

## IV

### REVERSAL OF CAPITALIST PATH OF DEVELOPMENT

THIS QUESTION of the reversal of the path being pursued by the rulers needs concretisation and elaboration. The question is naturally asked: How can you compel them to reverse a path which they are following consciously because of their class interest? The only thing that can and has to be done is to start 'preparations' for overthrowing them, establish a workers' and peasants' government, and proceed to the construction of socialism. Any other approach to the question is, at best, an illusion, at worst, treachery to the cause of socialism. Reality, however, does not offer such oversimplified alternatives.

The first thing we have to realise is that the world after the Second World War is a very different one from what it was before.

The international and national forces fighting for socialism, national independence and democracy are far stronger now than before the Second World War. In fact, they are now definitely stronger than the world forces of imperialism and reaction, which means, the most powerful and aggressive forces of capitalism.

A vast and powerful socialist world has emerged. In one field after another, it is not only overtaking but outstripping the capitalist world in industry, science, technically trained cadre, and so on. Despite the disruptive and narrow nationalistic policies of the Chinese leaders, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are rendering most effective aid to the people still fighting for national independence, as also to those countries which have achieved national independence and are pursuing a path of further advance.

Such assistance includes economic and industrial aid for strengthening the economic independence of the newly-independent, underdeveloped countries. It includes poli-

tical and diplomatic assistance through the UNO and innumerable other international organisations.

It includes powerful military assistance to countries and people fighting in defence of their national freedom, as in the case of Cuba and Vietnam.

All glory to the Cubans and Vietnamese for their monumental patriotism, courage and sacrifice. But we cannot forget what happened to Abyssinia, the Sudetanland, and Manchuria thirty years ago. It is the indomitable faith and courage of the Vietnamese combined with Soviet and other socialist aid that has compelled the mightiest capitalist power in world history, the USA, to eat the dust in the fields and jungles of Vietnam. With what anguish Nehru and so many of us had to witness the juggernaut advance of fascist aggression in Europe and Asia thirty years ago! That is where the world has changed.

The working-class and socialist movement in France, Italy, Japan and a number of other capitalist countries is a far greater force today than before. The imperialist rulers of these countries have to reckon with it, and think ten times before measuring their strength against it.

The national-liberation movement in Africa, Asia and Latin America has come up against new hurdles and obstacles, undoubtedly. Its triumphal advance during the fifties and early sixties has run into difficult waters. But at root, the new difficulties have been created by the imperialists and their dirty stooges in these countries. The advance from national freedom to socialism is complicated and tortuous, but it has certainly not been halted. The tragic setback in Indonesia and Ghana is there, but the advance in Egypt and Burma is also there.

In our own country, the path of capitalist development has never been as discredited as now, people's discontent and struggles, after independence, have never attained the intensity and breadth they have done during the last two years.

The difficulties ahead are still enormous. But it is the new

awakening among the people, their growing unity and militancy, which is the true barometer of advance.

What are the demands which are being raised in recent years, with growing sharpness and insistence, both in the legislatures and outside, by the rising wave of people's discontent? Have they any relation to the basic demands of the national-democratic revolution to which we have referred earlier?

We will find that the various demands raised really get focussed on four general slogans: 'Defend people's living standards! Defend democracy and the democratic liberties of the people! Defend and democratise the national economy! Defend national independence!' This is how the partial and day-to-day demands of the people are getting linked up with the demand for the completion of our democratic revolution.

First and foremost, the workers' and the trade-union movement are demanding DA equivalent to the rising cost of living and a basic living wage. The TU demand for workers' effective participation in management, which has been there for years, is becoming a live working-class demand. Common people in town and country are demanding cheap and sufficient food through an organised and efficient system of distribution, i.e., rationing.

Everywhere people want resources for planning and economic development to be raised by taxing the foreign and Indian plutocrats and not through commodity taxation, deficit financing and compulsory savings.

