

NECESSITY OF CENTRE LIFE IN A MARXIST PARTY

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Publisher's Note

A meeting of the comrades of Shibpur party Centre (Kolkata) was held on 2 and on 3 December,2023. Comrade Provash Ghosh, the General Secretary of the party listened to the comrades after which he made a valuable discussion on the concept of party centre, the problems which are vitiating the centre life as well as the problems which may emerge in future and what steps should be taken by the comrades to solve these problems. He subsequently added some more points to this discussion which, we believe, will not only help the comrades of the centres, but also the other comrades to achieve greater and loftier communist character.

7 November 2024

With Greetings
Amitava Chatterjee
Central Committee

Necessity of Centre Life in a Marxist Party

My purpose of this discussion is to speak on why the great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh wanted to build a party commune and centre and to show what problems are arising in running these centres and what further may come in the future and how to deal with them on the basis of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Many comrades know in the situation when individualism born out of bourgeois democratic revolution, had lost its progressiveness in the reactionary stage of capitalism and become utmost individualistic, self-centred and opposed to social progress, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was the first to realise that for the indispensable need of achieving lofty communist character in this era an individual must have to be completely freed from private property and private property mental complex. In Russia capitalism was underdeveloped and in China it was all the more underdeveloped, which was why individualism was relatively progressive in both these countries and so the importance of this point was not felt in the communist movements in these two countries. The ethos of the freedom movement in our country was: the interest of the country was primary while the interest of the family or individual was secondary. Similarly the moral of the communist character in both these countries was: the interest of the revolution was primary while the interest of the family or individual was secondary. It implied that the interest of individual would be

there, albeit in secondary form. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that, although this very moral standard had worked during the revolution, later this trace of individualism raised its head as “socialist individualism” and worked against socialism. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh also said that, in case of underdeveloped and developed countries including India, proletarian revolutionary parties could not be built up at all if there was individualism and so, revolutionary movements would not go forward. That is why he said that, breaking the chains of individualism in every sphere of life one must have to identify oneself completely with the revolutionary party, revolution and proletarian class to achieve higher communist character in these countries. This is the highest standard of communist character in this era, although it is very difficult to achieve this standard. Our mentality, desire and aspiration, sense of good and bad, habits, behaviour, life style, everything has been built mixing with various types of dirt and filth generated by the prevalent decaying, putrid bourgeois society. These are thoroughly ingrained in our flesh and blood. After joining the party, the party thought attracts us on the one hand and on the other, the forces of bourgeois thought nurtured for so long create a huge hindrance. One part of our mind wants to advance and the other part resists. We make some progress in one direction and step back in the other. That is why conflicts between the outlook, thoughts and cultures of both the classes—the bourgeois and the proletariat—are going on constantly in everyone’s mind. Apparently it seems that this conflict between bourgeois and proletariat exist only in the economic field. But it actually exists in every sphere and in every question of life. Form and nature of the conflict are not identical for all. Maybe, for someone there is a very strong impact of bourgeois forces in many areas of his/her life and in other areas there is some impact of proletarian force, albeit less. Again in the life of another one the impact of bourgeois force dominates in many areas, whereas, in some areas the impact of proletarian force is

still active. Therefore, it is necessary to wage an all-out struggle consciously and persistently for achieving proletarian revolutionary strength by wiping out the impact of bourgeois forces within oneself. In course of this continuous struggle sometimes we are successful and sometimes we are unsuccessful to achieve something; sometimes we fail and again sometimes we win. How far one can go and how much one can succeed depend on how strong is one's compassion and emotion towards the exploited and oppressed people, how much one has mastered the knowledge of revolutionary theory and how much one has succeeded to conduct uncompromising fight against the impact of bourgeois forces within oneself according to the teachings of the party. Again even after attaining a high standard and lofty character, one remains under constant attack of the prevalent bourgeois social system and so even a momentary self-complacency or carelessness can cause havoc. In this noble struggle just as failure is very damaging and painful, so is success glorious, pleasant and honourable. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh stands before us as the brightest example of the epitome of this lofty communist character.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh gave us the clear guideline as to how to fight bourgeois individualism in every sphere of activity of the party, class organisations and mass organisations and also from the life style of the leaders and workers. For the very purpose of making this struggle more effective and stronger he gave importance to form communes and centres as the arena for practising collective life. The form and method of work of these organisations are different from those of other organisations. It is not known to me whether any other communist party in the world ever thought of or formed such institutions. There is a difference in form and standard between commune and centre. A commune is formed mainly with the staff members, which is why its standard is relatively high, whereas a centre is formed with those who have attained a fairly high standard by joining the

