to the need of sufficiently expanding the organization of the party so as to maintain contact with the vast masses of people, we are still weak. This lack of required strength to lead the revolution, that is the relative weakness of the revolutionary party, is today a main problem before the revolutionary working class movement and democratic mass movements in India. Whether we are stronger than some party, or we have greater mobilizing power than some other party or whether in such and such areas we have conducted more militant class struggles than other parties — all these are not at all relevant here. The reality is that even in West Bengal we lack the necessary strength. We have no reason to be complacent about how much stronger we are than this or that party. Like philistine social democratic leaders we cannot be proud that one of us is a Minister in the government. We should not have this mentality. Even if one day we become stronger than those left parties, which are now bigger than us, we have to keep in mind that we would be still a long way off from directing the mass organizations of our country on a revolutionary course, or from firmly establishing the revolutionary ideology among the people. It ought to torment us that we are still small compared to our task. This torment shall not lead us to despair ; it shall motivate us to speedily overcome the difficulties within the limits of the objective situation and to gain that strength. There should not be any lapse in our effort. We know that even with our efforts, revolution may not come. Because, many factors conducive to revolution, many developments, contribute to the success of revolution ; hence if we fail, even after best of our efforts, to accomplish revolution, then historically the failure was inevitable. At least we would not be blamed for that. History would be witness to the fact that we spared no effort. Our struggle is to ensure that nothing is wanting in our efforts.

To free ourselves from the shortcomings and defects we ought to have a clear perception of the complex situation of today. Often we are victims of a casual and stereotyped attitude. We have to keep in mind that there must be planning so that we can effectively and speedily carry

out our mass contact activities and the daily routine works. We must see to it that we carry our distinct political line to the people in a planned way in order to educate and organize them and thereby also elevate our own ideological-political-cultural standard and revolutionary character. Keeping this in view I shall now discuss some concrete organizational questions.

Every work connected with and conducive to revolution is a kind of struggle

A comrade has asked whether stereotyped day-to-day party activities can help us attain revolutionary character. It is not clear in the first place what the comrade has meant by stereotyped activities. If he means carrying out routine party work, like selling party literature, regularly also through door-to-door approaches, participating in street collection, putting up posters, visiting party office, giving company to other comrades at party centres, attending party classes — if the comrades do all these in a stereotyped fashion, without establishing public contact, neither associating with people around them nor associating themselves with the democratic movements of the people, on individual as well as collective basis involving all party comrades in a locality, if they do not carry out political-ideological campaign among the masses through door-to-door approach and personal contact, if they do not have a clear-cut political programme, a well-defined method of campaign, if they do not have contemplation or make any attempt to build mass organizations with those people, that would certainly not lead to attainment of a genuine revolutionary character. Our comrades should bear in mind that day-to-day programme of entrenching themselves in a tenacious political campaign, keeping close contact with the people and thereby intensifying the campaign, chalking out plans to build up mass organizations, participating in each and every democratic mass movement as it grows, and making plans and directing every effort towards building up mass movements — all these are a kind of struggle and these are related to a particular stage for developing required organization for democratic and revolutionary movement on the basis of adequate consciousness. Such struggles, too, are revolutionary in character.

The struggle that the revolutionaries conduct does not necessarily mean a particular form of struggle, that is, the form of direct confrontation, barricade fights or pitched battles. Because, such forms of struggle do not materialize in a day ; and when they come, as they sometimes do at the height of militant mass movements, they do not go on continuously for a long time. A revolutionary organization capable of conducting such a protracted struggle that will eventually transform into one for seizure of power — such an organization takes the revolutionaries a long time to build up. The revolutionaries have to wage a sustained and painstaking struggle, every day at that, by co-ordinating three tasks — the struggle to build up party organization, on the one hand, and, on the other, organizations for conducting democratic mass movements and thirdly, propagating the revolutionary ideology.

Now, the situation today is not such that we are starting the battle for revolution right away, nor is there a direct fight with total involvement of the people against the police or anyone else. Besides, movements like the ones that Calcutta witnessed on issues like tram fare-rise, or call for general strike or on other issues — what we call spirited combats — do not come about frequently. From the comrade's question it appears to me that he thinks how can they build up revolutionary character without such struggles. Well, I ask you : Is it possible for the

revolutionaries to develop this kind of struggle every day and continuously at that ? Has this ever happened in the revolutionary history of any country ? Then how do the revolutionaries build up their character ?

Party workers should realize that revolutionary struggle has so many stages of development. It has different stages of growth. At the very initial stage, when thoughts of revolution first germinate in the society arising out of the human yearning for freedom from exploitation, these thoughts stir up the people. Gradually, one by one, people get influenced by these thoughts and inspired they come forward to build up a revolutionary party. When such is the objective condition in a country at the initial stage of revolutionary struggle, do the handful of revolutionaries start the revolutionary uprising right then ? Are those few revolutionaries to start firing at whomsoever they may encounter, or finish their revolutionary programme by shooting down a few policemen ? No, certainly not. Then how to begin the struggle in such a situation? Before the revolution, through long and painstaking struggle they have to build up the requisite organizational groundwork for revolution. And indeed this is an arduous struggle.

It would be a grave mistake to think that revolutionary struggle means only armed insurrection or barricade fight, and that the various forms of struggle the revolutionaries have perforce to wage to build up the revolutionary organization or to pave the way for armed uprising are not revolutionary struggles. Such trend of thinking arises from petty bourgeois romanticism, pessimism, frustration and despair. When frustration, despair and pessimism take root in the society, that section of the leading youths who lack comprehensive revolutionary consciousness, who do not understand the complex process of bringing about revolution, that is, who do not realize how, by co-ordination of countless struggles through a myriad of complex processes the cherished revolutionary struggle takes shape — such cadres who lack the revolutionary consciousness suffer from desperation and restlessness, thinking that nothing is being achieved. As I said, they think that only a particular form or pattern of struggle is revolutionary.

