

Freedom Movement of India
NETAJI SUBHASHCHANDRA BOSE

Provash Ghosh

Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)

Freedom Movement of India : Netaji Subhashchandra Bose
— Provash Ghosh [Speech on 23rd January, 1984]

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Publisher's Note

On 23rd January, 1984, on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhashchandra, Comrade Provash Ghosh, Present General Secretary of SUCI(C) addressed a gathering at Joynagar, South 24-Parganas, and delivered an important speech on 'Life-struggle of Netaji and Tasks of Students and Youth'. In 1989 it was published as a booklet. In January 2020, it was republished with some additions by Comrade Provash Ghosh under the Title 'Netaji Subhashchandra Bose in Historical Perspective'.

Many requests from different quarters came to republish the booklet on the occasion of the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhashchandra. Hence it was decided to again bring out the booklet. With some more alterations and additions by Comrade Provash Ghosh, the English translation of the Bengali booklet is being published (2021) with the Title 'India's Freedom Struggle : Netaji Subhashchandra Bose'. The responsibility of any errors in translation is ours.

October, 2024
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Freedom Movement Of India

NETAJI SUBHASHCHANDRA BOSE

Today we have assembled here to pay respect on the birth anniversary of the great revolutionary leader of the freedom movement Netaji Subhashchandra Bose. There was a time – during the days of the Swadeshi movement – when at his clarion call millions of students and youth plunged en masse into the freedom movement, leaving their homes undeterred by the tears of parents, casting off the chains of affection, disdaining the lure of academic degrees and lucrative jobs, rising above petty self-interest and personal gains; they bravely faced the police attacks and torture and remained undaunted by the prospect of death. To the people of this country, to the students and youth this great revolutionary leader proclaimed time and again that the bondage of subjugation cannot be broken by begging, by appeals and petitions that a price has to be paid for freedom. One has to sacrifice one's blood, one's life, one's all for freedom. In those days this clarion call resounded from province to province, from town to town from village to village. Millions of students and youth were inspired by this call and took firm pledge.

You know that I am a student of great Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's revolutionary thought, just a soldier of proletarian revolutionary movement. It is because of this identity of mine that you have called me to speak at today's gathering. They way I have understood Netaji

as a student of great Marxism-Leninism, and following Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's revolutionary thoughts — that I shall place before you today. Standing before you at this gathering I am reminded of my boyhood days, the last phase of the glorious era of India's freedom movement. As in countless people from those days, the memory of our childhood and early adolescence time is still vivid in me. Many of us heard the song in our mothers' lap — the famous song, "Mother, bid adieu to me for now, I shall come back again" (*"ekbar bidaya de ma ghure asi"*). — no one knew who wrote the lyric, who set it in tune. But in many homes this song was heard in the tearful emotional voice of many a mother. Thus in our early life Kshudiram's name was indelibly impressed in our heart. We heard in the voice of the elders the rousing song of the wandering minstrel Mukundadas — "If I had at my disposal ten thousand lives, I could drown in deep ocean the sun of glory of the British traders" (*"dash hazar pran ami jadi petam, phiringi baniker gourab rabi atal jale dubiye ditam"*). We also heard the elders discussing in a hushed voice about Netaji's flight from the country, his setting up of the Indian National Army abroad, about his fight against the British, and speculating when he would come back and liberate the country. We felt a thrill that today or tomorrow he would come back with the Indian National Army. Thus in my childhood and adolescence, even at that early stage of life Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Deshbandhu, Lala Lajpat Rai, Netaji, Bhagat Singh, Nazrul appeared as ideals in my life as in many others. Whether we would be able or not we all dreamt about becoming like one of them. And because this dream was in me, when I came in contact with the great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, who carried in his heart the pain and sorrow of crores of oppressed people of this country, and made a vow to realize the unfulfilled dreams of Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Saratchandra, Premchand, Subhashchandra, Bhagat Singh, using Marxism-Leninism as a weapon, and further developing and sharpening this weapon was building up revolutionary

movement, I was attracted by his teaching, his ideology and character : I was inspired by him. The great revolutionary thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us to respect these great personalities of the past, to draw lessons from them, and after assimilating whatever is to be learnt from them to advance further for acquiring proletarian revolutionary character. So being inspired by the teachings of Comrade Ghosh I have come to offer respects along with you to this great revolutionary leader in our freedom movement. I know that Netaji Subhashchandra had given whatever he could for the country, today he has nothing more to give, today it is we who have to receive from him. Hence in observing his birth anniversary if we confine ourselves to mere garlanding, routine accolades and speeches, I say let such functions cease, let this mockery stop. If we do not empathize with the pain of this great man, with the inner feelings of his heart, if we do not draw the necessary lesson from his fighting character, if we do not take up as the sole task of our life the work that is necessary in today's changed situation to fulfil that dream, for whose realization he conducted a life-long struggle, then is there any significance of paying respect to him?

There are many things to learn from Netaji's life, his life-struggle. I shall first place before you a few aspects of that. We have all heard in our young years, in our student-days, just as the present-day students do, the advice from our guardians, teachers, well-wishers that students should not take part in politics, that to study is the sole mission of students. Some go a bit further and tell, "Complete your studies, get your degree, get established in life. Then do what you think best. Such ideas and words have been in vogue for such a long time that for many it has become like a gospel truth, as if this can never be questioned. What did Netaji say about it? Many of you will be startled to hear it. Netaji said, "To study is the mission of students – this maxim has been used by many in their attempt to dissuade the students from serving their motherland. Study means to read a few books and pass some examinations – through this one may win gold medals, may be, get a respectable job, but cannot

acquire manliness.”⁽¹⁾ This is what Netaji Subhashchandra conveyed to the student community of our country. And how is manliness to be acquired? Netaji has answered this question through his entire life-struggle. Like in many young men of that time in Netaji’s life the teachings of two great men played an important role, firstly Vidyasagar and then Vivekananda. Vidyasagar said, “It is the supreme virtue and the principal task of a person’s life to devote himself to doing good to the land of his birth.” Vivekananda told the educated community of the country, “Can one be called educated just by virtue of passing examinations and getting degrees? The education which does not give one valour and vigour is no education”.⁽²⁾ As long as the countless millions of our country are plunged in the depth of hunger and ignorance, those who have acquired higher education at the cost of their tears and blood, if they do not find any time to spare a thought about their duty towards these poverty-stricken people, I would call them traitors, enemy of the country”.⁽³⁾ These words inspired Netaji like they did many young men of his time. He did not hesitate one bit to stand against familial opposition, to stand against the tears of his parents, their scolding and chiding and all such things while devoting himself to the freedom movement, and unwaveringly carried out his duty. We all know that Subhashchandra was sent by his parents to England against his wishes to sit for the ICS examination and to be successful in it. But by then the pangs of foreign bondage started to torment him. His conscience felt the impact of Vidyasagar’s valuable teachings and his incomparable life-struggle, Vivekananda’s call, the unparalleled self-sacrifice of Deshbandhu, the example of martyrdom of Kshudiram and other martyrs in the freedom struggle, and the penetrating appeal of the literature of Saratchandra, representing the uncompromising revolutionary trend in cultural movement — all these built up the mental world of Subhashchandra when he was a student.

1- Nutaner Sandhane,
2, 3 - Bani-O-Rachana

On the one hand, he was thinking of plunging wholeheartedly in the Swadeshi movement and on the other like all good boys and girls was hesitant to disobey his parents. “Should I disobey my parents? Should I hurt their sentiment?” – with such hesitation he sailed for England. But while studying for the ICS as soon as the results of the examinations were out, he decided, ‘No, under no circumstances shall I become a servant of British imperialism’. With this firm decision to fully plunge into the Swadeshi movement he renounced the ICS title.

It was not easy for Subhashchandra to make this decision. From his childhood he revered his parents like god. He never thought about going against their wishes on any issue. While arriving at this decision he went through a difficult inner struggle. On this point he himself said, “To be disobedient in this manner to my parents was against my nature. And I could never think of hurting them....I was fast undergoing a change, I as no longer a goody boy afraid to displease his parents. I got a new ideology, which kindled my conscience”.⁽⁴⁾ With the strength of this ideology he fought against his parents’ tears, against their entreaty and enjoinment. Because, when he was making this decision the thought must have crossed his mind that there would be a tumult at his home, his parents would be wounded, would be distressed, they would lament, yet there could be no compromise on the question of principle, on the question of ideology. Like the great men of every era Subhashchandra placed more value on fight against injustice, struggle for emancipation from slavery and bondage to foreign rule, following the path of truth and justice than on the tears of parents and their good wishes, and it is because of this that in the history of freedom movement of India Subhashchandra came to occupy such a place of respect and honour. If Subhashchandra thought like the conventional good boys and girls — “My parents have done so much for us. They love me greatly and expect so much from me. Do I not have a duty towards them?” — then would he have any place in history?

Subhashchandra had to face the question, whether he should place greater value on the tears and travails of millions of oppressed Indians in chains than on the tears of his parents, whether he should respond to the call of love from his parents or to the call of Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Deshbandhu. He did not fall victim to vacillation, hesitation, indecision and weakness; he did not err in making his decision. And because he did not err he could rise to such a height of greatness. Had he compromised and accepted the post of ICS paying heed to the parents' wishes, he would have earned a lot of money, become affluent, amassed wealth, which are so very important for calculating people, but in effect he would have been a servant of the British and be thrown into the dustbin of history; we would not have known his name, would not have assembled here to pay respect to him from the core of our heart.

Two incidents inspired Netaji to take up a life of struggle. When he was a student in the lower classes at the Ravenshaw Collegiate School being inspired by his revered teacher Benimadhab Das, at that young age he gathered his classmates to observe Saheed Kshudiram Remembrance Day on 11th August. Probably this was the first time that this day was observed anywhere in India. It is clear that even at that young age the self-sacrifice of Kshudiram made a deep impression on his conscience. The other incident he himself narrated in his later years. "...a small incident at an opportune moment may leave a deep impression on our life. In Calcutta a decrepit old lady used to sit every day in front of our house and do begging. Whenever I used to go out or come in I could not help looking at her. Whenever I looked at her or even thought of her sad face and tattered clothes that used to torment me. Next to her I considered myself to be so happy and affluent, that I felt a sense of guilt. Such thoughts made me revolt against the existing social system".⁽⁵⁾ Great men of all ages and great revolutionaries carry in their heart the tears

and pangs of the oppressed people and that is what led them to the path of struggle. That is why the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh once said, "...politics calls for noble feelings of heart. Nobler still is the feeling that spurs on to revolutionary politics"

**One cannot be a human being worth the name
without accepting a noble ideology in life and
without struggle to attain it**

Today being a human being worth the name is equated with being rich, having high academic degrees, a high-paying job, owner of a big bank balance. Whenever a person has these, people say, "Look at him, he has become a real man. He is not into any trouble. He knows how to manage his affairs by getting hold of someone or other." Such are the words of many teachers, guardians, relatives and friends. And Netaji said, "He who does not love a great ideology will never become a real man".⁽⁶⁾ In other words, in order to be a real man we need to have a noble ideology in life, an ideology which can guide us to truth; we must have love for that ideology, accept it as the goal of life. Nowadays, even when an injustice or oppression happens in front of our eyes, many aver, "We understand everything, but what can we do? Our hands are tied; we have the family to look after; we are in service. If we protest we shall be put into too many troubles; we shall have to face many dangers and difficulties. So even though we understand everything, we are unable to do anything about it. Some go so far as to say, "If I am put in trouble, will anybody come and help". They do not feel the slightest prick of conscience. Kabiguru Rabindranath said, "Let thy hatred burn like straw those who commit injustice and those who tolerate it" ("*Anyaya je kare ar anyaya je sahe taba ghrina tare jeno trinasama dahe*"). Surely Rabindranath did not mean that a student who argues that he is a student, and his parents would be hurt or his family is poor and who would look after them, — if he sees injustice being committed and still does

not protest he would not have any sense of guilt. Rather, he said, “You cannot escape giving the excuse that you have not committed any injustice, someone else has done it. If you have tolerated injustice under whatever pretext, you also would be equally hated”. About such people Subhashchandra said, “If a person does not try to stop the oppression that he sees being committed, he insults his humanity and insults the humanity of the oppressed person also”.⁽⁷⁾ He further said, “Never forget that there is no crime more heinous than compromise with injustice and untruth”.⁽⁸⁾ Fighting against injustice may bring imprisonment, face lathi-charge, police firing, torture and oppression; then why should one fight? In answer to such questions Subhashchandra replied, “A person may be harmed or endangered or insulted or persecuted or imprisoned for his effort to eradicate oppression, but through that sacrifice and shame he is placed on a glorious pedestal of manliness.”⁽⁹⁾ He said, “If you want to win a life, you must be prepared to give your life if necessary”. In other words, if you want to live with honour you must accept death also if necessary. Based on his own life’s experience he further said, “In schools and colleges, at home or outside, anywhere or everywhere if you encounter oppression, injustice or unethical acts, courageous and oppose it..... If in my trivial life I have gained any strength, it is earned in this way only.”⁽¹⁰⁾ In addition to the messages of other great men of that age these appeals from Netaji inspired thousands of students in towns and villages, in schools, colleges and universities, made them take pledges and paying scanty attention to life or death, they plunged into the struggle to liberate the motherland, to immerse themselves in the freedom movement. Death posed no terror to them; they went to the gallows with a smiling face. Where are those days gone? In seeking an answer to that and taking part in the social struggle lies the real significance of observing Netaji’s birth anniversary.

Today also, when we hear about the different problems faced by our country, hear about the various exploitations and oppressions they strike at our conscience. We think we

ought to do something about it. But gradually weakness creeps in our mind. We start thinking, our parents will be hurt; what should I tell them, I would get into unnecessary trouble; my future will become uncertain. Such thoughts come into our mind, and we retreat back. But we have to learn from the answer Netaji gave to such questions, from the answers all great men of the past gave.