struggle to achieve higher communist character following the teachings and discipline of the party. Thus centres have been formed in some places under the guidance of the leaders of the state and of district committees as well. In the past, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, Comrade Shachin Banerjee and some other comrades used to live in a commune in Kolkata. It ceased to exist after their death. Now the staff members live in the different centres in Kolkata and in other states with some comrades of the second category, where even some other comrades who are not inmates too stay, in case of need. The kind of standard of a centre depends by and large on the standard of the comrades of the centre and on how much impersonal, experienced and capable the in-charge of the centre is. Therefore, the standard of all the centres cannot be identical and so their advancement and their problems. Again, no matter how many problems are there or appear now and again, the standard of the centre life is substantially higher than that in the common family life, despite various contradictions and conflicts arising out of misunderstanding. This life is honourable. This is because, in the present society the previous joint families comprising of parents, siblings, paternal uncles and aunts are breaking up, giving way to nuclear families with only the husband wife and children, even these nuclear families are breaking up. Then in this situation to build up, maintain and move a new kind of family forward—a family consisting of the members from different states or from different places of the same state, who are free from any discrimination of caste, creed and religion and not related by blood—is only possible on the basis of revolutionary teachings and lofty cultural standard provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. And to be able to join this family is a thing of great honour. But that does not mean that there will be no problems, no bitterness, no misunderstandings and no injustice. To think like this is being in a utopian dream. Even here things happen the same way as in other party units.

How do we perceive these problems? Which is our point of view? Comrade Shibdas Ghosh gave us invaluable lessons on this aspect too. We should always keep these lessons in our mind, especially when something distresses our mind or fills it with sorrow, we should gather strength by remembering these teachings. He said, "If you assume that in this path of revolution, there are no thorns, no contradictions, no conflicts, no inconveniences, no wrongs and injustices then you are mistaken..... You should realize one fundamental proposition of dialectical materialism. That the words like beautiful and pleasant will have no meaning, if we think that only beauty will prevail. Then the beauty will lose all its charm. What is ugly and unpleasant constantly appears by the side of beauty to kill it. And that is why beauty is so precious. But you cannot abandon this path and return to the ordinary life outside on the plea that there are wrongs and injustices. In that case, you will indulge in an injustice worse than that. That will be the road to servitude to capitalism. You can fight to correct these errors, faults and injustices coming in the way of revolutionary battle. You are deemed to struggle within this framework." He also taught us how to struggle for making these 'corrections'.

According to the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh we know that, there is struggle to achieve higher character in every sphere of activity at every level of cell, local and district. But the purpose of living, dining and sleeping together under one roof in a centre is not for mere monetary benefit or convenience of working together. Here the struggle to achieve higher character becomes more intensive and profound. Here the process of constant common association and constant common discussion becomes more living. The process of knowing the qualities and drawbacks of one other, helping one other and learning from one other becomes more operative. While working together in the field we cannot generally develop the process or can understand these things in detail. Thus centre life is a honourable great

struggle. It cannot be pursued so holistically in a cell or local body. While working in a cell, local or district level we can at best fairly understand who is right or who is wrong on a question, who has which qualities and faults, in whom there is vanity and a trend of self aggrandisement and such other things. But in the centre we can observe and understand the qualities and faults of every comrade right from the morning at the dining table to the time of going to bed at night. While working outside it is not possible to understand all of the drawbacks and qualities of the comrades. Centre life is the most suitable for that. While going outside we wear pant and shirt, but while at centre we stay in a casual manner leaving major part of our bodies bare, we do not bother to neatly cover ourselves. Although, while conversing with the people outdoors we remain somewhat careful, here in the centre our demeanour, our behaviour all are open and normal, similarly our association with each other is also open and informal here. Through this free mixing there is a greater scope to know which comrade has what qualities, shortcomings, weakness and strength. If we find any quality or strength in any comrade, we shall learn it from him /her. On the other hand the purpose of knowing the shortcomings of others does not mean it is to undermine them. The purpose is to help them. With respect to the struggle for character building centre life is an even higher stage of struggle. Here no distinction is made between the leaders and junior comrades while arranging for accommodation. However, sometimes here we try as much as possible to make some special arrangements for the sick and old comrades. In the centres the junior comrades can see the leaders openly. They get the opportunity to understand the leaders; they even get the opportunity to express their views about the leaders. Again care should be taken to see that junior comrades do not develop vanity because they live in the centre or because they live with senior comrades. If it is seen that any member, despite being repeatedly told, does not follow the rules and regulations of the

centre, he or she may not be allowed to stay in the centre. Again if any centre violates the prescribed rules and regulations overall, the higher leadership may wind it up.

There exists an ambience of collective reading in a centre, which provides the scope of understanding a subject through exchange of views with each other and of getting many things clarified. There is no such advantage in individual reading- that is reading alone. In the centres the comrades should read over and over again the books authored by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the books written by other Marxist thinkers, other political books of the party and Sarat literature along with the works of other great litterateurs of our country and abroad, both individually and collectively. Even when you read individually you should discuss with the others to verify if you have understood the subject matter correctly. Do not waste your time unnecessarily. The habit of remaining glued to the mobile phone as and when you get a chance has already developed. Don't become a victim of mobile phone addiction, which will distract you.