They have failed to understand that it is wrong to think that only one form and pattern of struggle is revolutionary and the rest are not. They ought to realize that all struggles conducive to revolution are, in fact, revolutionary struggles. The ideological campaign to build up the party organization is also an arduous revolutionary struggle. It needs a lot of patience to conduct this struggle. Because, winning this battle is often much more difficult than fighting street battles. The struggle to win over to the revolutionary side one individual after another amidst the pervasive atmosphere of frustration, or the struggle to establish the supremacy of the revolutionary ideology over the opposing ideas is not any easier than the armed struggle which the revolutionaries conduct. For example, in post-revolution China, see how complex the revolutionary struggle has become, though the question is no longer of overthrowing the ruling bourgeoisie ; there is no question of fighting against the army, police and state machinery. What an intense ideological struggle they have unleashed among themselves through the Cultural Revolution. This Cultural Revolution is not only more painstaking and arduous than the victorious revolutionary battle conducted directly against the army of Ziang Ky-shek, but it is much more complex.

Hence, revolutionary struggle does not mean only one particular form of struggle. We now gradually use the word struggle in such a way that we do not consider the day-to-day work of the

party as struggle. We think that ideological struggles, such as bringing out the party organ, taking it to the people, conducting polemical exchanges and revolutionary ideological propaganda against counter-ideas, are not struggles, are not battles ; these we think to be mere routine work. Hence the pattern of our work also becomes stereotyped.

Think of the thousand and one types of technical work that the comrades manning our party office have to do every day. These are such vitally important functions, that if they are left unattended even for a day, the overall functioning of the party would be seriously hampered — there would be a gap in maintaining link and communication and a disruption in the system of conducting the daily party activities ; there would be general disorder. Same is the case with running party centres and party communes. There has to be regular maintenance, attention has to be paid to the health of each member, their daily necessities have to be taken care of ; there are various daily chores and routine work. Apparently all these works look very uninspiring, ordinary and boring. It may seem that there is nothing revolutionary about them. But really it is not so. Take for instance, all the routine activities that need to be done for the daily running of the party press, the regular and timely publication of the party literature, their circulation and despatch. If these are not done, the party would be bereft of a vital and powerful instrument of ideological campaign. Such is the importance of these works. They are all part and parcel of the party's revolutionary work ; they have to be conducted in a way that is conducive to revolution and with revolutionary purposiveness. But viewed in isolation and detached from the total revolutionary struggle, all these types of technical work would seem to be very ordinary, unimportant and mere monotonous routine.

It requires a very high degree of revolutionary consciousness to carry out such duties for days and years together with a happy and peaceful mind and with revolutionary integrity, devotion, dedication and sense of purpose. Because of lack of adequate revolutionary consciousness many comrades have a mistaken notion that these routine works are rather unimportant trifles and not as important as building up mass struggles or mass movements. Such a notion is totally wrong. Rather, it is often seen that those who can carry out such so-called trifling work with ability, they can discharge the party responsibilities better than many others.

In this connection I would like to add one or two important points. One important trait among others, or an acid test, of a high communist character is that whenever he takes up any work, he does it with such devotion, meticulousness and flawlessness that we hardly find any parallel. This applies to all types of work, big or small. He performs each and every work with utmost care, concentration and perfection. Even in doing small things like sweeping a room clean, he does it with a creative mind. Because, to a revolutionary no work is mere trifle. So I say, do not carry out any work in a casual or non-serious manner. Because, if you do not do every work with all seriousness, thinking it to be unimportant, then not only will the work be spoilt, but the process of developing integration in your method of thinking would be impeded. A casual attitude is detrimental to development of integrity of character. So when you take up any task, small or big, apply your whole mind to it and try to do it with perfection.

Moreover, we all know that party communes or party centres are also a kind of party organization, though of a different character. So, running these centres well from every point of view as party organizations should be the common concern of all the members, both male and female. But most often it is found that the household chores, which have to be done for daily

living are attended to by the female comrades only, even when these cause unbearable hardship or strain. Others do not share such work unless compelled to do so. I do not know whether the party leaders have given any serious thought to this problem for a correct and rational solution.

Another point has also drawn my attention ; I am talking about the leaders, not about the general comrades. Some leading comrades, who are of sound health and are not so aged, have developed a peculiar habit of always asking the junior comrades of petty services, like bringing a glass of water, which they could themselves do very well and ought to do. But they do not do it, they ask a junior comrade to do it. It is true that the junior comrades do not mind it. However, that is their part. But the leaders on their part should not be averse to doing this sort of work as a matter of habit and practice. Otherwise, this bad habit will not harm them alone ; others also may easily fall victim over time. Let me now resume the discussion on routine work.

Importance of painstaking political campaign even amidst despair all around

You must realize that the day-to-day work I have already mentioned about is not mere routine work. It requires a lot of concentration, ability to provide leadership, organizational ability, theoretical ability, determination and doggedness. When a revolutionary fever seizes the people, when a tide of mass movements sweeps over the land, when fights against oppression are all around, people agitate and jump into the struggle ; even those who never wanted to participate in struggle join the fray, and people rally in thousands and thousands in the struggle. There is no dearth of people in the forefront of struggle. These struggles, which some party workers consider to be the only form of revolutionary struggle, also draw in their folds people who do not have the slightest revolutionary consciousness. Because, a fever of revolution and fight grips the country. But when there is a lull, when the reactionaries are on the offensive, but real resistance movements of the people cannot be built up, then how should we build up the movements by organizing the people ? In that adverse situation you have to keep your cool and through analysis, polemical discussions and propaganda, clearly expose before the people the class character of the opponents' ideology and propaganda and show how they are confusing the people through such propaganda, tall talks and revolutionary verbiage. Our task then is to defeat the propaganda of the opponents through such painstaking struggle and build up the organization by convincing the people. This is a much more complex struggle. Amidst frustration and despair all around, when there is no fervour of movement, when the situation seems hopeless, at that time carrying out this struggle voluntarily only on the strength of revolutionary consciousness is possible only for a dedicated, class conscious worker. One cannot do it if one does not have revolutionary consciousness. It demands that one has to stay with the people and carry out the routine work, participate in the routine programmes ; one cannot do it without the steadfastness born of revolutionary consciousness.