It is known to you, you have witnessed with your own eyes that to the present generation of students and youth working for the country has been reduced to working for personal gains, for obtaining benefits and favours. Today's sole concern is to weigh how much one would gain by going to which party, by enlisting as cadre of whom, during elections by working for whom. Those who are in the seat of power at the Centre and in the states are constantly indoctrinating the students and youth with these ideals. Witnessing this Comrade Shibdas Ghosh once said with pain, 'Today's parties have become like employment exchanges! Taking advantage of the poverty and deprivation of the people they are luring them to work for their party by creating hankering in their mind for jobs, for money and other riches, for trade licenses etc. If a person engages himself in political struggle renouncing personal interest, his friends laugh at him and taunt him, 'You are a fool to work for a party which has no future. What benefit will you get working for such a party'? His guardians also advise him, "If you want to do politics, go to a party from which you will get some personal benefit. Look at Mr. X. He is clever enough, through party work see how he has improved his lot and gained so many things! This is the mode of thinking of this age. So whatever is inevitable has happened in politics. In those days people used to come to politics to offer something, now they come to get something. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said in an address to the students, "...those who build up revolutionary movement and battle, initiate the struggle against injustice, at the outset they have to give more, they need to make more

sacrifices, bear more casualties,... It is on the basis of such mentality that the soil was prepared for fighting injustice and building up revolutionary struggles in one and all countries. Likewise the revolutionaries, brick by brick, established the foundation for revolution and then only revolution could come about” .⁽¹¹⁾ Such was the mentality of the students and youth during Netaji’s time. And because they had it they could stake their all and plunged into the freedom movement for their motherland. They had before them the words of the revolutionary author Saratchandra, “Service for the country is not merely a collection of words, it is the greatest struggle of human life. On one side stands my own self, and on the other side my country. In between there is no personal interest, no monetary gain, no desire for name and fame. He only can be called a patriot who can sacrifice his all for the country”.⁽¹²⁾ People like Subhashchandra, the revolutionary fighters of his time accepted this teaching as the fundamental guiding philosophy of life. That is why Subhashchandra could come out ignoring the lure of academic degrees and jobs, leaving hearth and home, ignoring the tears of his parents and make this fervent appeal to the student and youth power of this country, “You give me blood, I will give you freedom.” He not only gave his blood he gave his all at the altar of the country’s freedom. If we don’t take lessons from the life of this great man; on the questions of service to the country, taking part in politics, if we do not learn from him how to happily renounce personal interest, how to dedicate ourselves to the political struggle against injustice, exploitation and oppression, not for any gain, but to give our all in that struggle, if we do not take this as our life’s mission, then it is futile to observe 23rd January, futile to hold functions like this.

Correct ideology, correct path, high ethical standard are the real source of the strength of great men of all ages

These days we often hear utterances like the following – many of you also sometimes say this — “Will they be able to

11 - Shibdas Ghosh, Selected works- vol-III,

12- Desh Seva-Sharat Rachanaboli- vol-5

deliver? Do they have the power?" Even about the leader or the party whose analysis and discussions you like, whose character attracts you, you sometimes say, "The policy and ideology of the party are correct. Their cadres are polite and well-behaved; they are disciplined. But will they be able to deliver? Do they have power?" By power is meant, do they have ministers, do they have MLAs and MPs, do they have influence over the police, do they have money power? Do they have large membership, even if persons are recruited through lure of money and other benefits, do they get publicity in the media, in the TV channels? The Congress and the other regional bourgeois parties, even the CPI(M) got power to be equated with these criteria. Their propaganda has confused you and you too have started to think in this way- this is the tragedy. But in those days, when people like Subhashchandra and the cadres of the freedom movement came into politics, when they chose the party and the leader, they did not understand power in this manner. Great men of all ages, great sons in human history, whoever fought against the injustice and oppression prevalent in their time, on the basis of which power did they struggle? Be it Buddha, Jesus Christ, Shankaracharya or Chaitanya, when they started they were alone, they had to go through untold suffering, oppression and persecution. But none of them said, that I shall succeed because I have the backing of state power, I have the army with me, I have money power and muscle power. They said, we shall succeed because we are fighting for justice against injustice, we are fighting for truth. Truth was the source of their strength. This is the guiding beacon of the great men of all ages. In Europe those who unfurled the banner of democratic revolution in their fight against feudalism, held high the banner of liberty-equality-fraternity, the banner of Renaissance, fought on the strength of truth, on the basis of their understanding of the new truth of the new age. We have witnessed in history that in the battle for progress, in the revolutionary struggle against injustice droves of people do not come in the beginning; only a handful come, the handful who can happily bear all the persecution and injustice,

and still have the courage and spirit to carry the banner of struggle against injustice. It is for this that the pioneer of Indian Renaissance, Rammohan Roy said, "It is a tragedy in history that truth always starts with minority". Another great fighter during that period of Indian Renaissance, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, carried out his historic struggle alone and companionless. About his loneliness he said, "In my own country I am exiled". Have they not brought about any historical achievement? Have they not brought about great historical changes? If they did, then on the strength of how many misnisterships, how many MLAs and MPs did they succeed? How many were at the bedside of Marx when he died, the progenitor of Marxism which has created such a tumult in the world? What has made Marxism so strong that it could rob the sleep of the capitalists-imperialists of the world? Great Lenin, the architect of the successful Russian Revolution, started with a handful of followers; his opponents used to taunt, 'What would he be able to achieve with so few followers?' In this context came Lenin's historic utterance, "Better fewer, but better". He said, 'The question is not of number, the question is of the correct expression of revolutionary politics of the proletariat'. The same idea was articulated by the great leader of the Chinese Revolution, Mao Ze-dong, 'The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological-political line decides everything.' He said, 'In this vast country I started with twelve compatriots. Six left because they lost the mental strength. Four lost their lives in the fight against the enemy. Today the party is huge, it has immense strength, and the revolution is successful. Out of the original twelve only two are alive now. All this advancement has taken place, because of the correct policy, the correct ideology, the correct revolutionary line. But if the party now deviates from the revolutionary line, loses the ideology, everything would collapse like a house of cards'. Our leader, the great leader of the proletariat, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh started building up a genuine proletarian party to realize the unfulfilled dream of countless martyrs, using Marxism-Leninism as the weapon. The opponents taunted him, hurled abuse at him, spread calumny

and false propaganda, resorted to tooth and nail opposition, but he ignored all these and alone soldiered on. A group of people told him at that time, ‘Your contention is right; there is logic and truth in it, but you will not succeed. India is a vast land, there are so many famous leaders, so many well known parties, and you have no degree, no companions, no financial resources, no media-backing, even the leaderships of the Soviet and Chinese Communist parties do not back you, they back those whom you call pseudo communists; in this situation what will you do alone? For nothing you will spoil your future, your carrier; you should desist from following this path.’ He boldly replied, ‘The revolutionary ideology that I believe to be true for the emancipation of crores of oppressed people of this country, for that ideology I shall fight till the last drop of my blood. You may shoot me, I may die of hunger, but I cannot barter away my conscience. If I forsake truth, what is the purpose of going on living? My shelter is under a tree, I may die also under a tree. But I shall die holding my head high. I shall die with the conviction that the sacrifice of my life was necessary for revolution in India. If there is truth in my action, future history would acknowledge it.’

Whether a party will be able to deliver or not, what is the real strength of a party, on such questions Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, “...if the ideology and base political line are wrong, then however much organizational power and strength there may be, nothing really will be achieved by these; and the result can only be harmful. But if ideology and base political line are correct, then no matter how little organizational strength you have today, by slowly and gradually increasing your strength you will be able one day to bring about a radical transformation of this society.”⁽¹³⁾ He used to say, ‘The life of revolutionary politics rests in the high standard of character. A party may look big, but if the leaders and cadres of the party do not have that high standard of character, then that would mean the party has no life; it is like a

dead body, it would only poison the whole environment'. He further said, "...the kernel, the essence of any ideal, any philosophy, any noble ideology is ingrained in its moral standard, in the cultural and ethical standard. Marxism is a noble revolutionary ideology. Consequently the essence the kernel of this noblest ideology too lies ingrained in its cultural and ethical standard."⁽¹⁴⁾ So how should one judge whether a party will really be able to bring in social revolution, will be able to do real good for the people? What would be the source of power of such a party? All great men in all ages have demonstrated that the source of that power is correct ideology, correct policy and high ethical standard, high standard of character. Those who dedicate themselves to the struggle to liberate the country and the society will remain unknown to the people in the beginning, will not be heard by the people, will not only get no support, rather face opposition; in such situations they are not to flee like cowards, they are to go on with the struggle alone day after day, and they should have courage to do that. Reminding of this teaching Subhashchandra said, "Even if you want to take measures to stop any harm coming to the country in future, the common people may not accept your advice. Then you should amass the courage to fight against the whole world alone and without any friend"⁽¹⁵⁾ Those who have taken up the mission to change the society, to fight against injustice, create history, not only do they have to withstand the oppression and brutal persecution by the exploiting class, they also have to bear abuse, slander and vilification from the confused, superstition-ridden populace. Highlighting this aspect, Subhashchandra said, "To create history one must be ready to face much opposition and oppression. And you must not be surprised that even for a totally selfless deed you would face taunt and abuse, jealousy and enmity from your nearest friend"⁽¹⁶⁾ In this way Netaji reminded us that if we have the desire to anyhow gain fame and popularity, if you think that you are doing so much for the public but they

14 - Shibdas Ghosh, Selected works- vol-IV,

15, 16 - Natuner Sandhane

do not appreciate it, so what is the good of doing all this work, rather go with the prevailing current, if you think in this way, then you cannot do any great deed, you cannot change the course of history. “He who wants to be always showered with accolades from the public, he might temporarily win public approbation, but will never become an immortal character in history, and he cannot create future history.”⁽¹⁷⁾ In course of revolutionary struggle, struggle against injustice one may have to face much oppression, many hazards. About how one should view these, what is their value in a revolutionary’s life Subhashchandra said, “Life has value because there are blows and dangers. Would life have any beauty, any variety if there were no sacrifice, no sorrow, no torment, and no oppression?”⁽¹⁸⁾

When Netaji was fighting against the Gandhites inside the Congress, or when he was ousted from the Congress by Gandhites’ conspiracy, when he left home at dead of the night with only one companion to embark on a dangerous and difficult journey, all the time nothing else but his dedication to ideology, his devotion to truth, his flaming patriotism was the source of his strength. For the sake of truth, for ideology one may sacrifice his life, but this sacrifice does not go in vain, it would give birth to bigger movement by inspiring many more to give their lives – teaching this he said, ‘For the sake of ideology a person may die, but the ideology would live even after his death and blossom through the lives of thousands more.’ Today on 23rd January while observing his birth anniversary if we do not take lesson from these teachings of Netaji Subhashchandra, then it would not be an act of paying respect but merely self-deception. One question may arise, which many often pose, ‘Can anyone be like Netaji, if one tries? Every work cannot be done by everyone. Talent and ability are inborn qualities.’ In answer to such questions what did Netaji say? In an address to the students he said, “You perhaps think that great men are born great. They do not become great through practice, labour, toil and diligence. This idea is totally wrong. ... If you carefully go

through the life-history of all the great men who appeared on this earth, you will see that there is a limitless perseverance, untiring effort, single-minded dedication and ceaseless toil. If you really try with dedication and effort you will also reach a position of greatness.”⁽¹⁹⁾ Comrade Shibdas Ghosh also observed on this point, "We shall have to realize that qualities and attainments do not fall from heaven — these are particular products of a particular struggle. I am not at one with those who believe that genius, personality, talent are inborn. In my opinion, man’s consciousness is always in contradiction and conflict with the environment in which he is born and lives. ...In this very process of perpetual contradiction and conflict of man’s consciousness with the social environment — how and in what manner a man conducts this struggle and guided by which ideal, which morality, which outlook, and how ably he succeeds in conducting this struggle — on these solely depend what character he will emerge with. Naturally, a genius, a personality, a talent — they are particular products of particular struggles.”⁽²⁰⁾

Netaji also became a great man through conducting an uncompromising struggle against imperialist oppression and exploitation on the basis of the ideology, approach and culture of the then freedom movement of our country. This is also an important lesson for us from Netaji’s life.