Some of those, who live in the centres act responsibly, some of them also struggle hard while working outside. But corresponding to this struggle some of them do not exhibit as much ethical development they need to. Your character will not change by just doing more work in the field, nor will it just by reading more books. It needs a distinct struggle to change one's character. First of all we should have to know and understand the characteristics of bourgeois character vis a vis those of proletarian character and then to struggle consciously to change ourselves. Character manifests itself in everything—in our attitude, behaviour, conduct, exchange of jokes and friendly banter. As we see that when fire burns it gives heat as well as light—both exist simultaneously. These two cannot be separated. Similarly character cannot be viewed separating it out from one's attitude and behaviour. It is seen that in the centre life there are some comrades, who are of high standard, do not have to be

asked to do any work of the centre; they do chores at their own initiative, without being asked to. On the other hand those comrades, who are of low standard, do not take up chores in the centre, like marketing, cooking, cleaning, washing etc. if not asked. Again there are some, who do not do them, even after being asked to ; they avoid it making many excuses. It indicates that they take the centre life as a privilege. It is a kind of the worst individualism. Everybody should feel involved in the work and problems concerned with the centre. Maybe someone is now assigned to do the job of the manager; maybe someone is assigned the job of shopping for groceries, vegetables etc, someone of cooking or someone else of house cleaning. Yet, if time permits the others too should join hands to help the others doing these chores. This is called a collective spirit. 'Today, it is he/she, not I who is supposed to do this' or 'on the other day while I was rostered for doing the chores, he/she didn't help me, so why should I help him/her today'—such mentality is the reflection of bourgeois individualism. But the purpose of joining centre life is to get rid of this mentality, isn't it? Any work, any responsibility, no matter whether it is small or big, should be undertaken gladly, not as a burden, not being aggrieved. Otherwise it not only comes in the way of work of the comrades, but also the very process of their character building. The struggle to achieving higher character is conducted through the approach towards a work, from what point of view the work is taken up and how it is done. Sometimes it is seen that some comrades live in the centre, but do not get involved in collective life. They live aloof and go out to work on their own. But they do not bother about mixing with other comrades (of the centre), exchanging views with others or thinking about good and bad of the centre. Therefore, their presence or absence in the centre makes no difference.

No centre should be detached from the people of the locality. The members of the centre should share responsibility

among themselves to mix with the people of the different neighbourhoods in the vicinity of the centre. On the one hand it will ensure the security of the centre and on the other hand it will help build the organisation in the locality.

At the initial stage when the party was suffering from acute financial crisis Comrade Nihar Mukherjee sometimes collected from somewhere some flattened rice (*poha*) and soaked it in water to turn it into mush and all of them including Comrade Shibdas Ghosh would eat it. Sometimes I saw them eat only rice with some lentil soup or with one half of a potato. Even in the midst of this situation we saw Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, Comrade Shachin Banerjee (and others) to smilingly carry on revolutionary struggle by which we were inspired. Compared to those days financial position of the party has definitely improved. Sometimes we can now afford good food, although it is not the same in all centres. But here is a problem. What will be the approach of the revolutionaries towards good food, nice good clothes and a comfortable life? We have important teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on these questions. According to him a revolutionary will not nurse any grievance, or any resentment when these things are not available, so also he/she will not develop in him any attachment to all these even when these are available. If he/she develops attachment to these comforts which is going on getting, and he/she is not alert about it, then later it will pose a serious crisis in his/her revolutionary struggle when he/she does not get even good food or accommodation. So, as we shall not practise austerity if we can afford some comfort, so also we shall not lament if the same is not available. You should keep in mind that, the revolutionaries will have to negotiate with many a complex turn and twist of the revolutionary movement, they will have to go through various adverse situations. So, a revolutionary should be prepared to face any situation.

Again the concept that, only the person who lives in a

centre will be able to achieve high character and the others will not, is also not correct. One's development depends on whether one's life struggle is conducted in the right process or not. Centre life can help someone in this regard, if of course, he/she wants to take the help. It should also be remembered that, there is no guarantee that one will develop by just staying with a top leader. Changes do not happen in the case of humans in the same way as these happen as the consequence of external and internal contradictions in the material and animal world. The role of external solely depends on what the human mind will accept, will not accept and how much will accept.

The members of the centres should not think of their personal interests or inconvenience, rather they should always think of convenience and inconvenience of others. If there is any complaint against any member, that should be informed to the in-charge of the centre, but not gossip about it among themselves, nor spread resentment. It should also not be talked about outside. If the in-charge cannot solve the problem or if there is any question about his/her decision, that should be resolved by discussing with the higher leadership.

Nowadays there are more than one room in some centres, whereas, in the beginning it was difficult to find even a single room. The first district party centre was set up in an L-shaped room on the terrace of a house situated at Ballygunge in Kolkata. Some comrades used to live in that very room huddling together. There was a very small kitchen by the side of that room. At that time some comrades were married couples. Sometimes if any leader came, the couple had to move to the kitchen beside. In the house in central Kolkata in Akhil Mistry Lane there were three rooms—one was comparatively large and the other two were small. In the larger room 12/14 of us used to sleep in two rows. The female comrades used to live in one of the smaller rooms. A married couple used to use the third room. If the husband of any other female comrade would come either of the