Many do not like this work of regular campaign, attending political meetings, selling the party literature and establishing mass contact through door-to-door approach. These do not appeal to them. They think that let some action happen, they would then clinch the issue ; in other words, they would somehow complete the task of revolution within two, three days and then for five days they would relax. Why do they think in this way ? Because, they cannot effectively convey the party's political approach, nor can they effectively build up the struggle,

they cannot stay with the people and attract them to revolutionary ideology through discussions and propaganda, cannot enthuse them, cannot build up new organizations, cannot draw the youth into these organizations and wean them away from criminal activity or extremist ideology. As a result, they start thinking that nothing much is happening. They begin to feel that unless some precipitate action takes place, revolution will not materialize. But have they ever thought how this action would take place? Does it mean that all the advanced cadres who are here should somehow get hold of some firearms and go out on the streets for a confrontation? What good would that do? They cannot make the slightest dent into the state machinery. Those who are thinking in this way have not understood that the revolution that we cherish, the battle that we want to wage is a class war, a people's war. This protracted people's war can be waged only if a major section of the people are organized under the banner of revolutionary ideology and are imbued with revolutionary political consciousness. This protracted people's war can never grow out of sporadic and spontaneous popular outbursts which flare up from time to time, but which lack the conviction of revolutionary political ideology or revolutionary theory. This can only happen if we can correctly guide the spontaneous movements that develop in the country based on the people's discontent, and thereby imbue the people with revolutionary consciousness and gradually build up the people's instruments of struggle.

But are the movements in our country of that nature? What types of movements are going on in our country? Take the case of the food movement. Thousands of people rallied and participated in the movement and fought for the cause; yet afterwards they are lost to the movement. Why does this happen? Because, when the people jumped into the movement they did not do so on the basis of a revolutionary consciousness; they did not possess the consciousness, patience, dedication and mental make-up to pursue the day-to-day struggle to build up the revolutionary party, and to bring about revolution. But all the same, they did come in thousands to plunge into the battle. The climate of movement that developed based on a particular issue drew the people into the movement. But such a movement involving thousands of people does not develop often. When resentment builds up in the people, it eventually bursts out on any issue, whether there is any leadership or not. Because of the lack of revolutionary political leadership and lack of political consciousness within these movements, these spontaneous outbursts subside and peter out after a while. Another period of frustration follows. The people groan under oppression till they again burst out in another spell of spontaneous agitation. All the mass movements witnessed in our country, except a very few, are of this character. Under continuing oppression, the patience of the people eventually gets exhausted and an upheaval comes like a tide, but neither under the guidance of a revolutionary ideological leadership, nor embodying revolutionary political consciousness. And the political parties who exercise leadership over these movements through committees, do not keep track as to where all these people come from to join the movements, and where they all disappear afterwards. Time and again our party has sought to point out to others who combine in a United Front to lead a movement, that they do not steer the movement like generals, rather they call for movement from above, and then court arrest, go to prison and be out of action. On the contrary the task ought to have been, along with the call for movement, to organize those who want to join the movement into people's committees, and to bring these committees in the position of leadership and conduct the movement through these committees. At the same time, within the movement, let the political-ideological struggle between the parties go on. Without such ideological struggle the political consciousness of the people cannot be sharpened. Because, the parties that come forward to unitedly lead the movement do not share the same attitude towards movement. Some

do bungling within the agitation. It is the people who suffer brutal repression, who die in police firing ; the parties campaign against this and later capitalize on it during the hustings, win electoral victories, get garlanded and become ministers or occupy positions of power. This is the attitude of most of the parties about movement.

Not spontaneous, sporadic agitational movement,

but organized, conscious, protracted movement

is the need of the hour

On the other hand, a genuine revolutionary party wants that through such agitational movements a measure of political consciousness of the people grows, that the political leadership of the people develops to an extent and the people's committees develop as instruments of struggle with political consciousness. Such people's committees would not be permanent bodies. In each movement, they would grow maintaining some level of consciousness, and then would disappear after the movement is over. Thus in each movement, if the people's committees grow with some revolutionary consciousness, the people would learn to guide the movement themselves, and to build up the revolutionary leadership. When the people are in the midst of movement, they may not have the wisdom, but they do have excellent fighting fervour and clarity of outlook regarding fighting. They do not become victims of the vices which easily creep into the leaders, penetrate into the parties. Along with this fervour, if they get equipped with political consciousness and wisdom they can themselves discern how far the movement could be pushed ahead and how to conduct them. When they are able to do it they can also see which of the parties in the leadership are truly guiding them ideologically and morally, are providing support to their plans. As this realization dawns, the pseudo-revolutionary parties will be isolated from the people. This is the approach of our party towards democratic mass movements.

But such movements do not grow at our bidding. It does not grow just because a revolutionary party wants it to grow. Our Naxalite friends are raising the slogans, 'political power comes out of the barrel of a gun', 'peasants create liberated areas in the countryside'; they are exhorting the people to fight and are thinking that revolution has started. I ask them to seriously consider whether revolution has already started and whether it is possible to bring about revolution in this way. See what is happening in reality. Revolution is reduced to fiery talks in coffee houses and street corners, and a handful of people have spread out to some remote countryside and are carrying out some armed actions. But that, too, in how many places and to what extent. If the Naxalite claim of popular support were true and if that big were their organizational base, if only five of them could organize the struggle in each locality, then by now peasant revolution would have swept across the whole of West Bengal and large areas of India. But is that happening ? Sparks are coming out of fiery debates and the fire of peasant revolution is aflame among students in university campuses, in college premises and clashes of rival students' unions. But in reality peasant revolution is not to be seen anywhere. Because, revolution is not such an easy affair. We have differences of opinion with them on the question of peasant revolution, which they are advocating. We hold that the stage of revolution in India is socialist revolution. What I am saying is that even if they have to carry out peasant revolution,