The heinous conspiracy of the Gandhites against Netaji is a disgraceful chapter in the history of our freedom movement

Now I shall place before you the role of Netaji in freedom movement and some aspects of his political struggle. You know that our beloved leader Comrade Ghosh had shown through penetrating analysis that there were two trends in our freedom movement. One of them was the compromising line which was reformist and whose objective was to come to power through petitions, appeals,

19 - Subhas Rachanaboli- vol- III

20 - Shibdas Ghosh, Selected works- vol-III,

negotiations, roundtable conferences and through various bargaining. The other trend was the uncompromising line whose objective was to win freedom not through petitions, appeals and compromises, but through armed struggle and blood-soaked revolution. Gandhiji was the representative of the first trend, and Netaji of the second trend. The first trend reflected the interest of the Indian national bourgeoisie, that was mortally afraid of working class revolution, and the second trend represented the militant petty bourgeois class. You also know that in our freedom movement there was bitter mutual opposition between the leaderships of the two trends and also a fierce fight. The trend of armed revolutionary struggle made its appearance in India even before Subhashchandra appeared on the political scene. The armed revolutionaries set a glorious example sacrificing their life. However, they were divided into groups carrying out uncoordinated actions in the different provinces. It is under the leadership of Subhashchandra that the different groups united for the first time to give rise to a new revolutionary leadership as an alternative to the compromising leadership. In this respect Subhashchandra played a historic role. Subhashchandra's election as President at the Haripura Congress signaled the first victory of the revolutionaries. At that time many of the Gandhites did not offer much resistance. They hoped that the lure of post, the prospect of being reelected as the Congress President would persuade Subhashchandra to renounce the line of armed revolution. But their hope was belied. His Presidential address at the Haripura Congress alarmed them and also the British imperialists. War was imminent in Europe. Subhashchandra gave the call, "We should take advantage of the World War and strike at the British imperialism during this war. If we fight in other times the British imperialism would deploy the full might of their military power, but now they are preoccupied with war in many fronts, so they will be unable to deploy the full military power against the freedom movement. It is easiest to defeat the enemy by

striking at the moment when it is weakest”.⁽²¹⁾ In addition he announced, “The first objective of the Congress is to earn full freedom (*purna swaraj*); the next objective is establishment of socialism; the workers and the peasants have to be drawn into the freedom movement, landlordism is to be abolished.” He declared, “Against this background of imperialist conspiracy throughout the world there stands Soviet Russia, whose very existence strikes terror into the heart of the ruling classes in every imperialist state.”⁽²²⁾ Such proclamations never came from the Indian National Congress earlier. So, British imperialism, Indian capitalism and the Gandhite leadership all got alarmed. They all decided to foil such an attempt of Subhashchandra. He would not be allowed by any means to be reelected as the President at the Tripuri Congress. Thereby started the most disgraceful chapter in the history of freedom movement. The Gandhite leadership put up Pattavi Sitaramaiya against Subhashchandra. Everyone was aware that Sitaramaiya was Gandhiji’s candidate. Not only that, unconstitutionally and violating all rules, Nehru-Patel and all the big leaders of the Congress Working Committee issued a public appeal to vote Sitaramaiya without being approved at a meeting of the Working Committee or getting the approval of the President. A barrage of propaganda was unleashed against Subhashchandra in the capitalist-imperialist media. In spite of all these attempts the conspirators did not succeed, revolutionary forces won and Subhashchandra was reelected as President. After being defeated, ignoring all norms of courtesy Gandhiji proclaimed, “Pattabhi’s defeat is my defeat. However, I am congratulating Subhash. After all, Subhash Bose is not an enemy of the country.”⁽²³⁾ Such was the way of Gandhiji’s congratulating Subhashchandra. It shows how furious he was. Afterwards the Gandhite members of the Working Committee hatched an even more heinous conspiracy. In spite of knowing about Subhash Bose’s serious illness they convened a meeting of the Working

21, 22 - Crossroads,

23 - Subhashchandra Vabmurtite-O-Itihase- Gour Adhikary

Committee in his absence. When citing his illness Subhashchandra requested a postponement of the meeting for a few days, they threatened with en masse resignation. That is, they wanted to corner Subhash by whatever means. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru even issued a public statement, saying that “It is Subhashchandra who is responsible for precipitating this crisis for the Congress. As if the greatest crime of Subhashchandra was to get reelected as the Congress President. Their heinous activities reached a nadir when they started to spread calumnies about his illness. They started saying, “Subhash is not at all seriously ill; it is political fever.” This propaganda became so widespread that when the doctors of the Reception Committee examined him on the day prior to the meeting they were surprised to find that he really had a high temperature and did not even have the strength to get up. Even that did not allay the suspicion of Nehru, Patel and others. It is said they even asked the doctor whether he had measured the temperature himself. Yet he had to be brought to the meeting in a stretcher. I ask those students and youth to recall these incidents when on the one hand they garland the portrait of Netaji and on the other shout slogans of ‘Congress Zindabad’. I ask them to ponder how the Gandhite leadership of Congress hatched heinous conspiracies one after the other to corner Subhashchandra. In spite of his high fever he addressed the gathering and expressed his deep concern, “The so called democratic powers, France and Great Brittan, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia”.⁽²⁴⁾ In his speech he referred to England and France as ‘so-called’ democratic states and expressed his deep feelings for the Soviet Union.

Gandhite leaders adopted the tactics of either keeping Subhashchandra as the puppet President curtailing all his powers or forcing him to resign. With this aim they brought in the notorious Govind Ballav Panth Proposal. So long according to the Congress Constitution the President

nominated the members of the Working Committee. The Panth Proposal said that from now on the Congress President would nominate the Working Committee members with Gandhiji's consent. This would ensure that whoever be the President the Working Committee would be under the control of the Gandhites. Secondly, the Proposal said that all decisions must be taken with the consent of Gandhiji. In other words, in effect the President would have no power. However it is not just the Gandhites who brought this proposal, the tragedy is that while the Gandhites were conspiring to remove Subhashchandra from the Congress leadership, the Congress Socialist Party (CSP), in an act of most despicable treachery, voted in favour of the Panth Proposal and the so-called Marxists, the CPI (now split into CPI, CPI(M), CPI (ML) and a number of other factions), instead of standing by the side of Subhash Bose, made the opportunistic and treacherous move to remain neutral (!), thereby helping the Gandhites to win the vote. The Panth proposal was accepted, Subhash Bose and his followers were defeated. About this tragic episode Netaji wrote in a letter with great pain, "Tripuri was frankly a defeat for us.... It was a case of one sick man lying in bed (Netaji was lying on dais with high fever) fighting (1) 12 stalwarts of the Old Guard, (2) Jawaharlal Nehru, (3) seven provincial ministers (who were canvassing for the old guard, and (4) the name, influence and prestige of Mahatma Gandhi." ⁽²⁵⁾ About Nehru's role he wrote, "Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in this crisis than Pandit Nehru. If he had been with us — we would have had a majority. Even his neutrality would have probably given us a majority. But he was with the old guard at Tripuri. His open propaganda against me has done me more harm." ⁽²⁶⁾ He depended on the Congress Socialist Party and the undivided CPI, but was deceived. About their treacherous role he wrote, "Our defeat was due further to the betrayal of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) leadership. The Communist Party was also sailing with the CSP." ⁽²⁷⁾ About the opportunistic character of the CPI he comments, "To talk as

a leftists and act as a rightists. ... are brilliant examples of opportunism.”⁽²⁸⁾

After the Panth Proposal was adopted a new crisis appeared within the National Congress. Gandhiji refused to give any opinion about the formation of the Working Committee. Yet without his consent the Working Committee could not be formed. There was a stalemate. Nehru and others made Subhash responsible for it. In this situation to avert crisis Subhash sent many appeals to Gandhiji to intervene. Gandhiji avoided citing many reasons and other preoccupations as excuses. The affair became so dirty and ugly that even Kaviguru Rabindranath, who was a believer in Gandhiji's policy of non-violence, was very aggrieved. He also requested Gandhiji to intervene. But Gandhiji avoided the issue as before. Hence Subhash Bose had no other alternatives but to resign. And this is what the Gandhites wanted. When in the historic AICC sitting at Wellington Square Subhashchandra was reading out his resignation letter millions of people assembled outside shouting slogans of 'Subhash Bose Zindabad' and voicing strong condemnation of the Gandhites. After the session the Gandhite conspirators were afraid to come out. Subhashchandra personally escorted them out with all honour and helped them to leave. And the newly elected President in his place Babu Rajendraprasad was invited by him to his home with great cordiality. In the midst of such injustice, incivility, nasty behaviour, Subhashchandra's patience, civility, fighting spirit and firmness amazed and charmed Rabindranath. He sent a congratulatory letter to Subhashchandra addressing him 'Deshanayak' (great leader of the country).

But the attack of the Gandhites did not end here. The Working Committee took a decision that no movement is to be organized against the British. Accusing Subhashchandra Bose of giving a call for movement against the British, his membership in the Congress was suspended, in effect he was expelled. Kaviguru Rabindranath Thakur protested against this too, and

once more appealed to Gandhiji to intervene in the interest of national unity. Gandhiji replied to Rabindranath that he did not want to say anything against the decision of the Congress Working Committee and he should not. And he requested Rabindranath Thakur to tell Subhashchandra Bose to learn to behave with discipline. It was at this time that he told Dinabandhu Andrews that Subhash Bose was a spoilt child. In the eyes of Gandhiji, Subhash Bose was indisciplined and spoilt. Narrating the events of those days, a British historian Michael Edwards commented, “In those days Gandhi used his weapon of non-cooperation not against the British but against the Congress President (meaning Subhashchandra)”.⁽²⁹⁾ Subhash Bose was forced to resign. Those who carry the banner of Congress today and place the portraits of Gandhiji, Nehru, Indira and Netaji, to them, particularly to the confused students and youth of West Bengal, my request is that they should recall this disgraceful chapter in the history of freedom movement in India.

**The heinous conspiracy of the
Gandhites against Netaji was in the interest of
establishing undisputed hegemony of the
capitalist class over the freedom movement**

On the question of why Netaji was expelled from the Congress in this manner, and why his programme of movement was attacked, Netaji himself said, “Their (that is, the Gandhites’) apprehension was that once a / the nationwide movement takes off, they would lose the leadership and control over the national movement.”⁽³⁰⁾ He continued, “Their aim was to bypass struggle in every way to hold on to whatever power had reached their hands, and to negotiate for more power in close-door meetings.”⁽³¹⁾ This was Netaji’s analysis about the then Gandhite leadership.

The question is, why did Gandhiji attack Netaji in this way? Was it from personal animosity? Was it a struggle for

leadership? We do not think so. That the Gandhites attack against him was in the interest of the capitalist class was very well understood by Netaji; that is why he said, “In reality what lay behind this inner party struggle was class-struggle.”⁽³²⁾

Our departed leader, the great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that Gandhiji even unknowingly acted to serve the class-interest of the Indian capitalists. Beautifully explaining the essence of Gandhism in a few words, he wrote, “Gandhism is a sublimatic transformation of bourgeois class instinct, originated through the fusion between the sense of bourgeois moral values and the fear complex of revolution of Gandhi.”⁽³³⁾ Gandhiji did not accept science as a tool for investigating truth. He denied the historical law of development of society; he denied the truth that there is class division in society, that any individual, no matter how great he be, how truthful and dedicated he be, can never transcend the bounds of class-approach and class-outlook. Because he denied this truth, through whatever he did thinking it to be for the good of the country, and through all his thinking and in every which way he harmed the class-interest of the oppressed and exploited people, rather benefitted the interest of national capitalism – this he could not understand. This is the tragedy of Gandhiji. Apart from this, he discarded the scientific outlook while seeking truth and clung to blind religious faith. He believed with all sincerity that his thinking came from a divine power. So he asserted, “My claim to hear the voice of God is no new claim. Unfortunately, there is no way that I know of proving the claim except through results. . . . The hearing of the voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm. . . . This was between eleven and twelve midnight. I felt refreshed and began to write the note about it which the reader must have seen. . . . I have no further evidence to convince the sceptic . . . but I can say this: not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the

belief that what I heard was a time-voice of God.”⁽³⁴⁾ In his subconscious mind the opposition of bourgeois class to armed struggle was so firmly rooted that he believed with heart and soul that his opposition to armed struggle, that his principle of non-violence was the voice of God. He even said at that time, “Of course, my emphasis on non-violence becomes one of principles. Even if I was assured that we could have independence by means of violence I should refuse to have it. ... I base my faith in God and his justice.”⁽³⁵⁾

From the same outlook Gandhiji opposed working class struggle and working class revolution and argued for safeguarding capitalism and said, “God has created the owner and the worker. The owner has power of intellect, the worker has the power of labour. ... The owner’s wealth will remain with him. From this he will spend to meet his needs, whatever is reasonable and equitable. The rest the owner will hold as trustee to be spent according to the needs of the society. A person cannot create individual wealth without private ownership. ... I have no animosity against the capitalists. ... I want to melt their heart, so that they share an equitable part with their brethren who are less fortunate than them. So to me class struggle has no inevitability. ... Our socialism or communism will be based on non-violence, and on friendly cooperation between owners and workers, between landlords and rentiers.”⁽³⁶⁾ Look at India today, what is the state of the imagined land of Gandhiji. Even at that time Saratchandra had cautioned about this role of Gandhiji, “His (Gandhiji’s) real fear is about socialist revolution. He is surrounded by capitalists, by traders and merchants.”⁽³⁷⁾

Unknowingly being guided by this capitalist outlook and capitalist interest Gandhiji believed with all sincerity that revolution and revolutionaries are a menace to India. That is why once in Deshbandhu’s home he expressed, “They are enemy of the country, traitors” Saratchandra immediately stood up and protested, “I protest against your accusation. They are

34, 35, 36 - Socialism of My Conception - M.K. Gandhi

37 - Saratchandra - on Present Politics

laying down their lives for the country's freedom. For having a different opinion if you brand them as traitor, on the same logic they may also call you a traitor." Gandhiji had to retract his statement in the end. Once Saratchandra in reply to Gandhiji's query said, "...attainment of Swaraj can only be achieved by soldiers, not by spiders." That is, freedom will not come through *charka* (spinning wheel)-weaving, it would come through armed struggle only. Because Gandhiji believed that freedom would come only through non-violence, he was against the revolutionaries. That is why, in spite of Subhashchandra's request he did not put any pressure on the British Government to revoke the death sentence of Bhagat Singh during his sitting with the British Viceroy. Subhashandra requested him to boycott the meeting if the Government did not revoke the death sentence. But Gandhiji did not do it. All knew that Bhagat Singh would be hanged on 24th March morning. On that date the annual session of the National Congress was due to start. Gandhiji was afraid that Bhagat Singh's hanging would lead to huge demonstrations and he requested the Viceroy to change the date of hanging. Accordingly the Government made a sudden decision to change the time of hanging to the 23rd evening. Because they were not informed in time none among his relatives or followers could be present at the jail gate. Bhagat Singh sacrificed his life at the gallows keeping his head high like a true hero. While the whole country was mourning the death of heroic Bhagat Singh, Gandhiji stated, "This hero-worship of Bhagat Singh has done incalculable harm to the country and is continuing to do harm. Wherever there is this frenzy of hero-worship, there is hooliganism and degradation."⁽³⁸⁾ But the real sentiment of the people found expression in the homage of Subhashchandra, "Bhagat Singh was the incarnation of the spirit of rebellion that is awakening at every corner of the country. The flame of consciousness that has been lighted will never be extinguished."⁽³⁹⁾ It is precisely because of such reasons that Gandhiji was afraid of the leadership of Subhash Bose. You know that though the demand

of national liberation was raised during imperialist British rule, the Indian society at that time was class-divided. On one side stood the handful of exploiters, capitalists like Tata-Birla and the landlords. On the other side were the millions of exploited workers, poor peasants, agricultural workers and the middle class. The object of the freedom movement was not the same for the two classes, could not be the same. The sole objective of the national bourgeoisie, the exploiting class was to utilize the patriotism of all their countrymen to replace the British imperialists and establish their own exploitative class rule, which they are doing today. On the other hand the class interest of all the oppressed people would have been realized by doing away with all foreign and national exploitation and oppression and establish a social system free from exploitation. This was the idea of freedom according to their interest, the people's interest. The national bourgeois class utilized Gandhiji to realize their class interest. This national bourgeoisie was bitterly opposed to armed revolutionary struggle, because the news had reached them that in 1917 the working class in Russia through armed struggle had ousted capitalism and established socialism. As a result even though they wanted to wrest power from the British imperialists, they were mortally afraid of working class revolution. So they would never allow armed revolution to happen in India. If this happens the people would learn to use arms not only to oust the imperialist rulers but would acquire revolutionary consciousness to oust capitalism itself. This was the fear of the bourgeois class. So armed revolution had to be stopped by adopting whatever means. This was more important for them than the end of the British rule. So whatever power can be wrested through appeals, petitions, legalized demonstrations, non-violence, etc that is enough, and for this Gandhiji was their best representative. About this Gandhian leadership, Bhagat Singh also remarked, "The Congress is going on trying to win some advantages and some rights for the capitalist class and merchants and traders."⁽⁴⁰⁾ But if the leftists inside the Congress led by Subhashchandra came

to leadership position in the Congress the interest of the bourgeois class would be jeopardized. So Subhashchandra could never be allowed to become the leader, he had to be ousted from leadership and even from the Party. So it was to realize this necessity of the capitalist class that the Gandhites hatched conspiracies one after the other and in the end became successful. Unmasking the true nature and class character of the Gandhites and the then leadership of the Congress Netaji said at that time, “Today among them we see such Congress Ministers who were anti-Congress before they stepped in to grab the Congress ministership, we’ll see such people who had not been even anywhere near British jails. We are witnessing that even millionaires are declaring themselves to be patriots because they are calling themselves Gandhites. ...Landlords and rich farmers, industrialists, millionaires – these are the people who now flock around the Congress Ministers.”⁽⁴¹⁾