couple residing in the centre had to sleep in the veranda. Till 1966 we lived like this in the centre. In Tala (Kolkata) commune Comrade Shibdas Ghosh used to sleep on the floor till 1972. Some young comrades too would sleep by his side. In 1972 after his severe illness a cot was arranged for him and collecting subscriptions a car was also arranged for him. Before that he usually travelled by buses and trams. Only in case of urgency he would sometimes hire a taxi. Today there are several rooms in some centres. Separate rooms are allotted for the married couples. Again some comrades are given single rooms. But many air an attitude that all this—this room, this bed, this pillow—is, as though, their private property. If it becomes necessary to let that room for someone else, a shadow of unhappiness hovers on their face. It was told that in a premise the female comrades should keep their garments in a fixed room and they will change there. If the garments of the females are there in the room where a married couple lives the male comrades usually hesitate to enter that room. But this direction has not yet been implemented everywhere. There does not arise any question of imposing discipline to enforce this direction. It should be done voluntarily. Otherwise it virtually means that everyone has a separate room. This is not correct. It should be fought out. If they did not come to the party life some of them could have become the owners of houses and cars. But they have come to the party and the party centre voluntarily to become communists. In that case why should they have the sense of ownership of all this—this room, this bed or pillow or other articles? By this they are practically doing harm to their own selves. This apart, for the need of the party sometimes cycle, motor cycle or car is purchased in the name of some comrade. It is seen that sometimes that very comrade seems to have behaved in a way that it is his/her personal property, which is not correct. No matter whether it is day or night, why does one need to sleep alone in a room? Instead why shouldn't 2/3 male and female comrades be

accommodated in a single room during the daytime? Comrade Shibdas Ghosh wanted this. It facilitates the practice of common association and common discussion. If we stay in the same room we can chat and discuss among ourselves, moreover, it helps reduce the use of light and fans. It prevents wastage. Many of you know of the example set by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh with regard to the use of public money. It is also found in many of our discussions. Yet many of you do not practise it effectively in your lives. All of you know what lesson he gave Comrade Ranajit Dhar regarding use of soap bought for him. Nowadays in many cases like taking meal, wearing clothes, doing marketing and using water and electricity that alertness to the use of public money is lacking. In 1972 having thought that he would survive no more, he did not agree to get treated. He had thought that it would result in wastage of public money since he would no longer be able to serve the people. After trying hard the doctors and the leaders managed to convince him. It is very sad that despite having this noble instance regarding use of public money many comrades are failing in this regard. They do not remain careful in using water, electricity, soap, tooth paste and other things.

Besides, why should our approach to the domestic help engaged for cooking and other chores be like that of most families outside? They are poor people. It is for them that we are fighting. We should have communistic humanitarian approach to them.

Nowadays many young boys and girls are coming to the party. Sometimes some of them look gloomy, some of them are found sweating and exhausted. But a great number of comrades are not in the habit of inquiring from where these youngsters have come now or what they were doing so long. I am saying it especially to the female comrades. There is a special appeal to the mothers and elder sisters in the party. Why don't you draw these young ones close to you? Do you keep track of what they are doing where, do you think about their good and bad? All are

working, but everybody is busy only with his/her own job. Why don't you mix with all these young people coming through DSO, DYU and Komsomol? Why don't you give them your love and affection? Don't you feel any obligation towards them? You are a communist father and a communist mother. Do you remember that great Engels showed that in the primitive society there was no such thing like paternal love? This appeared in the later stage of the society, when property and the sense of ownership of property had emerged. It developed out of the need to identify who the father of the children was, to determine the heirs to the property. From there emerged the parental responsibility as the social responsibility. This has been going on for ages and this sense of parental sense of responsibility is deeply ingrained in the flesh and blood of the parents. Private property mental complex works even in the thought that it is my child, it reflects in my weakness or special concern for my child. It should be understood well. In order to achieve communist character one should have to be freed from this complex. Our struggle is for becoming a communist father and mother. Be a communist father and a mother. All children are our children. Motherly affection and fatherly affection should be free from this narrow boundary of the sense of ownership. Broaden your mind. Widen your love and spread it around completely. As you will also enjoy these relationships, so also will the young people be benefitted. Love divorced from ideals and ethics weakens people. Weakness and love are not the same. Weakness and love may look alike, but if love is devoid of ideals, ethics and a social goal it will inevitably beget weakness. In the party we have witnessed some instances of what can happen as the consequence of this weakness. The comrades, who once conducted many struggles, worked for the party even after being beaten up by their guardians, worked for the party going without food, have now turned out to be weak for their children and are creating obstacles, maybe unconsciously, for their children to pursue

revolutionary politics. Why has this happened to their children? We are getting good boys and girls from outside, while the children of some of our comrades are turning away from politics. Why is it happening? Not only are the parents responsible for this, but also the party is responsible, although the parents are more responsible. The children learn first from their parents. The parents are their first teachers and they play the key role. Although I know that a good number of fathers and mothers emotionally want that their children, when they grow up, should pursue the party sincerely. But this desire has not been translated into reality for many. What is the reason for it? Because, these parents are the victim of modern bourgeois culture so far as their children are concerned. They have forgotten how their parents brought them up. If they were not reared to be true humans, could they be associated with the party in this way? Their parents did not understand revolution. But they imparted some moral values and ethics conducive to that age. At the time they were not so too worried and concerned about their children. Today it is called a nuclear family; in these families the parents are solely concerned over how many kinds of dresses their children should have, which subjects they should study, how many tutors they require for how many subjects, what is their result in which subject, and which academic line they should pursue in future. Not only that, they should excel in all fields—singing, dancing, swimming and other activities. This very approach prevalent in the present society is impacting on the party life too and it is doing harm. Seeing the fate of their children some comrades are crying now. But the children have reached the point of no-return. They forgot that doing well in examination and becoming a true human being are not the same. Saratchandra in his book *'Boikunther will'* showed this by comparing the educated younger brother Binod with the so-called uneducated elder brother Gokul. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh cited this example over and over again. Some

parents think that, since they were associated with the party after completion of their studies, so also, even their children should also complete their studies and then join the party. They forget that, when they were students, the society then was not so degenerated; they had got some lessons of moral values from some corner or other, maybe from their guardians, or teachers or neighbours, which is absent now. Moreover, is it true that the children will *ipso facto* join the party, because their parents are associated with the party? Do ideal, taste and culture transmit through blood relation?