they have to go through prolonged painstaking work, which some of the comrades call boring routine work. We have to carry out ceaseless and intense ideological struggle to expose all the bourgeois ideological traits and prejudices which have penetrated into the workers' and peasants' movements and are leading them astray. We must hold before the people not a vague but a clear ideological conception. You must realize that mere chanting of 'we want revolution' does not reflect any conception of revolutionary ideology, nor do slogans like 'we must fight', 'leadership would grow out of struggle'. What is the nature of the struggle, who are the friends and who are the foes, its myriad complex processes, when does it take the form of direct confrontation, when does it retreat, in other words what form does it take at what stage — regarding all these clear conceptions will have to be developed. You have to remember that at a certain stage the struggle takes the form of campaign work at that time the task is to recruit cadres, to carry out propaganda work, to bring out party organs, to build up the party organization. This is one stage of the struggle. And in the course of carrying out these tasks, when the organization gains some strength, based on issues of movements, the revolutionary party steps up the struggle to direct agitational movements against the exploiting class. Through these movements the party exposes before the people the real character of the state, its coercive machinery and the power of the instruments of exploitation. At the same time it exposes the attitudes of the other parties in this struggle, the parties who talk about socialism and indulge in rhetoric on revolution. Because so long as the people cannot grasp which is the correct line through ideological struggle, the way for revolution cannot be cleared.

Let me illustrate. We, the SUCI, stand for socialism, so does Bangla Congress and Forward Bloc. Even Jawaharlal Nehru had been a protagonist of socialism. Again, the CPI(M) also advocates people's democratic revolution for bringing in socialism. The CPI and Naxalite friends also talk of people's democratic revolution. They argue that the three models of peoples' democratic revolution have little in common. That is, the same people's democratic revolution has three incarnations. Even if we accept the people's democratic revolution to be the stage of revolution in India, then which one of the three models is the correct one ? The people have to be deeply involved in the struggle to find out which one is right and which one is wrong. And as they meditate over it, grapple with it, and acquire the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, the correct way to revolution would become clear.

In fact, bypassing the ideological struggle nothing can be achieved. 'Do something, whatever you can ; we are with you' — if this be the attitude of the people, the country faces a bleak prospect. The inevitable consequence of this approach is the kind of struggle you have witnessed in the country from time to time. Not just now, from as far back as 1919, workers of this country have gone on strike and have sacrificed their lives, so many people have embraced the gallows, so many barricade fights against the police have been put up in Calcutta, surges of democratic mass movements have come, so many times people braved brutal oppression by police and military let loose on the movements. But what has been the net result ? The condition of the people has worsened day by day. We have not been able to advance a bit. And now some people are despondent that nothing at all is happening. There were all those fights, army was deployed, tanks rolled down the streets, people fought pitched battles with the police, so many times Calcutta experienced black-outs. Then why this despair again that nothing is going right, no struggle is coming up? Because, these struggles had the same character — sporadic and spontaneous. As oppression increases, once in a while people burst out in movements, whether they have the correct realization or not. But because correct leadership is not there, organization

is not there, because the people do not have the patience to analyse and understand, the movements cannot be freed from the character of spontaneity. After each movement a wave of frustration engulfs the people. Yet, the party which can provide the correct leadership does not yet have the strength to lead the movements, to control the movements, to guide them along the correct path. If it could do that, it could educate the people about the correct tactics and ultimate objective of the struggle, free them of frustration and steadily advance towards the goal of anti-capitalist socialist revolution by building up the people's own instruments of struggle ; when necessity demanded it could also retreat in the movement, teaching the people why was this necessary, that the cause of revolution would be harmed without this retreat. For a bigger battle in future it is sometimes necessary to retreat, so as not to waste the strength of the movement ; retreat is also a form of struggle. In military strategy there is both advance and retreat in battles. When two armies are fighting against each other, does one make continuous advance until the other is totally defeated ? No, an army advances but when necessity demands it also retreats ; both advance and retreat are a form of struggle. When it retreats an army does it in a strategic way just the way it does when it advances. In the same way a cold war which precedes the actual war — that is, creating a favourable climate for war, preparing the popular opinion in favour of the war — that is also a kind of war. Without this no battle can be fought. It is the working class, the people of the country who supply the men in the battlefield everything that the latter need — the food, the arms and ammunitions. So unless the people can be induced to give them support, the soldiers cannot fight for more than a few days. So the war-mongers have to create a war psychosis before the war. Do you think that this is necessary only for the reactionaries, the war-mongers ? And the revolutionaries need have no concern in this regard ? Think of a situation where a revolutionary party has been able to rally a large number of workers and peasants to wage a protracted revolutionary battle against the state power, imbuing them with revolutionary consciousness. But even then the usual question that comes up is that at the time of revolution what would be that number. Say, one, two or five millions, isn't it ? But out of a population of 800 millions, if at least 500 million people do not back the struggle, if they do not view those who are actually waging this struggle as their own people and that it is their task to extend their help to the struggle in every possible way, then revolution cannot be accomplished. If the majority of the people look at the struggle not as their own but as the concern of a particular party only and that they need not get involved in such botheration, then even the five million, reared for this struggle, they cannot make any dent into the capitalist system. Even before they can lay a finger upon it, they will be finished off. One indiscreet act in the name of revolution — without building up people's opinion in favour of it — would wipe off the fruits of hard struggle of twenty years to rear five million revolutionaries. So we must have a clear understanding about the ways of struggle, its twists and turns.

What is meant by recognition of necessity

A revolutionary should bear in mind that he is in the midst of struggle wherever he may be. Struggle is the very mode of his existence. He exists always with revolutionary consciousness. What is this consciousness ? It is this that he has realized that the question of his own development, his own emancipation is inextricably linked with the question of social development and social progress. If social progress gets obstructed, if reaction sets in in social environment, his development is also impeded ; its shadow is cast on his family too. He cannot

earn his freedom in isolation from the society. To try that way of liberation of self is the way of the spiritualists ; that is not the way of the revolutionaries, not of those who have chosen the path of struggle. Another point is important in this context. When we say that the interest of one's individual development, individual uplift, the entire gamut of one's interest is linked with the interest of social progress — its true realization does not come unless we understand, in a class-divided society which is the leading or vanguard class among the exploited masses, the question of development, advancement and emancipation of which class is inalienably linked with the progress of the society as a whole, with the advancement of production, of science, of culture. If we understand this, we shall also understand that, because the question of individual emancipation of every person in the society is linked with the question of emancipation of that particular class, is linked with the question of struggle of that particular class and the leadership of that struggle, a revolutionary is part and parcel of that class struggle which leads the society towards establishment of the hegemony of that very class.