I want to place before you another point. The British imperial rulers had no apprehension about the compromising movement of Gandhiji. They realized that if Gandhiji and Gandhites are in the leadership of Congress they have nothing to worry about. Rather all their apprehension is regarding Subhashchandra. Hence they backed Gandhiji in many indirect ways, and just like the national Bourgeois class they too tried to build up an image of Gandhiji as the undisputed leader of the freedom movement before the eyes of the people. The British historian Michael Edwards put this point very clearly, “The British realized that they have nothing to fear from Gandhi, because they found out that he was just a reformer opposed to Western thoughts. As long as Gandhi was at the helm of Congress, they knew that they had a friend inside the Congress. So long as the non-cooperation movement was non-violent they were not bothered about it very much. ... Gandhiji’s sole purpose was to suppress the armed struggle, which was also the objective of the Government. They had the power to put down the sporadic incidents of armed struggle here and there. But if

Gandhi was not in the leadership of the Congress this position might go to a much more dynamic leadership who were supporters of armed struggle. Then if an all-out rebellion developed it could no longer be suppressed. That is why they treated Gandhi with respect, though to keep his image untarnished in the public eye (that is, so that the people do not think him to be a friend of the British), once-in-awhile he was put in jail, but for the terrorists and the revolutionaries imbued with western thoughts of whom they were really afraid, the treatment was much harsher."⁽⁴²⁾ It is for this reason that the English newspapers controlled by the imperialists backed Gandhiji and were against Netaji. It prompted Netaji to write, "The newspapers of Bombay and Madras controlled by British capital Have now turned overnight into mouthpiece of Congress ministry."⁽⁴³⁾ In the same way, today the print media-TV-radio controlled by Indian capital give publicity to BJP, Congress, many regional parties, even CPI, CPI(M) who protect the interest of capitalism, but shun the revolutionary party SUCI(C).

Because of this fear complex of the Indian capitalists they did not carry the banner of cultural revolution against feudal religious bigotry, and outmoded medieval thoughts and culture and did not follow the uncompromising line of Indian Renaissance epitomized in particular by Rammohan, Vidyasagar and Saratchandra. Instead of scientific, secular outlook Gandhiji presented a novel idea of religion-oriented nationalism based on harmonization of all religions, for which in reality the freedom movement turned out to be dominated by upper caste Hindus. As a result, the Muslim population and the so-called dalits and lower caste people kept out of the freedom movement, which both the British imperialists and the Indian capitalists also desired. The outcome is, on the one hand, that secular humanist outlook could not take deep root in the country, and on the other hand, though national political unity was achieved along with spread of capitalist national economy, hostility and enmity among the people divided on the basis of religion, caste, tribal, regional and

community feelings remained; and the Indian capitalists and their bootlicking parties in power foment these divisive feelings to break the unity of democratic movements, instigate riots and create vote banks for coming to power through elections. It is because of this harmful policy of the national bourgeoisie and their mouthpiece Congress during the freedom movement that RSS-BJP, could thrive and gain such strength today and as its counter force groups of Muslim fundamentalists could also raise their head and flourish and this two-fold development has created a dangerous situation in the country. Opposing the religious orientation of the Gandhites Subhashchandra upheld a true secular approach. He said, "Politics should be totally free from religion. Religion ought to be a matter of personal belief; he should have the full freedom to follow the religion of his choice. Politics should not be guided by religion or ideas of the supernatural, it should be guided solely by economic and political deliberations."⁽⁴⁴⁾ Needless to say that the Gandhian leadership did not accept this rational scientific outlook. As a consequence of this a dangerous situation has been created in our country today. In this context it needs to be mentioned that religion was kept out of the Indian National Army. Abid Hosain and some others composed a song for the INA calling for harmony of all religions. Netaji was very displeased and told him, "Listen, I want to make one point clear to you. I shall never allow religion to be admixed with our activities. Nationalism should be our only basis. You want to unite them in the name of religion. If this happens then one day they will be divided again in the name of religion. There are gurudwaras, mosques and temples; they may go anywhere according to their choice. But in my world there is no place of anything that is devoid of nationalism."⁽⁴⁵⁾

This uncompromising approach of Subhashchandra in political, social and cultural fields was ominous for the British imperialism, Indian capitalism and Gandhian leadership. So they conspired to remove him from the leadership of the Congress.

By opposing Netaji the undivided CPI did immense harm to the freedom movement and to the communist movement

But in spite of all the conspiracies of the capitalist class and the Gandhites and all the support provided by the imperialists, it would not have succeeded in removing Netaji from the Congress party and its leadership if there was a genuine Marxist-Leninist working class party. Unfortunately there was no such party in our country in those days. The undivided CPI which claimed to be Marxist-Leninists, and which is today split into CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML) and numerous other factions, in spite of its claim was totally divorced from Marxism-Leninism and communism. What they professed and what they did helped to firmly establish bourgeois leadership over the National Congress. As Marxists their sole duty ought to have been to foil the conspiracy of the bourgeois class to establish absolute hegemony over the Congress leadership keeping Gandhiji in the forefront, and to strengthen the revolutionary line in the freedom movement. Because the National Congress of those days was not like today's Congress. Then Congress was like a platform. Gandhites were therein, the Congress, so also were the revolutionaries believing in armed struggle; there were the moderates, and the uncompromising fighters, there were even those who believed in socialism and communism. There was the opportunity to corner and defeat the Gandhites by supporting and strengthening the alternative revolutionary line of Subhashchandra, and gradually pave the way for establishment of working class leadership. Similar was the strategy adopted by the great leader of the Chinese Revolution Comrade Mao Zedong; when he along with other communists was in the Kuomintang Party in a United Front he lent support to a great nationalist leader like Netaji, Dr. San Yat Sen, and even at the stage of anti-imperialist struggle, this paved the way to working class revolution and succeeded in finally accomplishing it. What should have been the role of a Marxist party in the handling of the contradiction between the compromising reformist trend and

the uncompromising revolutionary trend in the freedom movement of India? On this question the great leader of the international communist movement, Stalin, said in a speech in 1925, "The fundamental and new feature of the conditions of life of colonies like India is not only that the national bourgeoisie has split up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but primarily that the compromising section of this bourgeoisie has already managed, in the main, to strike a deal with imperialism. Fearing revolution more than it fears imperialism, and concerned more about its money-bags than about the interests of its own country, this section of the bourgeoisie, the richest and most influential section, is going over entirely to the camp of the irreconcilable enemies of the revolution, it is forming a bloc with imperialism against the workers and peasants of its own country. The victory of the revolution cannot be achieved unless this bloc is smashed. But in order to smash this bloc, fire must be concentrated on the compromising national bourgeoisie, its treachery exposed, the toiling masses freed from its influence, and the conditions necessary for the hegemony of the proletariat systematically prepared. In other words, in colonies like India it is a matter of preparing the proletariat for the role of leader of the liberation movement, step by step dislodging the bourgeoisie and its mouthpieces from this honourable post. The task is to create a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc and to ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc. . . . In such countries, the independence of the Communist Party must be the chief slogan of the advanced communist elements, for the hegemony of the proletariat can be prepared and brought about only by the Communist Party. But the Communist Party can and must enter into an open bloc with the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie in order, after isolating the compromising national bourgeoisie, to lead the vast masses of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism."⁽⁴⁶⁾ The Communist Party of India ought to have realized the import of this teaching of Stalin, and keeping the separate existence of the party should have got

on the Congress platform, help the uncompromising leadership fighting against the compromising reformist section and build up unity with the former. But what did the so-called communists of India do? Far from supporting Netaji against the Gandhites, when the latter conspired to bring in the Panth Proposal, instead of backing Netaji, in the name of an apparent neutral stand; in effect it helped the Gandhites, that is the national bourgeoisie. Witnessing the roles they played in different instances in the freedom movement, Netaji said with pain, “ In spite of the universal and humanist appeal of communism, in India communism could not advance very far. This is because the method and the tactics that the protagonists of communism in India adopted alienated the people instead of making them friends and supporters.”⁽⁴⁷⁾ The truth of these words of Netaji are vindicated by their activities even today.

Seventeen years after this Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the founder of SUCI (Communist) showed by applying Marxist methodology that the then CPI totally failed to apply Marxism-Leninism in party-building process, in its understanding of the philosophy of life, in its ideology and political analysis, and in ascertaining the strategy and tactics of revolution, and thereby instead of being a genuine communist party it developed as a petty bourgeois party, just as the parties of the Second International and the Menshevik Party of Russia, though professing Marxism turned out to be social democratic parties whom great Lenin marked as agents of imperialism-capitalism. It is precisely because of its social democratic character that the CPI did not follow the guideline of Stalin.

CPI(M) was formed through split in the CPI it retained the character and attribute of the old CPI. During the days of the freedom movement most of the leaders and cadres of united CPI were honest and dedicated, yet, because they deviated from Marxism, they disregarded Stalin’s teaching and instead of the power-hungry bourgeois parties, the Congress and BJP, they are sunk in the same quagmire of power-grabbing politics. In the

47 - Speech in Nowjowan Bharat Sabha, Mathura

states in which they are or were in power, they throw to the wind the interest of workers, peasants, middle class and are over-active to appease the Indian capitalists and foreign imperialists. Like all bourgeois parties they have no qualms about resorting to hypocrisy, deceit and falsehood. Like other bourgeois parties CPI(M) is ruthless in suppressing democratic movements employing fascistic means. Not just that, to suppress democratic mass movements they not only employ the police but let loose criminal gangs for perpetrating hateful mass-killing and gang-raping. As a result the foreign imperialist multinationals and Indian monopoly capital are fulsome in their praise of CPI(M) for its ability and dependability. Another group of people, citing the example of CPI(M) are attacking Marxism, socialism in Soviet Russia and Stalin, which neither Netaji nor other eminent personalities did in those days citing the example of the then CPI. Many are not aware that in 1945 when defeat in the war was imminent, with great hope and expectation Netaji broadcast from the Singapur radio station of the Indian National Government, "If there is one man in Europe today who holds in his hands the destinies of the European nations for the next few decades, that man is Marshall Stalin. The whole world, and above all, Europe will, therefore, follow with breathless anxiety the moves of Soviet Union in the days to come."⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is now well-known that in the aftermath of the war he wanted to go to the Soviet Union. Tragically he could not do so. Had he been able to so, the freedom movement would certainly have had a different ending.

CPI acted in total contravention of the guideline of great Stalin

Like Dr. Sun Yat Sen of China and Dr Soekarno of Indonesia, Netaji too, as an anti-imperialist, nationalist revolutionary leader had great respect for Marxism, communism, and Soviet Union without being a Marxist.

We know that in the present era Marxism-Leninism is the

highest revolutionary ideology. In different countries, those who would fight against injustice and oppression, fight for independence and liberation against imperialism, in spite of being nationalists, they would consider communists as the most dependable ally in this struggle. That is why the glorious role of Marxism-Leninism in the liberation struggles of China and Vietnam, and the examples of character, honesty, integrity, dedication, and self-sacrifice of communists inspired countless nationalists and attracted them to communism. Yet in our country, the un-Marxist activities and opportunism of the so-called communist party created a bad impression among the freedom fighters about the role of communism in freedom movement; about this Subhashchandra told Rajani Palme Dutta in an interview, "Communism as it appeared to be demonstrated by many of those who were supposed to stand for it in India seemed to me anti-national."⁽⁴⁹⁾ However, even with such behaviour of the so-called communists, he did not form a wrong understanding about communism. He said in the same interview, "I should add that I have always understood and am quite satisfied that Communism, as it has been expressed in the writings of Marx and Lenin and in the official statements of policy of the Communist International, gives full support to the struggle for national independence and recognizes this as an integral part of its world outlook."⁽⁵⁰⁾ Those who have become staunch anti-communist from looking at undivided CPI in the days of freedom struggle and looking at CPI(M) and CPI(ML) today, I would request them to learn from Netaji's example, because he did not err about communism from looking at CPI.