A few days back a teenager comrade, who could not fare in the examination as expected, came to me, I told him—do you know what is my academic qualification? All right, I leave speaking of myself, do you know about the academic qualifications of the portraits of the persons hung on the wall? Is there any value for these academic degrees? Is there any value for these results? However, it is natural that, everyone wants to do well in examinations. But why should they lament so much? So the parents should change their approach, if they want to make their children great then it is to make them great revolutionaries. To pass in the examinations comes next. You know there are some comrades in the party who have passed medical or engineering examinations and hold the posts at the level of leadership. But that is not because they have passed these examinations. They have attained this position through conducting struggle according to the ideology of the party. This is the main point. To acquire the true qualities is the first and foremost thing here.

I want to say one more thing about the children living in the centre. When we were associated with the party our fathers scolded us, even beat us up, our mothers shed tears. Despite that we left our homes being attracted by a noble ideology. The ideology appealed to us so much that we left our homes to step into the outside world. But the children living in the centres do

not have that scope. They go to the meetings, processions and various party programmes in the arms of their fathers and mothers. If they cannot understand its importance properly, gradually it tends to become monotonous to them and eventually the outside world becomes a more powerful attraction. So we should be very careful from the beginning and make them aware of the environment of the outside world. They should be made to understand the difference between party life and the life outside. They should explain to their children emotionally and appealingly why they left their homes and their families, and why they are working so hard day in and day out. Respect and emotion should be created in them towards the leaders and workers of the party and the other members of the centre. Without this ideological relation cannot be developed only through blood relation. They should be made aware of the importance of party life. Nowadays arrangements are made for better food for the children subject to the affordability of the centre. So they do not know about the pain of not having proper food. They do not know about the pain of not having necessary clothes. They do not even know how and from where these materials come. Due to the ignorance a sort of a privilege seeking mentality develops in them. They do not get the opportunity of knowing what the hardship of poverty is, what the pangs of hunger are. So from the very beginning they more or less get accustomed to a middle class life and with this their demands also go on increasing. They should also be given proper education about these. They should be made to get accustomed to very simple clothes, simple food and plain living. That is why from the very beginning they should be familiarised with the lives of the children of the poor slum dwellers and pavement dwellers; so that they can develop a feeling of empathy and compassion for them and a sense of responsibility towards them can also develop spontaneously as well.

In a centre husband and wife may live together, they may

also live with their children. In that case in absence of impersonal approach many of the married couples are prone to keep a special eye on their own affairs and on those of their children as well, which too is not compatible with collective life. We have embraced centre life only to get rid of these tendencies. So everybody should consciously carry on struggle to get rid of all this. We should help each other in this regard. It is natural that every child feels attracted towards its parents. But the parents should try to direct this attraction not to them, but to the other members of the centre. It should be the duty of all the members of the centre to look after all the children, to feed them, to send them to bed and to do every other thing for them. Why should the parents alone feel concern for all this separately? Why should the parents alone inquire about whether their children have (sat down to study), put on their clothes, had their meal or gone to bed? It is also not proper for the parents alone to make their children to sit for study, feed and clothe them? If it continues the children would in effect become parent centric. It will virtually give rise to separate families within a collective family. If there is more than one child in a centre you have to be a father or a mother to all of them, you have to treat all of them equally, so that one cannot distinguish who the biological parents are. The parents should realise that love free of weakness is good for their children. On the other hand weakness in the name of love is harmful for them. Is it desirable for the parents? Again if some parents develop weakness to their children, other members of the centre should not gossip or whisper about it, rather they should help them get rid of this weakness. There should be one particular senior comrade to guide if the children commit mistakes, or do wrong and if needed also guide to discipline them. The others, if necessary, will help this senior comrade, but under no circumstances will act on their own, not even the parents of the children concerned. Anyway, it is not correct that the children will grow as genuine communists by the

very fact that they live in centres. On the contrary, it may be otherwise if they are not guided correctly. Sometimes it is found that some parents bring up their children on the basis of the moral values of the bygone days and for that reason their children are brought up well and eventually associate with our party.

When the children come reach puberty or adolescence many questions and curiosities about sex arise in their mind. It is quite natural. But now the environment of schools, colleges and localities is very bad so far as these questions are concerned. Apart from that there is the influence of mobile phones, which is being misused out of curiosity. That is why they should have a frank and open relation of friendship with any efficient and knowledgeable senior comrade, so that they can openly tell him/her without fear and hesitation if they hear or see anything bad or anything bad appears in their thought. This is utmost necessary.