In the context of the situation in our society today this is the recognition of necessity. Recognition of necessity does not mean the necessity of an individual's maintenance, the necessity of employment, the necessity of meeting the needs of the family. This is not the necessity of the revolutionaries. To a revolutionary necessity means the real necessity of every individual, the real necessity of the whole society, the real necessity of the progressive revolutionary class, the necessity which gives rise to a social movement. If a man wants to be free from individualism, from prejudices and narrow-mindedness, from self-centredness, from vulgar impulses and passions, all of which are present in him, he cannot do so by struggling in isolation, on individual capacity. Because these arise out of the influence of the present social system, out of the impact of class thinking in a class-divided capitalist society. Since the question of advancement of production and liberation of science-art-literature-culture from the grip of capitalist exploitation is inextricably linked with the question of emancipation of the working class — the class historically placed to free the entire society by waging struggle against all these — the question of emancipation of the individual is also linked up with the question of emancipation of the working class. The realization of this necessity is the realization of the necessity of emancipation of the individual. And the recognition of this necessity transforms an individual into a revolutionary.

How does a revolutionary exist in the society ? He exists as a conscious entity in the society, who has correctly comprehended the true nature of the contradictions and conflicts in the whole social and material world and has grasped which contradiction, meaning contradiction between which two opposite forces, determines the course of progress. In the period when contradiction between imperialism and feudalism, on the one hand, and national freedom struggle, on the other, was determining the course of progress, consciousness of individual liberty, of individual development and emancipation, the real necessity was realization of identity with the interest of freedom struggle. In that period recognition of the necessity of the country's independence reflected the realization of his true necessity, his correct social consciousness, his correct class consciousness. Again in today's society the conflict between the capitalist system on the one side and the oppressed class, on the other, that is, between the capitalist class and the working class is the main conflict, or, in other words, the principal contradiction in this society centring round which individual consciousness and individuality revolve. In this principal struggle the determining factor stipulating social progress is the victory of the working class — the replacement of the bourgeois democracy with proletarian democracy, establishment of the

dictatorship of the proletariat over production, art, literature, culture, morality, in short in every sphere, in place of bourgeois dictatorship. Under these circumstances when this recognition of individual necessity merges with the recognition of necessity of emancipation of the working class, one becomes a revolutionary.

Hence, when a revolutionary exists in the society, it means he exists amidst the struggle against the bourgeois class and the existing social system. This conflict is not confined to the sphere of political and economic struggle, it relates to every other sphere, at home and outside home, to culture-morality-tastes and everything else. For a revolutionary, what is conducive to revolution, conducive to struggle for the emancipation of the working class, what is conducive to the struggle to free production, art, literature, science from bourgeois preconception that constitutes his sense of appreciation, taste and aesthetics. A revolutionary's likings or aesthetic sense is totally incompatible with the sense of appreciation and realization of a bourgeois, with his culture, his sense of beauty, with his idea of family, of love, his sense of freedom of sex. Such is the correct position of a revolutionary.

Such then is the mode of existence of a revolutionary. He exists in the midst of fierce struggle. In the ambit of such struggles there are some routine works. Only the class conscious workers who have a clear vision of the ultimate purpose can go through the drudgery of routine work. The revolutionaries have to work over a protracted period in accordance with a plan in order to realize this ultimate purpose. If their style of work is not disciplined and is unpurposeful, they cannot smash the well-knit bourgeois state machine. We have only faced the police, but remember that ultimately we shall have to confront the army and the military of the organized state, which are equipped with the most modern weaponry. Before that final battle, to rally the necessary people's power and to develop the organization capable of waging protracted revolutionary fights, revolutionaries have to wage struggle within and outside home and within themselves, in the spheres of ideology, ethics, aesthetics and tastes, in the realm of art, literature and culture. That is why Mao Zedong said that before any revolution, the conducive cultural revolution has to be started. The significance of this is that when one class wants to overthrow another class, be that class the progressive revolutionary class or the reactionary class, it has to carry out protracted campaign and struggle in the ideological-political field, before it can take up the battle to overthrow the other class. The main and ultimate struggle cannot be won bypassing this. And this struggle is arduous. When there is no surge of movement, no fever of struggle gripping the people, only a conscious revolutionary can remain engaged in the difficult struggle to build up the organization, to attend to routine work day in and day out on the basis of dedication and burning conviction. I have already pointed out how easily people — even those who have never been in this long struggle to build up revolutionary consciousness, who do not have the strength to undertake the struggle of carrying out painstaking routine work day after day — are easily drawn into a movement when it takes the form of direct confrontation, what we often mistakenly believe to be the only form of struggle, and hold that to carry out daily routine work is no struggle at all. But if you examine, you would realize that to carry out routine work for a long period is more arduous a struggle. It requires a strength of character, a dedication to ideology, and the ability to adequately understand the whole situation.

So you can see that to carry out routine work is an essential prerequisite for building revolutionary struggle in the country, and this is also a form of struggle. So the appropriate critique of the party work would be to judge whether this work is carried out only on a set

pattern, or whether there is a plan to establish regular contact with the masses. In this process of carrying out the work on the basis of contact with the masses, contradictions will ever arise ; there would be turmoil ; it would demand innovative approach in building up the movement in conformity with reality. Movement does not mean only slogans, processions, meetings, barricade fights, confrontation with the police and seizure of power. These are all forms of movement, pertaining to particular stages of organizational development, particular stages of development of consciousness. What form the movement would take and when a particular form will have to be changed into another would depend on a number of factors — the stage of organizational development, the level of consciousness, the character of people's participation, the nature of assaults by the ruling class. Discussions, debates, polemics, convincing people, ideological fight against opposing viewpoints, organizing unions, running the college unions, conducting political classes, sticking posters, making door-to-door approaches, carrying on protracted and painstaking discussions with the people to establish the supremacy of the revolutionary ideology over the counter-ideologies — all these are various and complex forms of struggle. The revolutionary party worker engaged in this struggle does not carry out this work according to his individual mood and whim. He does this work in accordance with the collective decisions happily and with individual initiative along with the collective.