What could have harmed Netaji more than the activities of the so-called communists of this country! But from this he did not develop a wrong understanding about communism, did not become anti-communist. He judged and understood communism through reading the greater thinkers of communism, not by looking at the acts of the sham communists. Even without being a Marxist he understood the importance of communism in our

country while delving deep into the study of revolutionary ideologies in the freedom movement of our country; this becomes clear from one historic utterance of his, "It was generally felt that all progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress, who might not be ready to join the Socialist or Communist Party should be organised on the basis of a common minimum programme. I felt, further, that only by that means could the onslaught of the Right be resisted and the soil prepared for the growth of a Marxist Party."⁽⁵¹⁾ This shows that he was keen to prepare the ground for forming a genuine Marxist party. He had the conscious understanding to announce, "During the nineteenth century, Germany made the most remarkable gift through her Marxian philosophy. During the twentieth century Russia had enriched the culture and civilization of the world through her achievement in proletarian revolution, proletarian government and culture."⁽⁵²⁾ Expressing great expectation for the victorious march of communism he said, "The currents and cross-currents in the present situation of the world may be classified into two principal groups, that is, the current of imperialist power and the counter-current of communist power. Therefore, the termination of Hitlerism would be establishment of socialism."⁽⁵³⁾ This great leader could see so far ahead and articulate it, but the so-called communists of our country did not lend any support to him, on the contrary, opposed him, thereby helping the bourgeois class and the Gandhites to remove him from Congress leadership. What can be more tragic than this? Again and again a thought comes to our mind, if the country had a genuine Marxist party and leadership, and if Netaji could come into contact with them, what glorious role would he have played, and again and again we rue what a great opportunity the people of this country lost.

Be that as it may, as I was telling there was no party in our country which could organise the working class in support of Netaji and against the national bourgeoisie. Only the middle class

51, 53 - Crossroads,

52 - Address to the Indian Political Conference; London, 1933,

and the student-youth community were in support of Netaji. As you know the middle class is as vacillating in the political field as in the economic. Hence Netaji's leadership could not attain stability. After he was forced to resign from the Congress Presidentship and was expelled from the Congress party, being unable to do much in this country any more, he dreamt whether something could be done from abroad taking advantage of the Second World War situation, and with this dream he left home to undertake a perilous journey for an uncharted destination. That history has become a legend now and is known to you all.

You also know about how the so-called communists of our country, in league with the Gandhites, showered taunt and ridicule on his flight to Germany and Japan, in his endeavour to liberate the country by forming the Indian National Army. How they attempted to traduce his character! Branding him as 'agent of fascism' and 'Quisling' Jawaharlal Nehru said, "If Subhash comes to the country I shall greet him with an open sword." And the so-called communists said, "We shall greet Subhashchandra with a garland of bullets". The same sentiment found expression in an utterance of B T Ranadive, leader of CPI, and later of CPI(M), "In a message Subhash Bose has extolled anarchy and acts of sabotage as 'liberation war'. . . . The Communist Party would give that reply to the agent of Japanese imperialism, Subhash Bose, which honest patriots give to traitors and enemies of the country. If after landing in India the hired 'liberation army' of Bose, the gang of thieves and robbers attempt to plunder and rob, they would come to realize how severe is our wrath and hatred."⁽⁵⁴⁾ That is, in their view, they are honest patriots and Netaji is a traitor and enemy of the country! And his Indian National Army is a gang of thieves and robbers! They did not stop at this. In their party organ, violating all sense of decency, they printed a cartoon depicting a dog whose face is that of Netaji and the leash around its collar is held by the Japanese premiere Tojo. Such was the level of indecency that the so-called communists of this country stooped, note how the Gandhites,

the bourgeoisie and the so-called communists are talking in the same voice. Many years later Jyoti Babu (the Chief Minister of the CPI(M) Government) with an eye on the elections all of a sudden announced at a rally in Calcutta, “ We had committed a mistake in the past about Subhash Bose”. This realization dawned on them so many years later because of the elections.

This was not a mistake, but a serious crime, the like of which they committed not once, but many times. The blaze of uprising of 1942 against British imperialism (which the Gandhites tried to douse) was opposed by the CPI as a ‘fascist conspiracy’, and they set a novel example of ‘patriotism’ by collaborating with the British in their war effort. Many hold the wrong impression that the CPI did this on instruction from Soviet Russia. In a book published recently Dr. Ranen Sen, a well-known CPI leader of those days, wrote that in an interview with Stalin at Moscow in 1951, when the CPI leaders, in response to a query, mentioned about this role, Stalin severely criticized them for collaborating with British imperialism. Dr. Ranen Sen has written, “Our leaders told that they did not oppose the British war efforts with a view to strengthen anti-fascist forces.” In reply Stalin remonstrated, “Perhaps you know that Britain and United States rendered us practically no help. We have won on the basis of our own strength. At first they didn’t even want to open a second front. When the Red Army started advancing in pursuit of Hitler’s army, they became afraid that the Red Army would overrun whole of Europe, and from that fear only they opened a second front.” Afterwards a visibly annoyed Stalin said with a critical tone, “By giving up opposition to imperialism, you have in a way collaborated with the British”⁽⁵⁵⁾ If you question them today, probably the CPI-CPI(M) leaders would acknowledge that they had committed a mistake. But such acknowledgement has no value unless it is sincere, and unless one finds out the true reason for the mistake and draws lesson from it. On this question there is a valuable teaching from great Lenin, “A political party’s attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important

and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils in practice its obligations towards its class and the working people. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its class, and then the masses.”⁽⁵⁶⁾ Needless to say that the leaders of CPI-CPI(M) never followed this Lenin-appointed path. Had they done so, they would have realized that their party was never a genuine Marxist party. It is precisely because of this that during the freedom movement and today also through their un-Marxist activities they have done and are still continuing to do incalculable harm to revolutionary movement and pulled down the glorious prestige of the great ideology of Marxism-Leninism

I do not know how far they have realized their mistake, but the people of this country have long borne the cost of their mistake and will have to bear it for a long time to come. Had they stood boldly by Netaji and stopped the bourgeois conspiracy to remove him, the history of our country would have been written differently. Could Netaji hold on to the Congress leadership, could he make Congress adopt the line of revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle, certainly he would not have thought of going abroad. He would have organized revolutionary uprising inside the country; he went abroad because he could not do it. He would surely have successfully led the historic 1942 August uprising. And the situation in the country would have been different. They accuse Netaji of joining hands with the fascists; brand him as an agent of fascism. If one understands Netaji even a little bit, if one knows Netaji's character, one cannot bring such allegation against him, one can never think like that about an ardent patriot like him. On the contrary, our respect about him ought to increase even more if we look at what he said about fascism in Italy and Germany. Bitterly criticizing Nazism and Hitler he wrote to the director of

German Academy at Munich Dr. Thierfelder in 1936, “I must say with regret that the new nationalism in Germany is not only narrow and self-centred but also arrogant — I am returning back to my country with this impression. The essence of Nazi philosophy is expressed in Hitler’s recent speech at Munich. This new philosophy of racial inequality based on weak scientific evidence is preaching the superiority of the white races specially the German race. ... In *Mein Kampf* Hitler has criticized the old colonial policy of Germany, but Nazi Germany has started to raise demands about its old colonies.”⁽⁵⁷⁾ In his Ramgarh speech of 1940, lamenting the loss of opportunity for socialist revolution in spite of favourable conditions because of the lack of a leader like Lenin and Mussolini’s coming to power utilizing that opportunity, he said, “Italy in 1922 was all intents and purposes, ripe for Socialism. All that she needed was an Italian Lenin. But the man of the hour did not arrive and the opportunity slipped out Socialist hands. Italy ultimately went to Fascist instead of going to socialist.”⁽⁵⁸⁾ I have already mentioned about his profound confidence in Soviet Union expressed in his speeches at Haripura and Tripuri sessions of Congress.

The question may arise, why Netaji fled to Germany in 1941 to seek help though he was so opposed to fascism in Italy and Germany earlier just before the Second World War. It is a fact of history that after he fled from his home he reached Kabul from where he tried to contact and seek help, not from Germany and Japan, but from the socialist state of Soviet Union. In his struggle for India’s freedom he first sought help from Soviet Union. However, then the international situation was such that it was not possible for Soviet Union to give that help, because fascist Germany-Italy and imperialist Japan had appeared internationally as the main enemy. Soviet Union was going to be attacked by them. Soviet Union had the necessity to handle British and US imperialism against Germany-Italy-Japan and to build up tactical unity with the former which they succeeded in doing after much effort. Because, even before the Second World

War started, British, French and US imperialism plotted to get Germany, Japan and Italy to annihilate Soviet socialism. For that they helped Germany in many ways. But the turn of events was such that war first broke out between Germany-Italy—Japan and Britain, France and Russia. In this situation it was not possible for the Soviet Union to help Netaji. Their inability they conveyed to Netaji. Possibly Netaji also appreciated the difficulty of the Soviet Union. So, on this issue he never made an aversive comment against Soviet Russia, and never harboured any animosity towards Soviet Union. However, a group of people going by the name of Subhashbadi (followers of Subhash) has spread much slander against Soviet Union regarding this issue. Following the policy of letting a thief catch a thief, Netaji planned to utilize the contradiction between Germany-Italy-Japan and Britain. Because then British imperialism was his main enemy and his sole focus was to win India's independence. Guided by fervent patriotism Netaji wanted to use Japan against British imperialism as did Aung San in Burma and Soekarno in Indonesia. Later both of them turned against Japan. Can there be any doubt that if necessity arose Netaji also would have stood against Japan. It may be questioned whether this tactics was right or wrong, the issue may be debated, but can he be branded as 'agent of Japan'. Was his life-long arduous struggle for the purpose of establishing Japanese imperialism in India? Yet the so-called communists marked him as 'agent of Japanese imperialism', 'traitor', 'enemy of the country'! This history may be unknown to the present students and youth, but can the elderly people forget it? We can only say this, that if the Japanese invaded India, he would be the first person to take up the gun for fighting them, and if need be to become a martyr. In this context a remark by General Shah Nawaj of the INA built by Netaji is noteworthy, "Our only safeguard is our own strength. After entering India if we found that Japan was going to take the place of the British, we would have turned our guns and fought them". These words of his compatriot reflect Netaji's approach to Germany and Japan. Today we all know that he had many

differences of opinion with German and Japanese leadership on diverse issues, and that towards the last stages of the war he said, "The people of all subjugated countries will have to depend on the socialist state for their liberation." There is another aspect which you ought to thoroughly comprehend.

In the Second World War, being attacked by the Axis powers, Germany, Italy and Japan, the Soviet Union allied itself with British, French and US imperialist to fight the Axis powers; and Netaji took the help of Germany and Japan to fight against British imperialism. Netaji's enemy was a Soviet ally and Netaji's ally was a Soviet enemy. Yet, instead of being repeatedly asked and pressured Netaji did not declare war against Soviet Union. Many a time he expressed displeasure at Germany attacking Soviet Union. In 1941 June when Germany suddenly attacked Soviet Russia violating all international norms and in spite of a Non-aggression Pact, and without even declaring war, Netaji was in Italy and sent a strong note of protest to the diplomatic officer Borman of the German International Department at Rome. Mentioning the incident the diplomatic officer Borman wrote in his report, "It was clear from Subhash Bose's words that on the question of Russia-Germany war he was very much influenced by the Russian views."⁽⁵⁹⁾

During the war he uttered not a single word against Soviet Russia, if he did Hitler and Tojo would have been very pleased, but he did not go that way. This incident proves how deep was his faith in and respect for Soviet Union. In this context we are reminded of the words of our great teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, "A party may not be Marxist, it may not be communist, but if it is a communist hater, that party cannot be a truly democratic one in the present times."⁽⁶⁰⁾ Netaji's role was like this.

Today the poison of communalism is vitiating the atmosphere of the whole country. Riots are instigated time and again raising the slogan of Hindutwa. Thousands of people are

59 - Netaji Through German Lens - Nanda Lal Mukherjee,

60 - Shibdas Ghosh Selected Works, Vol-IV

being killed, property and shelter are being destroyed, women are being raped. Even during the imperialist rule the Britishers, in spite of many attempts, did not succeed in instigating as many riots, as happened during the Congress and the BJP rule. These attacks are launched so that the unity of the people in democratic movement can be broken, and dividends could be reaped during elections. In his time Netaji waged a bitter struggle against communalism. I would like to say a few words about it. With great concern he cautioned about communal forces, “Hindu Mahasabha (progenitor of today’s BJP) ... have suddenly developed a rabid communalism, communal venom is being emitted from day to day with a view to poisoning the minds of the Hindus in Bengal and elsewhere.... Communal organizations like Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League have become even more communal than before.”⁽⁶¹⁾ In the same year he said in a speech at Jhargram, Medinipur District, West Bengal, “Hindu Mahasabha sends Sanyasis and Sanyasins with trishul in their hands to beg for votes. Hindus unhesitatingly bows down on seeing trishul and the saffron. Hindu Mahasabha has thus appeared on the political scene by using religion and thus contaminating it in the process. Every Hindu should condemn this. We want that all freedom-loving men and women of the country serve the country unitedly and intently.”⁽⁶²⁾

What would Netaji have said had he witnessed how RSS and BJP have usurped political power misusing Hindu sentiments? There cannot be any eternal reason for conflicts between the Hindu and Muslim communities in our country — it is not there. A section of the vested interest from their narrow sectarian outlook is precipitating quarrel and misunderstanding between them... in freedom movement, such people should also be considered as enemies... ”⁽⁶³⁾ He severely criticized those who raised the slogan of ‘Hindu Bharat’ in those days, “We hear voices of ‘Hindu Raj’ in India owing to a majority of Hindu population. Since the Hindus

61 - Editorial published in Forward Bloc, 4 May, 1940,

62 - Published in Ananda Bazar Patrika, 14 May, 1940,

63 - Josor district Conference, 7 July, 1929,

are majority in India, there is a bogey of Hindu state. These are all useless thoughts.”⁽⁶⁴⁾ He also said, “There can be no bigger a lie than saying that the interests of the Hindus and the Muslims are different. Those who say that the interests of the Hindus and Muslims are not the same actually do not speak the truth. Hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, these are the basic questions.”⁽⁶⁵⁾ He has also given guidance how communalism may be eradicated. He said, “I am placing emphasis on the necessity of a more far-reaching remedy to solve communal discord. . . . Like all other religions Islam has also a place in India. It is necessary to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of each religion, because, mutual cultural familiarity paves the way for communal peace and unity. . . . For this cultural tie up it is necessary to have a somewhat scientific and secular education. Religious orthodoxy is a serious obstacle to cultural association, and there is no better remedy than secular, scientific education.”⁽⁶⁶⁾