It is often seen in the centre life that, like any other common family, the female comrades have to do more household chores, such as cooking, sweeping and making beds. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh forbade it. Both male and female comrades have to bear responsibilities equally on this score.

In the centre the senior comrades should be ideal persons for the juniors. They observe the behaviour, way of talking, altercations, exchange of hot words and every other thing of the seniors. The seniors often do not keep it in mind owing to excitement. It exerts a very bad influence on the juniors. It becomes especially worse if their parents are involved in it. If any comrade, who is not a member of the centre concerned, comes to some comrade there or if any junior comrade comes to stay there for a few days for any reason, it should be the concern of all the members of the centre that the very comrade is taken care of properly and he/she can leave the centre with a proper understanding about the centre. It is occasionally seen that the visitor comrade is attended to only by the comrade whom

the visitor has come to visit. The others are not at all bothered about him/her. It is not proper. Apart from this it is also not good to have competitive mind between one centre and the other. Each centre should learn from the other, if necessary one will help the other by giving advice. Centre life warrants very hard and high standard of struggle. In this respect, too, every member of the centre should have to play an alert and conscious role, so that everyone can conduct struggle according to the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. I have already said that if an in-charge of a high standard who is impersonal and, together with that comrade, there are also others of a high standard only then it is desirable to form a centre. Otherwise a mess should be formed under the supervision of the party. That mess should also be guided by the party, so that it does not turn into an ordinary mess and it can be developed into a centre in course of time.

Rivalry, lack of mutual tolerance and broad mindedness, unwillingness to recognise qualities in others and competitive attitude are seen among a good many female comrades in the party, in the centres and in the class and mass organisations as the evil effect of patriarchal society. All these things not only vitiate the atmosphere, but also hamper one's own development.

Maybe that someone misbehaved with a comrade, maybe some other abused him/her—but that comrade is found to keep those past memories to himself/herself even today. At the time of heated exchange of words these things come to the open. We should be careful about what I should think and what I should not. Even that is a struggle. Thinking itself is a kind of action. I think for revolution, so I should think what is necessary for revolution. I should read books which are necessary for revolution. I should do what is necessary to be done for revolution. Why should I entertain the thought which draws me away, even a little, from revolutionary needs, driving my mind to turmoil, disturbs my mind, tries to distract me, tries to destroy my initiative, and causes deterioration of relations with other

comrades? Why? Reject it. Control your mind. Apply your mind. It can't be that your mind will drag you wherever it wants to, not that. Use your mind. Decide for yourself what you will read or what you will discuss now. Conduct struggle to achieve the ability to decide what to do and what not to. When any bad thought creeps in and disturbs you, drive it away immediately. At that very moment go out. Start discussing with your friends. Start debating on any issue. Cuddle a baby. Or listen to music or read a book. Divert your mind. It is just like not taking food which harms the body, however tasty it may be. In other words we shall take food which is beneficial for our health. I shall think only which is necessary for me. So it is not beneficial to store all this trash of the past in your mind. Keep to yourself all those thoughts which are valuable like gems, not the nasty trash.

While criticising any comrade always keep in mind that, you cannot take it for granted that your criticism about that comrade is correct until the party decides it to be correct. Nowadays I am giving emphasis on this point that, you do not have the moral right to criticise the comrade, whom you do not love, whose qualities you cannot appreciate, from whom you do not want to learn and whose criticism you cannot accept gladly. This should be the ethical approach. To find fault with somebody out of anger, hatred, and from the mind to retaliate and undermine him/her and again to speak of these faults everywhere is a sign of rank unethical bourgeois narrow mindedness. Maybe I have been annoyed by the behaviour of you or somebody else, maybe it seems to me that I have been undermined, but if I keep on remembering it to find an opportune moment to pay him/her back in his/her own coin, that will be the worst kind of individualism. If anyone misbehaved with me and if it is reckoned by the collective judgement that he/she really misbehaved, I should still not be angry, I should not keep the anger to myself either. I shall feel sorry, not for that he/she behaved in this way, but for that it will harm that comrade, hamper his/her development. Instead

of thinking how to counterattack him/her I should think how to free him/her from this fault. This is the ethical approach. From the historic discussion of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh “On Communist Code of Conduct” we know that, we should always look for our own faults and look for the quality of others. Why did he/she say so? Everybody has faults, maybe more, maybe less, inadequacy and limitation in various matters. We are struggling incessantly for our own development; there is no limit to this development. One has to conduct this struggle throughout one’s life. We are struggling for advancement—this in reality implies that we should have to realise where I commit mistakes, where I lag behind and where I am inadequate. So, when someone, even with ill motive, points out my mistakes and faults, and not only that if it comes from an enemy even, and if this fault comes to be true, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh went so far as to say that he should be considered as my teacher. When I observe any comrade, regardless of whether seniors or juniors, it means that I look for his/her qualities, so that I can learn from him/her. While looking for qualities in a comrade if any fault happens to come to my notice I should try to help him/her with a heart full of love. We should also learn from the common public. As we should learn from the qualities of others, so, if any fault of anyone is found in collective judgement, we should also learn from that fault so that I do not repeat that mistake. Those, who are arrogant, always think of themselves as superior and are victims of bourgeois individualism of low standard. They cannot behave like this. One who praises me and behaves in a way that pleases me, is more close to me. Can I be benefitted by such a thing or can it be the proof of my ability? On the contrary if any comrade criticises me and that criticism turns out to be true, then that comrade really does good to me and my relation with him/her improves. Again if anyone criticises me wrongly, even then I should not be angry with him/her, rather I should think why he/she misunderstood me, whether there was any wrong in my