Combine individual initiative with the collective

It is a very difficult task to combine individual initiative with the collective effort. The individualistic trend and bent of mind which we want to fight out is of such nature that because of this, a person having some kind of realization about revolution, even if it is a bit superficial, sometimes creates a mind to join the struggle ; but what is found in that case is that because of that factor, he wants to go by his own notions, by his own ideas. On the one hand, he wants to fight for the revolution, and, on the other hand, he cannot free himself from his individualistic trait, his ultra sense of freedom. He is not aware that the correct realization of the necessity of this struggle includes the realization that he has to free himself from the individualistic trait and ultra sense of freedom. Struggles conducted in an individualistic way can never lead to the desired goal. Because, that is not the product of collective planning. That is why the Marxist revolutionaries approach the struggle both individually and collectively. That is their attitude. Because, an individual alone cannot bring about revolution. So the revolutionaries have to learn how to fight collectively. When someone is alone in organizing people in a locality, we find that if he has a fighting zeal and an inspiration to sacrifice, he does the work very well among the people under his own leadership. Because there he is the undisputed leader, his individuality is not wounded, it does not come in conflict with another's, he does not feel humiliated, his ego is not injured. But when he has to work according to a plan with other comrades with parallel personality, it often happens that there arises conflict among the different personalities, work is hampered, many complications arise. So one has to learn how to work not only according to one's own plan, but also according to plans formulated by others, voluntarily and happily. And to learn it one has to free oneself from individualistic traits and personal whims. But how can one learn it ? How can one free oneself ? This can be learnt only by developing the habit of submitting to the collective while working together with others. We sometimes hear a comrade argue that he does not like at all this process of working collectively. He likes to be simply told what to do and then left alone. He would fulfil the task alone, by himself. What a strange claim !

As if he possesses such power that he can conquer the whole world ! But no one has ever conquered the whole world by himself. Even the Almighty⁵ could not do it, what of others !

So the main point is that everyone has to conduct the struggle being part and parcel of the collective. Routine work, which is an indispensable part of revolutionary struggle, teaches the cadres of revolution to have patience, to acquire the habit of working remaining within the collective. It helps them to fight out the individualistic traits, the ego, which constantly tend to deceive them, to lead them astray. Rational judgement in each of us directs us to one course, but our individualistic trend tends to obstruct that course and misdirect us. This is the contradiction which is going on within each of us. This struggle of the two opposing forces within each of us is also a reflection of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the present society. In this situation one has to either convince the collective to accept one's point of view, or happily abide by the collective decision even if it goes against one's own view. If this frame of mind is not there then even while moving together a feeling of grudge and discontent will grow in oneself, one will nurture the very bourgeois sense of individual entity within oneself which manifests itself in the form of individualism, ultra sense of freedom and in the form a deceptive feeling of one being a person having a strong independent temperament. One cannot free oneself from prejudice, sense of exclusive individual entity or ego only through subjective thinking or theoretical discourse. Remember that an individual's conscious entity emerges out of conflicts and contradictions with the external world and it exists in the midst of contradictions. When he finds the correct path by grasping the true character of the contradictions and if he patterns his activities following this path, he can exert influence over the external world and at the same time develop himself. Else, he would degrade himself.

Class character of ego and superego

We know that all mental faculties, including ego, instinct etc., exist in contradiction. This ego or instinct does not exist independent of the social set-up. The principal contradiction in a particular society patterns the mental make-up in that society. All thoughts and ideas are spiritual production — manifestations of the functions of a conscious mind. When the principal contradiction in the society was the fight of the serfs under the leadership of the then revolutionary capitalist class against the feudal class, then that particular contradiction patterned in a certain way the thoughts and ideas, mental make-up, ego and instinct. But the mental make-up, ego and instinct that exist in the present society are not exactly the same as those in the feudal society. Instincts sometimes appear to be immutable, but indeed they are not. Every instinct has a given category, has a certain framework, and a given material condition stipulates that framework.

Every aspect of mental activity — thoughts, ideas, concepts, contemplations — grows out of contradiction and conflict between the human brain and the external objective reality. Human brain has the power of analysing which the animal brain does not have. Because human brain has this power of analysis, his world of thought evolves out of struggle with nature. Animals too are in struggle with nature, but as their brain lacks this power they are merely subject to natural law. All the activities and behaviour of animals belong to the category of reflex action, are controlled by conditioned and unconditioned reflexes. Whatever one may think of their intelligence it is

nothing but varied forms of conditioned reflex. But in human beings another process occurs in the brain. The process does not end with reflex action — from sensation to motor action. It follows a new track operated by another signal system, the second signal system, leading to perception, conception and then to emotion. While animals have only physical blind emotion, that is emotional nervous activity is the only possible activity in them, in man emotional activity operates on a higher plane — from blind emotion to reasoning through a process of translation, from perceptual knowledge to conceptual knowledge, finally leading to a higher kind of emotion.

Thus in man there are two kinds of emotion. One is a type of blind emotion, which is not tuned or guided by reason or conceptual knowledge. When such blind emotion directs human activity, human behaviour is somewhat like animal behaviour, he is then subject to nature, subject to external environment. Such blind emotion may suddenly elevate a man to a higher plane, it may also degrade him some day. Because it is blind it cannot be depended upon. The perceptual knowledge that grows from this blind emotion through the process of translation is superficial. One cannot fully control the emotional curvature through such knowledge alone. From this is born conceptual knowledge in man, that is concrete knowledge, which is capable of providing guidance. Such concrete knowledge alone patterns and tunes blind emotion. Thus, the emotion so released is one released by consciousness, by knowledge. The emotion one sees in the revolutionaries is emotion based on consciousness. So they can exercise control over it. Such emotion does not misdirect them, does not cloud their intelligence and judgement. The emotion which does cloud is blind emotion. Emotion based on knowledge or reason is much more effective than blind emotion, much more decisive.