Suggesting another way to solve the communal problem he further said, “in the situation today, it may seem impossible . . . to uproot the cancer of communalism. But the task will become much easier if we can develop revolutionary mentality covering the entire nation. . . . In the freedom struggle when the people become comrade-in-arms of one another, their life will be kindled with a new inspiration for one common goal, and together with this will develop a new approach, a new vista will be opened up, and a new vision will unfold. When this revolution happens, the Indian people will be transformed to a new type of people.”⁽⁶⁷⁾ Needless to say that if Netaji Subhashchandra succeeded in retaining the leadership of the Congress, if he were able to defeat the compromising Gandhite leadership and to follow the path of armed revolutionary struggle against British imperialism, then apart from solving other problems he could have uprooted the cancer of communalism, and the imperialists could not have engineered partitioning of India. A most revered

64 - Speech at Kumilla, 14 June 1938,

65 - Address at Rajsahi, 13 April, 1928,

66, 67 - Speech at Maharashtra Provincial Conference, 03 May, 1928,

leader in those days, who was imprisoned for the longest duration in British India and later in Pakistan, Sardar Gaffur Khan, nicknamed as 'Frontier Gandhi', said in a homage to Netaji, that "his heartiest congratulation would go to the only leader, Netaji Subhash, for his sincere act of love towards the poor. Only Subhash could wipe out the communal feeling that engulfed India and Pakistan."⁽⁶⁸⁾ Many in our country harbour the wrong idea that it is the Muslims who are responsible for the partition of India. The Hindu members, in presence of Gandhiji, together gave their consent to partition, only two Muslim leaders boldly stood out against partition of India, one was Sardar Gaffur Khan, the other was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Today many do not know of these incidents. History is also distorted in different ways. Today BJP and RSS are spreading communal poison throughout the country; if Netaji were alive would he have permitted it? Surely he would have resisted it with all his might. If we want to pay respect to Netaji we must fight against this communalism.

Many do not know that the BJP and RSS which are branding all individuals who dare to voice the slightest opposition to them, as 'anti-national', 'unpatriotic', 'traitors', themselves opposed the freedom movement. The RSS 'guru' Golwalkar proclaimed during the freedom movement, "The theories of territorial nationalism and of common danger, which formed the basis of our concept of a nation, had deprived us of the positive and inspiring content of our real Hindu Nationhood and made many of the 'freedom movements' virtually anti-British movements. Anti-Britishism was equated with patriotism and nationalism. This reactionary view has had disastrous effects upon the entire course of the freedom struggle, its leaders and the common people."⁽⁶⁹⁾ That is, according to the RSS chief, the freedom movement that developed encompassing the whole of India was merely 'anti-British movement' and British opposition is equated with patriotism and nationalism. Such thoughts are

68 - Times Of India - 06 April, 1990

69 - We or our nationhood defined - M S Golwalkar

‘reactionary’ because they deprive us of the positive and inspiring content of ‘Hindu Nationalism’. In other words, the united national freedom movement of the people encompassing the whole country was reactionary because it was not based upon Hindu nationalism. Golwalkarji did not stop there. He said,

“Those only are nationalist patriots, who with the aspiration to glorify the Hindu race and Nation next to their heart, are prompted into activity and strive to achieve that goal. All others are either traitors and enemies to the National cause”.⁽⁷⁰⁾ According to RSS chief Netaji and all the freedom fighters, the fearless martyrs, are ‘traitors and enemy of the country’.

RSS not only voiced these ideas, but all along they had opposed the freedom movement; they supported the British in suppressing the 1942 August uprising, and for this they got a big certificate from the Home Secretary of Bombay V Iyengar, who wrote to the British Government on 18 February 1944, “Sangha has diligently kept itself within confines of the law and most notably did not take any part in the disturbances that started in 1942.” In addition, while Netaji as well as the Congress Working Committee took the decision that no help would be rendered to the British imperialists in the Second World War, the Hindu Mahasava leader Savarkar’s call was, “So far as India’s defense is concerned, Hindudom must all unhesitantly, in a spirit of responsive cooperation with the war effort of the Indian Government (i.e., British Government) in so far as it is consistent with the Hindu interests by joining the Army, Navy and the Aerial forces in as large a number as possible and in securing an entry in all ordnance, ammunitions and war craft factories. ... Hindu Mahasavaitees must, therefore, rouse Hindus especially in the provinces of Bengal and Assam as effectively as possible to enter the military forces of all arms without losing a single minute.”⁽⁷¹⁾ It is to be noted that it was Savarkar himself who wrote to the British Government on 14 November, 1913 in a mercy petition for release from the Andaman Jails, “Therefore if the Government

70 - We or our nationhood defined - M S Golwalkar

71 - Samagra Savarkar Wangmasya : Hindu Rashtra Darshan, Vol-IV,

in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me, I cannot but be the staunchest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English government which is the foremost condition of that progress. ... Moreover my conversion to the constitutional line would bring back all those misled young men of India and abroad who were once looking up to me as their guide. I am ready to serve the Government in any capacity they like, for as my conversion is conscientious so I hope my future conduct would be. By keeping me in jail nothing can be got in comparison to what would be otherwise. The mighty alone can afford to be merciful and therefore where else can the prodigal son return but to the parental doors of the Government.”⁽⁷²⁾ Of course the British Government showed mercy and the parental doors were opened to the prodigal son who returned to render all-round help to the Government, the most noted one of which was his role during the Second World War mentioned above. This is the Savarkar whom the BJP Government presents with great fanfare as a great patriot, a valiant fighter in the freedom movement. What can be a greater falsehood than this.

Now you tell me whether it is not sheer hypocrisy on BJP's part to place wreaths at Netaji's statues on 23rd January. Isn't this just an attempt to erase their disgraceful role in the freedom movement and thereby confuse the people and reap dividends in elections?

Netaji on Emancipation of Women

The discussions by Netaji on emancipation movements of women, workers, peasants, and students and youths are worth recalling even today. About emancipation of women he said, “Women have to be liberated in every way, and given equal rights and responsibilities as men in the society and state. The discrimination in financial matters has to be removed, and arrangements have to be made so that everyone (man or woman), irrespective of caste and religion gets equal opportunity

72 - From Penal Settlements in Andaman by R C Mazumdar, published by Dept. of Culture, Govt. Of India in 1974,

for education and development.”⁽⁷³⁾ His message to the women was” We also want to see the women enjoying the same sets of rights and freedom which the men enjoy. We do not believe that the men will ever give that to women and even if they give, the women will really be having that. Women will have to revolt to earn their freedom.”⁽⁷⁴⁾ These words of Netaji are relevant even today for women oppressed and exploited by the capitalist system. How deep a faith he had in the courage, valour, self-sacrifice of women is evident from his decision to form a separate women’s brigade in INA.

Netaji on Workers and Peasants Movements

About workers movements he said, “If there is a conflict between the worker and capitalist owner, the entire state machinery stands by the owner. In the days to come, the working class will not only play important role in bringing about political emancipation but also in freeing the society from the shackles of economic oppression.”⁽⁷⁵⁾ The oppression and exploitation that he witnessed during British rule to make him utter these words has multiplied many times today under capitalist rule. Hence the working class must unite under the leadership of a genuine revolutionary party. Along with it, even at that time he warned the workers about the conspiratorial activities of the owners and said, “The world trade is in a recession. Its influence is felt here also. Almost all companies, even the Tatas and Burma Oil Companies are retrenching workers. Under the circumstances you must strengthen your unions. The owners are assuring you that they would open workers’ office which would look after your interests and hence you should dismantle the unions. Don’t be deceived by these promises.”⁽⁷⁶⁾ Many do not know that Netaji in his time led many workers’ movements and strikes, and for many years he was in the leadership of AITUC, the only united organization at that time. Alerting the poor peasants also he said, “Peasants, be united, otherwise the demands for your

73 - Subhas Rachanabali, 74 - Taruner Swapno

75, 76 - Speech at Kharagpur Railway workers' meeting, 1928,

rights will not be acknowledged. It is a tragedy that those who produce food for us have to die of hunger. To redress this condition the peasants should build up a united front among themselves.”⁽⁷⁷⁾

Netaji Gave a Call for Adopting Scientific Outlook in Seeking the Truth about the World and the Universe

Netaji was a dedicated seeker of truth. It is exemplary how in his journey through life he was ever ready to acquire new truth. In his early life, influenced by the thoughts of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, for some time he placed too much emphasis, spent time on sex-conquest. That it was unnecessary, irrational and wrong has been narrate by him later in his autobiography, “An Indian Pilgrim.” In his philosophical thoughts he was influenced by Vedantic and Vivekananda’s ideas. Later he was attracted to Hegelian dialectics. Much later he accepted the scientific method of analysis and was in the process of accepting materialism and coming out of the idealist trend of thinking. In 1940, before starting his hunger-strike till death in the Presidency Jail, he made some comments on different philosophies in his ‘The Message of My Life’ and wrote this remarkable piece for the youth of the next generation, “When I am no more, I would like this to be conveyed to those who are interested in the deeper problems of life... To sum up. on the question as to the nature of the world of phenomena, we better keep an open mind while making note of all that science has revealed to us so far. More light is bound to come, as science makes further advance. Meanwhile, we should bear in mind that the old conception of materialism has broken down completely. It has been under a cross-fire, being attacked by scientific research on one side and by philosophical reasoning and speculation on the other.”⁽⁷⁸⁾ Why did Netaji write this ‘personal testament’ for the youth on the day he started his fast until death? Why did he tell them to think about materialism in a new way entirely depending on scientific

77 - Speech at the Meeting of KISHAN SABHA, 1937

78 - Crossroads

research, discovery, experiments and verification? This has got tremendous significance. In his early life and continuing for quite some time Netaji was mainly idealist and spiritualist. But he was not bigoted or blind. He was a seeker for truth with an open mind. It is clear that later on he was on his way to seeking for truth based on science, and he realized that his previous opposition to materialism was wrong. In other words, basing on science he was fast advancing towards materialism coming out of the ambit of idealism. That is why he was telling to depend only on science for seeking truth. He wanted that the next generation of youth would not commit the same mistake that he did in his early years, thinking idealism to be infallible. That is why he gave this valuable advice to the youth, because he apprehended that he might die from the hunger-strike. How strong his commitment to truth was! So this great patriotic revolutionary fighter, the seeker after truth, cautioned the youth on this point. This is an invaluable teaching for all! Of course during the hunger-strike there was country-wide surge of mass protest, and the British Government was forced to release him from jail and intern him at home. How he fled from there and secretly went abroad is an unforgettable chapter of history. The next few years he was day and night engaged in organizing the liberation struggle and as a result had no opportunity of any further progress in the study of philosophy. But if he had the opportunity to progress further in philosophical discourse with science as the only weapon, he would probably have fully accepted Marxism and could have assumed the role of an Indian Marxist leader and could have superseded the bounds of petty bourgeois revolution and carried the noble banner of proletarian revolution.

With great sadness I want to put one point before you. Why didn't Netaji succeed in organizing the people in India though he tried his utmost to do so? To find out the reason we have to consider that British-ruled India was class-divided. On one side were the powerful national capitalists, and on the other the working class, poor peasants, serfs and agricultural workers.

National capitalism backed Gandhism and opposing armed revolution made a bid to draw the people to a position of compromise, and succeeded in doing it. On the other hand, there was no genuine Marxist party to unite the poor peasants, serfs, and agricultural labourers under the leadership of the working class. I have already discussed about the unmarxist conduct of the united CPI. The only forces in support of Netaji were the middle class and students and youth, which as a class have vacillating character; as a result it could not stand in support of Netaji as a stable force. Another crisis was also in operation. The bourgeois class wanted the common people to remain politically uneducated, ignorant and devoid of consciousness and support Gandhism. There was no revolutionary working class party to make the people politically conscious and united. Therefore the common people did not bother to judge which way the Congress was moving, whether there were contrary opinions within it, and if present who held which opinion, who was right, who was wrong etc. Most of the people did not know on which issues Netaji and the Gandhites had serious differences and why they had such differences which led to removal of Netaji by conspiracy. Most of the people being victims of religious blindness regarded Gandhiji as a saint or *avatar*, so they could not even think that Gandhiji could make a mistake, or unknowingly act in the interest of the bourgeois class. The few handful of people who had some inkling of the differences thought that they did not understand politics, this was a matter of the leaders who would finally decide. Lacking consciousness and remaining passive they went on supporting the Gandhite leadership, and the radio and newspapers gave one-sided publicity to Gandhism. Hence the great struggle of Netaji could not succeed. Even today the people of this country have not taken appropriate lesson from this painful consequence. The oppressed exploited people long for deliverance, long for liberation, but they do not care to give any thought as to how the liberation would come, how freedom from exploitation would come about. They think, “we are ordinary people, small fry, we

do not need to meddle in big affairs.” Taking advantage of this mentality the bourgeois parties, the sham communist parties are time again confusing the people, are deceiving them. Elections come, they vote this party or that selected by the bourgeoisie. They are swept by the wave created by the newspapers, TV, radio; they never pause to think: who controls the news media, in whose interest are they creating the wave? They fail to understand that it is the bourgeois class which is behind all these. The people even for once do not think from where the huge amount of money comes that the parties are spending in elections. When the poor die of hunger, lack of medical treatment, these/those do not spend a paise to help the poor, but spend a fortune to buy votes. From where does this money come? Who gives them and with what motive? The exploiting class, the monopolists dish out the money to Party No. 1, 2, 3 etc., so that when they come to power they would work for the interest of the exploiters. The capitalists are accumulating huge amount of wealth, and their servitors, the party leaders, the ministers, MLAs and MPs are amassing crores of rupees in banks in their own name or pseudonym; on the other side are millions of people who are turned into beggars and penniless paupers. During the time of elections the leaders of different parties appear in so many avatars, show so many tricks, give fulsome promises, shed crocodile tears for the poor, but after winning in the election appear in a different hue. With deep dejection the people voice, “Nothing good will happen in this country, all are the same, whoever goes to Lanka becomes a Ravana.” They forget that Rama, Laksmana, Sita, even Hanuman went to Lanka, but none of them became a Ravana, but Sita would not have suffered so much, *Lankakanda* (tumultous events in Lanka) would not have happened if Sita was not deceived by Ravana disguised as a mendicant, if she did not fall in Ravana’s trap. The people are not studying politics, are not judging which party is of the rich and which of the poor, which party represents the exploiting capitalist class, and which party represents genuinely workers-peasants-middle class;

instead they are swayed by news-media publicity, and are supporting this party or that of the capitalist class. They are deceived again and again, but still go on thinking, ‘We have seen the rule of this party, let us try the other this time’ — they are thus ensnared in the web of bourgeois politics. Votes may change governments, but does the capitalist exploitation change, does the exploitative state machinery change? The people will have to ponder: will they spend their time like this, being swayed by the wave created by the capitalist-controlled media, and being satisfied with crumbs doled out at the time of elections? Or, would they try to understand the politics even if it is difficult. They will have to ponder: at the time of the freedom movement, by not understanding the politics, by blindly following the bourgeois Gandhite leadership, and not boldly standing by Netaji, the then people let the country be utterly ruined. Today will you let a greater disaster come to our country by turning away from the study and practice of politics in the same way? I entreat you to deeply think about this matter on this matter on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Netaji.