expression. This is the ethical approach of the communists. Struggle to become a communist is in fact the struggle to lead an ethical life, a life with new morality. Throwing off the rubbish of old bourgeois society we have voluntarily accepted this new moral life, this communist ethical life. Our instant reaction, thoughts, expression, behaviour—all these are the manifestation of the force of bourgeois habits. That is why every comrade should always be alert about this bourgeois approach on every question in every sphere and should think and behave being free from this bourgeois approach according to the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. It is a very hard struggle. Sometimes it may so happen that I cannot control myself from succumbing to excitement or emotions. But as soon as I realise that it should not have happened, I make a clean break of it, which is not to please him/her, but to free myself from the fault. There are some people who cannot admit their mistake even if they can understand it. False sense of vanity stands as the barrier. Even this vanity is harmful. We too should have to be freed from it.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh also taught us that, when someone criticises me I should not be influenced by it even if he/she criticises to hurt me or makes bad comments. If there is something right in his/her criticism I should accept it.

While discussing on the subject Comrade Shibdas Ghosh further said that, if I get furious and agitated at any nasty remarks or behaviour of a comrade and try to argue with him/her in that state of mind, he/she cannot grasp the criticism despite you being right. So while going to convince him/her you should be cool, calm and normal and free from anger and disturbance. It is my responsibility to control my agitation and temper. When I feel that I may get agitated, lose my temper or become blindly emotional, I have to fight to free myself from this mental condition, otherwise it is to be understood that I am being overpowered by the bourgeois approach. Herein works a class approach. Again when I view

from the proletarian approach, this expression of anger also carries a value. My relationship with a comrade has developed to such a stage that he/she can honour my expression of anger. Maybe, I tell him/her nothing and slap him instead. But he/she can understand why I slapped him/her and he/she learns from it. On the contrary, if he/she gets aggrieved fo being slapped, I have to admit that my conduct was not appropriate. I have to learn to distinguish between the two situations where I can express my anger or slap someone and where I cannot and then I have to act accordingly. This is the instance of restraint; this is what is called self-control.

The relationship between the comrades should be of profound love, no matter to which state or district a comrade belongs. We are comrades—that means we are fighting the same battle with the same ideal. Comradeship is the highest stage of an emotional relationship. Comradeship is the relationship free from personal interest and grudge and based on the edifice of higher culture imbued with lofty revolutionary ideology. Our relation of comradeship at international level is also identical to it.

Among many comrades, even among many leaders there is a tendency to develop impressions. They develop an impression about this or that comrade, which means to evaluate this or that comrade, to develop an idea of who is of what nature. It is not right. Is it so simple to evaluate any person or any comrade comprehensively? It is only possible for him, who has mastered Marxist dialectical method of analysis, has gained long experience being engaged in revolutionary struggle, is impersonal in every sphere of life and is accustomed to collective life. A great teacher like Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, even though he had attained a sublime standard in this regard, said that, if he seemed to develop an impression about someone, he would first discuss it with the person to verify it and understand whether his impression was correct or not. But a great number of our leaders and workers develop impressions every now and then and talk

about it everywhere. It is not at all right. It is one thing that it seems to somebody that this comrade has made a good discussion on some question and the other one does not. But you cannot develop an impression about a comrade's character or standard only on that basis. If anything strikes you about a comrade that should be cleared by discussing it in the appropriate party body or with the higher leadership.

I have said it before in different meetings that, there should be such an environment that any junior comrade can speak openly, not falteringly or hesitantly, if he/she thinks something of or has a complaint against any leader. It is not an expression of disrespect, rather it is the expression of respect. If anyone is angry with somebody, let him/her express himself/herself like that. The leaders should always allow it. Again, when a junior comrade speaks of a senior leader, he/she should speak with profound emotions and respect for the leader and with concern for the party as well. It is also true that, usually there can be no senior leader, who is free from shortcomings. *The comrades should also understand that despite having some shortcomings a senior leader holds the responsibility of party leadership because of his/her many qualities in many spheres. However, it does not entail that it cannot be said about his/her shortcomings, if any. Again the senior comrades, too have many things to learn from the juniors. He/She, who is truly senior, can learn from this mental approach. But the junior comrades must not discuss hither and thither about any leader in his/her absence. They should also not vent any impression about any comrade in his/her absence even among themselves. If I have any opinion of any comrade, I shall directly speak to him/her of this matter with a view to verify whether my opinion is right or not. This is what great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us. He himself practised what he taught us on this question just as he used to do it in other cases. Just think once, even a leader like him did not decide anything without verifying the veracity of his

impression. But many of our comrades often develop impressions subjectively. Say, something occurs to me, but I keep it to myself, do not express and verify it. In that case if my impression is wrong, the very process by which my impression has been proved wrong, will also influence my thought process on other occasions and this tendency of developing impressions will go on increasing. By that I become a victim of a wrong idea and my process of thinking suffers damage which will ultimately harm me. That is why it is necessary to decide which is right and what is wrong through free and frank mutual discussions. If not resolved one should seek the help of the leadership. If we keep any aversion or resentment or anger about anyone within ourselves, it may come out as a sudden outburst at any time in an opportune moment. It damages the environment.