Naturally, in the capitalist society also, all ideas and thoughts — be it ego or something else — revolve around and are controlled by the principal contradiction in the capitalist society, the contradiction between the capitalist class and the exploited people led by the working class. In each individual his ego is in perpetual conflict with his superego, that is his consciousness or conscience. Even in a bourgeois individual there is contradiction between ego and superego. His ego is the self-centredness born in the social environment, and his superego is the desire related to the aggregate interest of capitalism, which makes him a nationalist and a humanist. This is the contradiction between ego and superego within himself. In other words, what is found in an individual capitalist is that, on the one hand, he has his business interest, on the other, he has his sense of aggregate interest of the bourgeois class — in his case this is the manifestation of the contradiction between ego and superego. When a worker, who exists amidst the contradiction between the capitalist class and the working class, is imbued with revolutionary ideology, his superego takes the form of revolutionary class consciousness. Just because he exists in the bourgeois society, the superego of every worker does not take the form of revolutionary consciousness — though in everyone there is contradiction between ego and superego. There is contradiction between conscience and instincts, between ego and superego even in an individual who has not become a revolutionary ; he also has an understanding of what is good and what is bad. A part of his mind tells him to do one thing, another part tells him that it is bad, it should not be done. This tendency to do something which his conscience forbids him to do, arises from his instincts, his ego. And his social consciousness, to the extent he has acquired it, which forbids him to do what is bad is his superego or conscience.

If we analyse the category of social consciousness of individuals in the society, we shall find that in some it is wholly bourgeois class thinking, in others it is dominantly revolutionary

working class thinking, while in still others it is an admixture of the two, that is their conscience is patterned partly by bourgeois thinking, partly by working class thinking. The conscience of one, who is influenced partly by the bourgeois thoughts and partly by the revolutionary thoughts of the working class, urges him sometimes to take side with the bourgeoisie, sometimes to stand by the working class. But all the time everybody's conscience forbids his ego or self-interest to do a bad deed. So in every individual there is constant contradiction between ego and superego and it would always exist. Till the seeds of conflict between individuals centring round production are totally eliminated from the social life, individual psychology or this phenomenon of individuality will not be eliminated. In today's capitalist society the individual ego in every case is by and large patterned by the dominating role of either the bourgeois ideology or working class ideology. Even if there is some feudal element of thinking mixed with it, the character of individual ego is determined by its dominant feature — whether it is dominantly bourgeois ideology or dominantly working class ideology. Today there is no way one can carry on with feudal ideology in its totality.

Therefore, an individual's struggle to rise above petty considerations of self-interest, individualistic tendencies, egoism and such other traits can never achieve its desired objectives, no matter how sincere his intentions are, unless it is linked with the greater social struggle, the working class struggle for emancipation. So individual struggle must be integrated with the collective struggle. But to guide this collective struggle along the correct course and to keep it free from mistakes and shortcomings, there must be a definite scientific method about it. So comrades have to free themselves of the casual and lax attitude found in them when they carry out routine work being deeply involved with the masses while staying with them, and you have to heighten the tempo of your work, and at the same time do it in a planned way. If the tempo of work becomes fast, but there is no plan behind it, that would not serve any purpose. You may do something hastily, but if it is done without collective planning, without an ideological base, nothing would be achieved. You would only waste your time. My concern is not how rapidly you are advancing in your work. My point is that you may move slowly or rapidly according to your ability, but move in a planned way and under an able leadership. You have to move curbing the individualistic tendency present in each of us, and tempering and tuning your individual behaviour by social consciousness.

If you proceed by implementing the party programmes in a planned way, under proper leadership, and at the same time collectively discuss the faults and endeavour to get rid of them and improve your work, you would be able to put your organization on a firm basis according to the necessity. But it would be a negative approach if you constantly hammer on the defects and complain that nothing is being achieved. It would mean that you are criticizing not with the purpose of doing something concrete, but for concealing the fact that you are not doing anything. You should know that the science of Marxism has laid down certain methods for determining the character of your criticisms. When there is only negative criticism, when grievance is the vehicle of your negative criticism, that is, when you do not say concretely what the party has to reject, and what it has to accept, but go on complaining and expressing grievance that this is not being done, that is not being done and so on and so forth, it would mean that when your inability to do anything becomes known, you try to find an excuse for it in others' faults.

Those who think in this way must ponder what they themselves have achieved, or if the party has any fault, what is that fault, or if the party has to take up a programme, what is that

programme. This is what they should consider. There is no point to feel aggrieved, no point for any dissatisfaction or mental turmoil. The only point of dissatisfaction they may have is that they are not satisfied with their own work. Everything else stems from their ego which is deceiving them ; they are putting the blame for their inability on the party's plan or on the concerned leadership. Maybe sometimes these are also important points, but then they should come as concrete points. That is, they should tell concretely what particular plan should have been taken which was not done or which particular plan of a leader has failed, and that experience shows that the work could have been done successfully in this particular way. But those who express grievance, or criticize or pass critical remarks, or show discontent, do they discuss raising such concrete points ? They do not. Again there are some comrades who discover, when they cannot make a breakthrough in their locality, that their locality is something special, a place of unusual difficulties. They think that no other locality is like theirs and they argue that they cannot achieve much because the situation is very adverse. That is, they try to find an excuse for their inability in the objective situation. Thereby they are not trying to grasp the basic point and are deceiving themselves. They do not try to determine what they should have done but have failed to do. Had they grasped this they would have realized that even amidst thousands of such difficulties, they could have achieved something. Hence, every worker should discuss in this fashion. They should first analyse what was their task which they have not done, and what are their defects.

The same applies to the leaders. When a comrade has failed to carry out a task, the leader should first examine what steps he did take to ensure that the comrade could carry out the assignment to the best of his abilities, and how the leader has helped the comrade in this matter. This is what the leader should do on his part : firstly, he should ascertain whether the assistance from his side was adequate ; and then he should examine the limitations of the comrade for which he has failed and explain to him the nature of the objective difficulties. If, even after all this, it is found that the comrade had not done what he ought to have, then that should be pointed out to him. But the leaders do not always do this. Often, if a comrade fails to perform his task, the leader immediately considers him to be worthless and metes out rough treatment to him. On the part of the leaders it is a clear manifestation of that tendency, which in a very subtle manner works in his sub-consciousness of disowning his responsibility in so far as his task to equip a cadre in discharging his responsibility is concerned — the realization of which again eludes the leader. This is not to say that the failures of the comrades are due to the faults of the leaders. My point is that if the leaders had no shortcomings, then why is it that they do not have the correct approach in this matter, and why do they become so attacking towards the comrades from the very beginning ?