Emilie Schenkl Came in Netaji’s Life as a Befitting Consort of Love

Here I want to discuss another relevant aspect about Netaji. In his life-struggle how open-minded, courageous and truthful Netaji was, is borne out by the change in his attitude towards marriage. In his early life following Vivekanada’s ideal he thought that to serve one’s country one should lead a celibate life. He explained later that his idea was wrong. When he was living abroad Emilie Schenkl appeared in his life. With her extraordinary personality, firm sense of self-respect and boundless sympathy for the freedom struggle of subjugated India she was a befitting woman to win the respect and love of Netaji. He knew many questions would be raised in India. His opponents would create a stir and rake up many things. His devoted or blind followers would be saddened. Questions would also be raised that she was a foreigner and professed a different

religion. But Netaji did not hesitate to honour this love. His love letter to Emilie Schenkel also provides exemplary teaching for all patriots and revolutionaries. He wrote, "India is my first and only love. I have given my all to my first love. I have nothing more to give; what little is left I have given to you. Perhaps this is not enough in return of your great love. But do not expect more from me."⁽⁷⁹⁾ Netaji married her and gave her due honour as his wife. In his well-known book '*The Indian Struggle*' he acknowledges her cooperation and expressed his gratefulness. Netaji perhaps thought that he would disclose the news to his countrymen at an appropriate time, so that there is no misunderstanding. But in his tumultuous life of that period he did not get the opportunity. So before he left for Japan in a German submarine he conveyed this news in a letter to his respected elder brother Saratchandra Bose, "Respected Mejadada, I am again journeying on a dangerous path. May be I shall not see the end of the road. If such a danger interrupts my journey I shall be unable to send you any news for ever. So I am giving you this news. It will reach you in proper time. I have entered into marriage here and I have a daughter. In my absence please have some affection to my wife and daughter, as you have so long showered it on me."⁽⁸⁰⁾ In his journey along a life of struggle love came, and to honour that love came marriage and also the birth of a daughter. Before leaving for Japan he saw his new-born daughter only for a few days. But he progressed further along the path of struggle. He did not show any weakness, was not held back by his wife and daughter. This is also a shining example.

What a noble character Netaji's wife had and what deep respect she had for Netaji is borne by the way she spent her life in war-ravaged Vienna and brought up her daughter amidst deprivation and hardship, but not for once did she express any disaffection, or reproach or blame Netaji. Afterwards she politely refused the offer of financial help from the Nehru Government

79 - College Street Journal, January-February, 1997, same time also published in Ananda Bazar Patrika, 80 - SubhasChandra Rachanabali - VOL-VI,

and the offer of help from the INA fund. Probably Emilie Shenkl never visited India, in spite of many invitations, from the apprehension that some opponents and fanatic Netaji-followers would raise questions about their marriage, and that would lower the dignity of her and Netaji. She spent her life carrying the hallowed memory of Netaji in her heart. Imbued with Netaji's teachings, she raised her daughter Anita as a worthy heir of Netaji, so that Anita replied to a question, "He did not give us any false hope. He always said that his country was his first love, to struggle for the country's liberation was his life's mission. ... In the war so many women lost their husbands, so many children lost their fathers. He cannot be blamed that he could not return."⁽⁸¹⁾ Though Netaji's daughter Anita Bose was raised in Europe, taught by her mother she developed deep respect for her father Subhashchandra Bose, his political thoughts and his life-struggle. This one can understand from her discussions at different times in this country. All these show what high standard of character and culture Netaji's wife possessed. After the war Netaji's elder brother Saratchandra Bose and his wife Bibhabati travelled to Europe and accepted Netaji's wife and daughter with great love and affection. Yet there are some blind, fanatic Netaji-followers in this country who do not accept that Netaji entered into marriage. They do not even have the sense to understand that thereby they are demeaning Netaji.

Why Did the British Have the Compulsion to Grant Freedom to India

A wrong idea is being perpetuated through a barrage of propaganda and even through text-books that it is Gandhiji's non-violent movements that brought freedom to India. This is not at all correct. More or less at the same time Burma and SriLanka also gained independence; but there was no non-violent movement there. The British transferred power primarily for two reasons. Second World War devastated Imperialist Britain economically, militarily and politically so much that it was

impossible for it to maintain the hegemony over the colonies in the old fashion any more. Second, was the glorious role of Soviet Union over the Fascists, the influence of Soviet socialism inspired the victorious progress of the liberation struggle in China and Vietnam led by the communists, and the surge of armed freedom movement in many colonies, and above all, the armed uprising in India in 1942, inspired mass awakening triggered by the valiant fight of the INA led by Netaji, and the naval mutiny in Bombay in 1945 — all these joined together and compelled the British to quickly transfer the power. This is confirmed from the conversation of the then Prime Minister Clement Atlee with Justice Phani Bhushan Chakrabarti, former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court and temporary Governor. About this conversation Justice Chakrabarti wrote in a letter, “When I was the temporary Governor (1956) Clement Atlee, the British Prime Minister who gave us freedom and removed the British from here, came to Calcutta and stayed at the Governor’s Palace for two days, while he was on a visit to India. I had a long discussion with him about the real reason of the British leaving India, I put a direct question to him that Gandhi’s ‘Quit India’ movement had quietened down much before 1947. The situation in 1947 was not such that it was necessary for the British to hurriedly leave India – then why did they leave? In reply he mentioned several reasons. The principal reason was the weakening of the base of loyalty of the Indian soldiers in the Army and the Navy by Subhashchandra Bose. At the end I asked him how much could Gandhi’s activities influence the British decision to leave India. At the question a derisive smile spread on his lips and he deliberately said, ‘mi-ni-mal’.”⁽⁸²⁾ So it is totally incorrect to say that it is the pressure of Gandhiji’s non-violent movements that compelled the British to transfer the power.

Today we are observing Netaji’s birth anniversary at a time when the entire country and the people are in terrible crisis in all spheres, political, economic, moral, social and familial, the like of which has never been witnessed earlier. In the days of anti-

imperialist freedom struggle people used to look up to the political leaders and workers with respect. Just the word '*swadeshi*' would rouse deep emotion and great respect even in a rural unlettered woman. Then there was devotion to duty towards the country and the people, honesty, integrity and spirit of sacrifice in the politics of not only the revolutionaries but also of the Gandhites; all of them believed with heart and soul that what they were doing was for the good of the country and in the interest of the people, no matter whether their ideology was right or wrong.

Today in capitalist-ruled India the common people have no respect, no faith in the bourgeois-petty bourgeois parties, whatever be their banner. Congress, BJP, CPI(M), the regional parties have all been in power sometime or other, either at the Centre or in the states. Now BJP is in power at the Centre and in several states. People have watched their activities and behaviour, from bitter experience they found that the leaders of these parties are totally corrupt, deceitful, without morality and ideals; their words have no value. After coming to power they do just the opposite of what they promised before the vote. Their only objective is to come to power by hook or by crook and to multiply their wealth. The leaders and workers of the freedom movement made sacrifices for the country; but today's leaders are servants of big capitalists, merchants and traders, and with the enormous money they get from service to the latter and the public money they misappropriate, they lead a life of luxury and pleasure. In the country with class division into workers and owners, exploiters and exploited, rich and poor, these parties in governmental power throw to the wind the interest of the poor, exploited people and ever serve the interest of exploiting capitalists. The word 'democracy' is used, but the people have no role in it. It is not the will of the people, but the money-power, media-power, muscle-power and bureaucracy-power of the capitalists that decide who would win the election, who would become ministers, how the government is to be run and what laws are to be framed. Like in all imperialist-capitalist

countries in our country, too, the much-vaunted parliamentary democracy is reduced to parliamentary fascist autocracy. Whatever progressive character bourgeois democracy had in the era of rising capitalism like individual freedom, right to protest, right of mass movement are all being robbed in this era of most reactionary stage of capitalism. The relative independence of legislative, judiciary and executive wings have totally vanished. The ministries and executives control everything to serve capitalism. What little democracy was there is being destroyed; judiciary is being transformed to a subservient body.

All these anti-people activities started during the Congress rule; now under BJP they have reached a peak. All movements are being suppressed by ruthless coercive force, anyone who protests is branded as anti-national and thrown into prison without any trial, all opposition is throttled. During the long British rule only a few communal riots happened. Now communal hatred and communal discord has taken a menacing form. Mass murder of hundreds of people, huge loss of property, and rape of countless women, in communal riots have become almost a daily affair. People of religious minority, on the one hand, and dalits, on the other, are brutally tortured and oppressed under the banner of Hindutwa. We Marxists are atheists and believers in science. But we acknowledge with respect the progressive role of religion in the early era of its advent, and the historic role of the religious preachers. We want to boldly state that the acts of Hindutwa proponents are totally irreligious and against Hinduism. These standard bearers of Hindutwa are polluting the religion as preached by Chaitanya, Ramanuja, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Chaitanya brought the message of love among followers of all religions, Ramakrishna worshipped in temple, recited *namaj* in mosque, prayed in church. He said all religions are the same, they pray to same god, call god in different names, just as some people say *jal*, some *pani*, some *water*, but it is the same thing. Vivekananda went so far as to say, "We want to take mankind to that end where there is no Veda, Bible or Koran but all works will be performed through integration of the Veda,

Bible and Koran... we not only tolerate all religions but believe all of them to be true.”⁽⁸³⁾ He said, “It is very natural that simultaneously with full freedom and without having any conflict, my son could be a Buddhist, my wife a Christian and myself a Muslim.”⁽⁸⁴⁾ These preachers never claimed that Babri Masjid was built at Rama’s birthplace in Ayodhya, and that a Rama temple has to be built demolishing the Masjid. Vivekananda denied the historicity of Rama and Krishna and called them mythological (*Pouranic*) characters. Neither in Valmiki’s Ramayana, nor in Tulsidasa’s Ramayana (the Babri Masjid existed in Tulsidasa’s time) is it mentioned that Rama’s birthplace was at the spot where Babri Masjid was built. Just as the Muslim fundamentalist Talibans demolished the historic Bamyan Buddha statues, so also from political motive the Hindutwa standard-bearers fundamentalists BJP-RSS demolished Babri Masjid and are building a Rama temple there. Had Jesus Christ, Hazrat Mahammad, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda been alive today they would certainly have given the call to resist such barbarity and irreligion. We have to remember that because of the weakening of world communist movement and anti-imperialist movement, imperialism-capitalism could conspire to foment this religious fundamentalism that has raised its ugly head and is on the rampage destroying civilization itself. The objective is to create a dangerous situation in the country by engineering hatred and conflicts between different religious communities, castes, races and nationalities, and creating vote-banks for their electoral politics and at the same time ensuring that the people cannot build up united mass movements.

The economic situation is also frightening. The Congress showered false promises of ‘poverty eradication’, ‘garibi hatao; the BJP also is throwing similar false promises of ‘achhe din’, ‘20 million jobs a year’, ‘putting 15 lakh rupees in everyone’s pocket by reclaiming black money’ etc.. However, while uttering such promises the policies they implement when in power are pushing the people to the brink of economic ruination. According

to the Global Hunger Index of 2020 among 107 countries India's position is 94th. 67% people are below poverty line, every day 20 million people go hungry or are half-fed, every year 10 million people die of hunger, every hour 5 peasants or workers commit suicide. 10% rich people own 74.3% of wealth and 90% people own only 25.3% of wealth. From this 90% if we leave out the higher income and middle-income people, 80% are proletariat or semi-proletariat. Retrenchment and unemployment figures have reached alarming levels. In 2019, according to the Government's Parliamentary Declaration 6 lakh 80 thousand factories are closed down, till today the numbers have increased. Economic recession has been going on for a long time, as a result millions of people are retrenched, have become unemployed or half-employed; their numbers are ever increasing. In Government as well as in non-Government sectors permanent jobs are being abolished, vacant posts are not being filled, number of employees are curtailed, agencies are appointed to engage temporary contract workers with a pittance as wages. Driven by poverty millions of young people from villages, from poor quarters in the cities are rushing to different states, even abroad as migrant labours to somehow eke out a living, often working as slave labour. For a handful of posts of peons or subordinate staff thousands of applications are coming in, even from MA/MSc/Ph.D. degree holders and from engineering graduates, etc. This is one picture of BJP's development. But there is another picture. The profit of the big capitalists is continuously increasing. Mukesh Ambani, BJP's great friend has earned Rs. 900 million every hour even during this lock-down period. Last year his earning has increased by Rs. 2,777,000 million to become Rs. 6,584,000 million which made him Asia's richest man. Another great friend, Adani, has been able to increase his earning in five years from Rs. 504,000 million to Rs. 1,100,000 million. Just think, by what method and with whose blessing they have been able to do it. Rs. 300,000,000 black money is deposited in foreign banks of Switzerland and other countries, but the Government is not finding anyone to hold it;

think why. The central Government has a debt of Rs. 86,000,000, the budget deficit is Rs. 8, 700,000 million. Yet the Government has munificently given the big capitalists a tax exemption of Rs. 1,450,000 million, has waved the repayment of debt of Rs. 6,660,000 million with the banks. See in whose interest the present Government is working. On one side is the regular increase of the fabulous wealth of a few capitalists, and on the other side is the unbearable poverty and deprivation of the majority of common men. The situation has become such that helpless poor parents are forced to sell their children, who become child labour, victims of extreme barbaric practices in our country and abroad; parents are selling the girl children, who become commodities in the flesh trade; to feed their retrenched sick husband and hungry children, housewives are selling their bodies standing furtively in the market places, at the railway stations; millions of people have no job, no home and make their dwelling on the pavements for all seasons; their children fight for the leftover foods thrown out by the rich, die of hunger and diseases. Does anybody care for them? What a heartrending pathetic picture of darkness!