All comrades are working among the public. On the one hand you are carrying the revolutionary thought of the party to the public according to your own ability, and on the other hand you have a lot of things to learn from them. You have to learn from anywhere that there is anything to learn from. But while mixing with the public, the impact of the influence of the decaying society which is there on them, also affects the comrades even unknowingly. The public, among whom we work or build mass organisations, appreciate us, praise us for our honest and selfless work. As a result some comrades develop a desire for praise and they develop even egoism along with it. Even the tendency to nurture ideas by which they can speak or behave in a way they can earn praise and popularity among the public increases. We do not care whether my demeanour is compatible with the revolutionary taste and culture or not. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh also gave a warning in this regard. We shall spread the influence of revolutionary ideology and lofty standard of taste and culture over the people by our behaviour and lifestyle.

There is another point—intelligence and cunningness are

not the same. Intelligence is always necessary. But intelligence should be guided on the right path with the help of higher taste and culture. We call it cunningness when one's intelligence is misused, when one's intelligence is used for selfish personal interest and for unethical activities. While working among the people it is not right to resort to cunningness, just for immediate results. That is because, it will destroy your character. However, at times, while working among the people this element of cunningness crops up spontaneously in us, which means that we tend to work to manipulate, to manage others. Sometimes we resort to some flattery, sometimes to talk some excess. This should not have been done. Then it will affect us too. Therefore, while mixing with the public, working among the masses, conducting mass struggle, we should act with revolutionary ideology and character. If we do not go to the public with the revolutionary approach how they will be introduced to the revolutionary ideology and higher moral values? It is incumbent upon us to uplift the political consciousness and cultural standard of the public. Impact of external influences is always there. As the public influences us such that we learn from them, so also they can exert a damaging influence. We have to determine which one is acceptable and which one is not, judging by the yardstick of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. The Marxist teachers other than Comrade Shibdas Ghosh did not give so much importance to conduct struggle covering all aspects of life, since they did not face this dire crisis of capitalism. But it is by observing this all-pervading decay Comrade Shibdas Ghosh gave us the guide lines, as to how to act as a revolutionary, not only in the economic sphere, but also in every sphere of life covering the realm of love-affection-fondness and even the domain of physical intimacy in married life. The teachings of revolutionary movements, the teachings of Marxism and the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh—all these should be cultivated in right earnest.

When the comrades return to the centre, they should inquire about each other and try to know how their day went. It is not to supervise anyone's work. They should discuss on what new they have seen and learnt or on the problems they faced, problems which they could not resolve. Again involving everyone, they should take part in chit-chat; enjoy wit and humour jokes, but in a way that it reflects good culture. Thus constant common association and constant common discussion will help common activities. It should be practised by everybody. I have come to know a new thing or have gained a new experience and shared it with all. But we do not discuss here about the internal problems of the organisation. The purpose of this discussion is to get familiar with each other's work experience and to take notice of each other's development. Nobody stands static at one place. If there is no deterioration, there must be advancement, no matter how little it is. We call it quantitative change and that should be kept under watch. We should not cling to the previous idea (although it was true at that time). We should learn from everybody; we should help everybody with a feeling of love. Do not keep pricking someone again and again about their faults and shortcomings, nor think like that even. When I discuss with somebody I do it with love that I bear for him/her. And my manner of talking will be such that he/she can understand it. When I want to say something to someone my purpose is nothing but to make him/her understand. So I have to speak in such a way that it is understood.

The word patience bears a connotation. Suppose the water of this glass is to be heated. I want to get it done immediately. Still then I have to wait till such time it takes to get heated. This is also a law governed phenomenon. I may want to have hot water immediately, but it will not happen. It follows a specific law. To follow this law without being restless for hot water is called patience. I told in the last meeting that a considerable number of comrades do not follow discipline. Nature is going on

according to law, the sun rises and sets, planets and satellites are revolving, seasons are changing, and the cycle of birth and death is continuing, breathing and blood circulation are happening — all this is law governed. This law is discipline. To follow discipline means to follow this law governed process within the party and for revolution as well. And I further say that doing nothing is also doing something. If you did not do a work of the party, it means that you not only neglected particular work of the party, but also you did not do what you should have done.

Suppose you are asked to do something. But you go on thinking ‘I’ll do it today, I’ll will do it tomorrow or day after tomorrow’ and so on. It means that you are violating the law governed process. You are becoming a victim of petty bourgeois habit. It is not today, not tomorrow but day after tomorrow. Why not just now? What is preventing you? It was all right, if you cannot do it because you have another important work to do. If it is not so, why can’t you do it now? You should deeply ponder over all these things.

While discussing on the centre I have touched upon some other general problems of the party. All those husband-wife couple comrades, who live in separate houses, should also try to implement what I have said so long. Try to do as much as you can. Going through this process one day someone’s house may turn into a centre. Here I end today.