The leaders should keep in mind another point. Not all the party comrades and supporters belong to the same level. So far as the defects and deficiencies of the cadres are concerned, these are of different nature. They have to be tackled with correct understanding of their types. So, without considering the particularity of the types of different workers, if they try to tackle them all with the same formula, it would be a denial of the theory of particularity of contradiction. It often happens with an honest party worker even, that because of some genuine confusions and shortcomings — about which he is not alert or even being alert he is a victim of certain habits and traits — he cannot get rid of these, in spite of his trying. In such cases the leaders should try patiently and repeatedly to help the comrade overcome his shortcomings for a certain period. Where he is incapable or fails — where it is known somewhat, that he is incapable — the main task of the leaders is to help him with sympathy rather than to be furious with him. Again leaders

are to bear in mind that the sympathetic treatment and help is not to be attempted on the basis of the exclusive individual thinking of a leader quite out of the party thinking or party approach. The particular problem, depending on its form and character, can be discussed in study circles in the presence of other comrades, or among the leaders or among selected comrades. Everything cannot be discussed everywhere, but each and every issue must be discussed in presence of some appropriate persons. It is to be seen that this individual tackling is never attempted simply on the basis of a leader's individual assessment. Obviously, the way he tries to tackle the problem must be in accordance with the party's theory and practice. In other words his method of tackling a comrade must be one that is scientifically tested by the party. At the same time it is to be understood that in such tackling something of the individual is also present within it ; it is his own part ; he is doing something in his own way. But it must be borne in mind that tackling of such problems cannot be a matter of individual thinking, or the way of doing things of a leader who is totally out of touch with the party theory and party realization in this regard. Even if such individual tackling yields apparently good results, this is not to be done. Because apparent good results do not necessarily mean truly and ultimately good results. If a leader tries to solve a problem in this way thinking that good results are obtained, in the end the effects are most of the times harmful. This is the experience of the party. Even if the comrade who has been tackled becomes very happy, all the same, this does not by itself prove that the tackling has been proper and good. Because people feel satisfied for many reasons. Suppose a person has done something improper or has behaved badly. If someone in the name of tackling that person, through his words and dealings effectively patronizes his improper act or conduct in a subtle way he may be satisfied, but would it mean that the problem has been solved ? What would be the result of his happiness ? It would do him immense harm. So, causing unhappiness does not mean that the tackling has been bad, just as causing happiness does not mean that it has been good — the matter is not like that at all. But one sign of good tackling, that is, successful tackling, is that the comrade, even if he feels unhappy in the beginning, will at the end of the discussion be happy and satisfied. If someone seems aggrieved, unhappy and not amenable to reason at the beginning of the discussion, it would mean that his ego is in conflict with the party understanding. When, in course of discussion, in the end he truly understands through reasoning he feels happy and satisfied. Again it sometimes happens that he may accept the logic of the point, but is not happy ; he agrees to what is said but happiness is not writ large on his face, he is not beaming with smile, he leaves with a sad, grave mien. It would indicate that he who has done the tackling has partly succeeded and partly failed.

I am saying all these to emphasize what the leaders should keep in mind to do the tackling with perfection. If, without being furious and impatient, a leader tries to rationally understand another comrade's viewpoint, he would understand where the comrade is erring and can also make him see his mistake. And remember another point — if he can make him see his mistake this would also help the leader to keep himself free from committing mistakes. Dialectical materialism teaches that without struggle no progress can be achieved. If there is no interaction and conflict of ideas between leaders and cadres, neither the leaders nor the cadres can advance.

Call of the hour

Comrades, though the situation may appear to be a bit tough for us at the present moment, revolutionaries are aware that they have to work amidst thousand and one such impediments and difficulties. However, odds and difficulties notwithstanding the correct base political line, correct revolutionary leadership and painstaking struggle would lead to the final victory of revolution. This is the lesson of history. Keeping this lesson in mind, you have to patiently plan and carry out the work, individually as well as collectively, continuously trying to perfect and develop your working style by rectifying errors and shortcomings. You will have to master the revolutionary politics of the party, every facet of it, and in such a way that in any situation you can correctly present the party line before the masses, can convince them about its correctness, and firmly implant in them hope and confidence about the revolutionary party, exposing the opportunist and social democratic parties who are still confusing the people. These social democratic parties are the forces of compromise between labour and capital ; and you all know that it is impossible to put an end to capitalism without putting an end to social democracy. To fulfil the task that is historically bestowed on us — to overthrow capitalism and to establish socialism — it is necessary first of all to have a correct base political line ; secondly, to muster the necessary organizational strength capable of influencing the situation in favour of revolution ; and thirdly to integrate the class and mass struggles on the edifice of higher proletarian culture and ethics, and to conduct these struggles through people’s committees, the people’s own instruments of struggles, in such a way that these people’s committees can eventually give birth to people’s alternative political power. The sooner you can achieve this, by remaining within the United Front and advancing the cause of united struggle of all sections of the toiling people on the one hand, carrying out sustained ideological struggle on the other, the sooner and to that extent the further you could help to raise the political consciousness of the toiling people, workers and peasants. The sooner you can achieve this, the nearer will draw the day of revolution. With this I want to conclude today with the earnest hope that you will seriously take up this challenge and engage yourselves with all your might in this struggle.

*Speech on July 30, 1969.
An abridged English version
of the speech in Bengali first
published in the Proletarian Era
on August 5, 1989.*

Notes

1. Rich landowning peasants, kulaks.
2. CPI(M)’s peasant organization.
3. Illegal occupation of land under fictitious ownership.
4. Forerunner of the present day BJP.
5. Just a rhetorical expression which does not connote any belief in God.