So that a question is not raised who is responsible for this situation, so that the capitalists, exploiters and the ruling parties are not blamed for creating this situation, BJP-RSS have hatched a diabolical scheme. In our country once Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Jyotirao Phule, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Premchand, Subramania Bharati lighted the torch of Renaissance, waged a battle against medieval religious bigotry, superstitions, obscurantism and vile social practices, and tried to create and foster modern, rational, scientific way of thinking; but today an attempt is made to plunge the country into the darkness of religious bigotry and dogmatism and blind adulation of Gita-Manu Sanhita-Ramayana-Mahabharata. A blind belief system is being inculcated so that the people do not blame the capitalist system and the rulers for creating the crisis in their life, but blame it on their 'hapless fate', 'sins in their previous birth', 'will of god'. Then there would not be any protest movements. With a

view to hindering the cultivation of modern scientific thoughts and development of scientific way of thinking, harking back to the ancient Hindu heritage is encouraged and ridiculous claims are being made that scientists like Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Heisenberg, Acharya Jagadishchandra discovered nothing new, all was written by Hindu sages in the ancient scriptures. The Prime Minister even claimed that the story of Ganesha proves that plastic surgery was in vogue in ancient India. All this is being done to create a fascistic bent of mind through fusion of spiritualism and technological aspect of science. Even Hitler could not go this far in rousing fanatic German and fanatic Aryan sentiments. Perhaps by and by BJP would claim that technology and modern industry, concepts of constitution, justice system, parliamentary democracy were known in ancient India. History is being distorted, text-books are being rewritten. It needs to be reminded that when Hitler was bringing down inhuman torture and mass extermination of Jews, the great personalities and lovers of democracy in those days like Romain Rolland, Einstein, Bernard Shaw, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Premchand, and others, boldly stood up against it, voiced spirited protest, but at the same time, the RSS Sarsanghachalak Golwalkar came out in support of Hitler and wrote, "To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by."⁽⁸⁵⁾ Apart from fanning up religious bigotry and communalism and creating fascistic mentality, the exploiting class and the ruling parties have launched another diabolical attack. And that is to totally demolish all human values, sense of responsibility and duty towards society and family, sense of right and wrong, affection, compassion and tender sensibility, all of which are valuable treasures of human civilization, and thereby turn man to a beast.

How capitalism is destroying humanity and human values was already described by Saratchandra in touching language in the novel Srikanta “Hiding under a cloak of civilization how the greed for money of the rich can turn a man to an unfeeling beast became my experience within the last couple of days, and this would remain with me throughout my life.” Further, “Unless man is turned into a beast, one cannot make him work like a beast.” He also said, “Death of a human being does not make me so sad as death of humanity does.” So many years ago he penned these words witnessing the true face of capitalism. In 1974, when capitalist rule had long been entrenched in our country, with great anxiety Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said in a speech, “I cannot but emphasize here that a nation going without food, suffering the worst kind of oppression and exploitation, and half-fed and half-clad for days together can also stand up, fight, acquire the power to combat, organize itself and rise up holding its head high, provided its moral strength remains intact and the people have a correct ideology before them. . . . The ruling class in India is engaged in a conspiracy to totally destroy that very moral character of the nation.”⁽⁸⁶⁾

While addressing you at this 23rd January Anniversary meeting, one thought is weighing heavily in my mind and is making me sad. I know that those of you who are relatively advanced in years are also thinking about it and feeling sad. And that thought is : how many in our country remember this great leader whose memory is linked with 23rd January? Today Netaji’s memory has gone into oblivion. But there was a time when on 23rd January Desbandhu, Rabindranath, Saratchandra and many elders sent him blessings; throughout the country meetings and rallies were held; bards like revolutionary poet Nazrul paid him respect through songs; when Subhashchandra came even a rural housewife would come out and expectantly stand by the wayside to have a glimpse of him. Where are those days gone? Is it only Netaji Subhashchandra whom we have forgotten? Thanks to the leaders of Congress, BJP, CPI(M), Trinamul

Congress and other regional parties we have forgotten all great personalities of the past. So in our country Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Vivekananda are forgotten names. The students and youth of our country do not know Kshudiram, Subhashchandra, Bhagat Singh, they do not know Saratchandra, Premchand, Nazrul. Such is the name of progress in our country. Has this happened only in natural course? No, there is a great conspiracy behind it. The capitalist class, the ruling class of this country does not want the students and youth to learn from these great men of the past, to draw inspiration from their character and their struggle. Crisis-ridden capitalism, stricken with fear of revolution, feels the dire necessity of destroying the character and human values of the students and youth. With deep pain and sorrow our great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, 'A nation, exploited people of a country fights even if hungry fights despite ruthless torture and oppression of military and police, if they have high human values, strength of character and unbending moral strength.' With the backing of the state machinery of the capitalist class of India that is trembling with fear of revolution, with the patronization of the parties in governmental power there is proliferation of obscene cinemas, blue films, dirty plays and *Yatras*. It is a conspiracy to keep the students and youth immersed in drinking, drug addition, gambling and dirty talks about women and their bodies. This brings on death of vibrant youth, of humanity, of conscience. Capitalism is aware that if it cannot dehumanize man and turn him to a beast, cannot make him a slave to base instincts, this exploitative system cannot be sustained; movements will surge, revolution will break out, no arms and weapons, no military force will be able to put them down. If there is self-respect, if there is conscience, man will again stand up with the valour and spirit of youth, just as youth raised its head once through Kshudiram. When Kshudiram was asked by the leaders, "Will you be able to do it?", he did not utter any words in reply, simply his face was brightened up with joy — as if to say, "Among all the youth of India I am the one to whom the call has come to join the game of death — I am

honoured.” This the true sense of dignity of youth. He did not ask, “If I am caught by the police, what will happen to my home?” Just from the expression on his face, his leaders were convinced that he would be able to do it. After hearing the death sentence Kshudiram just smiled. When the noose was put round his neck, then also Kshudiram was smiling. This is the youth which can defy death. Before climbing on the scaffold Saheed Bhagat Singh told the English Officer on duty, “You are a lucky man.” The surprised officer asked, “Why?” Bhagat Singh replied, “You will see how Indian revolutionaries embrace gallows with smiling face.” It is about them that Nazrul wrote, “They who sang the victory of life on the gallows” (*phansir manche geye gelo jara jeebaner joyagan*) If such characters inspire the students and youth of today, if Netaji Subhashchandra inspires them, if they are inspired by the teachings and struggles of Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Saratchandra, Nazrul, then, no offer of money, no lures, no tweaking of lust, no threat or terrorizing, no baton or rifle, will be able to arrest revolutionary movement, and capitalism knows it. That is why this attack, this conspiracy! In the Indian arena, nay in the global arena too, Bengal enjoyed such a high position, Calcutta held such an honourable position that Gopal Krishna Gokhale said with deep respect, “What Bengal thinks today India thinks tomorrow.” When there were no railways, no electricity, no radio or Television, in those dark days Rammohan came lighting the torch of Renaissance, Vidyasagar came walking from Medinipur, in the literary world came Bankim, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Premchand, Nazrul, in cultivation of science came Jagadishchandra Bose, Prafulla Chandra Ray, C V Raman and their worthy students Meghnad Saha and Satyen Bose, in politics came Deshbandhu, Bipin Pal and many others. From different provinces, from far flung districts, from villages came young boys and girls to Calcutta and carried back the messages of great men to the different provinces, to distant towns and villages. This happened because Calcutta was the capital of British India and it was here that the first enlightenment came through Western knowledge and

Western Science. Under its influence Calcutta flowered. Then Calcutta showed the way to the whole country, inspired it. Then in science, and knowledge, in literature, art, culture, in political and social movement, in character and human values, Calcutta had life, had beauty, had splendour and glory. Where is that Calcutta today? It is poor, lowly and ruined, it is glum, deformed and dead. Its putrid body is polluting the surroundings. At its sight Vivekananda would have cried out, Saratchandra, Subhashchandra, Nazrul would have writhed in agony.

In the country, though subjugated under the British rule, youth had woken up by the light of the new dawn of Renaissance, by the inspiring struggle of the swadeshi movement, they had taken the pioneers of the Renaissance movement and the valiant fighters in freedom struggle as their life's ideals, in countless numbers they engaged themselves in the struggle to attain humanity, selflessly they offered their lives in the emancipation struggle. Where is that country today? It is moribund, putrid, emitting foul smell.

Thanks to the conspiracy of the capitalist class and the ruling parties, Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Jyotirao Phule, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Premchand, Subramania Bharati, Deshbandhu, Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Kshudiram, Surya Sen, Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Pritilata, Asfaquulla all are in oblivion. To the students and youth propaganda places film stars and players as ideals, as role models. At the same time they are being immersed in drink- and drug-addiction, in gambling, viewing blue films, reading pornographic writings, dirty obsession with sexuality. The inevitable result follows. Even students of classes five-six are falling victims. Earn money by whatever means and indulge in dirty revelry — these have become the new motto. Luring young girls out of home with false promise of love and marriage, and then selling them in the flesh market, women trafficking, supari-killing, and every vile act are being undertaken to earn money. Extreme individualism, cruel heartlessness are ruining society and even family life. There are incidents of sons or daughter killing their parents or throwing

them out on the streets to grab their property; sometimes the parents are given a little money and packed off to old-age home; such is their sense of duty or obligation to their parents. Even in the conjugal life of husband and wife happiness, peace, affection and togetherness are fast disappearing, mutual recrimination, suspicion and doubt are vitiating the atmosphere. Bride burning and killing of bride are frequent. How can a child be properly brought up in such conditions?

Most alarming is proliferation of incidents of rape, gang-rape and murder following rape. In towns and villages hundreds of women are raped. Perversion has reached such level that even 90 year old women to 6-month old babies are raped. The daughter is complaining against the father, the student is accusing the teacher for molestation and rape. What does not happen even in the animal world is taking place in society. Such rapists are horrible creations of capitalist society. If this is civilization, then what is hell!

What would Netaji have said if he had seen this horrible picture of India? What would he have done? Realizing that we are to determine what is our duty and act to discharge our responsibility – that would be the true way to pay respect to Netaji. We have to recall that Netaji said, “ In my young days I thought that to drive out the British from the country was my paramount duty. Later when I thought deeply, I realized that our duty does not end with driving out the British. To establish a new social system in India another revolution is necessary.”⁽⁸⁷⁾

In 1930 he even wrote to the revolutionary Barin Ghosh about his future aim, “Through all these years by freedom we meant only political freedom. Now we have to declare that we will free the people not only from political bondage but from all types of bondage. The aim of the freedom movement will be emancipation from all the three oppressions—political, economic and social. ...

The main objective of our freedom movement will be to establish a classless free society.”⁽⁸⁸⁾ Without being a Marxist

Netaji could think this far, drawn by the success of Soviet socialism. With deep conviction he said, “I shall give my life in the cause of liberation of millions of Indian people. If truth has any value, my countrymen will understand the yearning of my heart.”⁽⁸⁹⁾

He has given his life. Now we shall have to ask our conscience have we really understood his heart’s yearning?

If we are to truly understand his heart’s yearning, if we are to fulfill his dream, we have to do our duty of conducting the struggle for anti-capitalist revolution. To fulfill this task we must respond to the historic call to the students and youth by the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh for realizing the unfulfilled dreams of the great personalities of the Renaissance and of Netaji and other revolutionary fighters and for freeing the people from capitalist exploitation, armed with the highest revolutionary ideology of this era, Marxism, “ ... remember, those who can sacrifice at the initial stage for ideology and idea – they are not many people, they are always few people – young, bright and students. At every stage of development of the society, in every country, it is the students and young people who come forward, being influenced by and imbued with the revolutionary ideology and being completely dedicated go to the masses, rouse the masses, organize them in thousands and help them in creating their political power. Then the time comes for the masses for action – that we call revolution. Before that you will have to travel many a step, arduous and tortuous – painful but happier. I say this is the happier and honourable way. Yes, in this way of fighting things, it may be painful – sometimes even tortuous, but no doubt it is the honourable way to lead a life. Here in this struggle you may die, but you will die with honour, raising your head high. You shall not die with humiliation just as cats and dogs die, rotting in the street. Remember, we are all mortal beings. So, if to die, don’t die begging, don’t die humiliating yourself. When to die, die with honour, and you have got only one surest way to live and die with honour, that is by

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taking active part in the revolutionary struggle of the masses to bring about a revolutionary transformation of the society, and for that purpose you will have to organize yourselves in thousands, and close up your ranks.

Comrades, engage yourselves and take active part in all the just struggles of the masses, individually and collectively, and all the while keep up your political initiative at the fore, Your slogan should be – go to the masses, organize them, help them in creating political power so that people, the toiling masses, can take up arms and bring about a fundamental change of our society by overthrowing the bourgeoisie from power, replacing capitalism and establishing socialism.”⁽⁹⁰⁾