In furtherance of these demands, and for an effective control over prices, people are demanding the nationalisation of banking, foreign trade and the oil industry; the rescuing of people's food from the clutches of the food monopolists and famine makers; monopoly state purchasing of foodgrains at economic prices; and similar procurement of other, essential commodities such as cloth, essential medicines, edible oils, etc.

People want hoarding and blackmarketing to be ruthlessly suppressed and the black money of all the rich thieves to be unearthed and confiscated.

The demand for the nationalisation of foreign concerns, and the break-up of Indian monopoly concerns is also coming to the forefront.

The landless labourers and the common peasants want drastic land reforms and economic and technical aid for agriculture so that the production of food and agricultural raw materials makes rapid strides, our dependence on the USA and other imperialist powers is reduced, and our economy becomes self-reliant and viable.

There is a growing demand from a large number of small and medium industrialists that they need protection from the powerful attack of foreign and Indian big business; that without such protection and also assistance, the slogans of swadeshi and import substitution are a hoax.

There is a growing realisation that the mountain of our foreign debt and other liabilities has to be scaled down and the terms of repayment made fair and feasible. The Westerners have got to accept repayment of debt in rupees, which is the way of increasing our exports and alleviating our foreign exchange crisis without hurting the people.

These are the vital (popular and national) economic demands that are being thrown up by the people's movement.

Naturally and correctly, people are also demanding an end to the emergency regime, an end to mass arrests, bans and firings, and the establishment of full civil liberties, above all, the people's right of organising peaceful mass struggles.

Since the treacherous Anglo-American role during last year's Indo-Pak conflict, and much more so after devaluation, even such people as are not conversant with the intricacies of imperialist foreign policies are rising in anger against American political blackmail directed against our national independence, as also CIA intrigues in India for subverting our freedom.

Life is thus asserting itself. The profound economic and political crisis brought about by the policies of the ruling Congress party, policies of making dangerous concessions

to imperialism and Indian landed interests, are compelling the masses to move forward to demand what we have characterised as the completion of the national-democratic revolution, a revolution that will root out all vestiges of imperialist and semi-feudal remnants in the country and give a decisive blow to the monopolists and big businessmen in India, the main collaborators with foreign private capital. Thus will draw up an path to socialism.

To proceed further, life is also demonstrating that the advance to the completion of our anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic tasks—lies dominantly through struggle, through powerful and united mass struggles.

Any notion or hope that parliamentary activity, including general propaganda through the press and public meetings, will suffice to carry us forward to socialism is utterly unreal under conditions in which foreign and internal monopoly capital and landholding interests have such a powerful hold over our economy and politics, Parliament not excluded.

This is not to say that the role of parliamentary activity is unimportant. Work in all elective bodies, from the village panchayats to the top has great value. It has value not only for popularising democratic and socialist policies and exposing the anti-people policies of the ruling party, but also for such progressive legislation as can be carried through on the strength of popular intervention in their work and functioning.

A majority secured by popular left parties and organisations in the state legislatures, municipalities, zilla parishads, panchayats, various kinds of cooperatives, etc., is a great asset. A lot of economic relief can be given to the people by the securing of such a majority. Plenty of relief in the sphere of education, public health, housing and other social services can also be given through these institutions.

But to imagine that all this activity can break the back of foreign and internal monopoly capital, landlordism, etc., without being backed by direct mass action is sheer moonshine. It is to count without one's host.

These powerful vested interests have never surrendered to the people in any country voluntarily or simply in obedience to a majority electoral vote in favour of dislodging them. They respect democratic forms and procedures only so long as their selfish interests can be served through them.

The moment these forms threaten to become weapons in the hands of the people for turning the tables against the vested interests, they throw all talk of democracy to the winds, bare their teeth, and become screaming votaries of 'law and order'—meaning brutal repression against the people.

This is the way the congress ministries are now going. The recent resignations by Shantilal Shah and certain other cabinet ministers in Maharashtra on the ground that the Maharashtra government did not drown the peaceful Secretariat Bandh and Bombay Bandh in a sea of blood, is a still more ominous pointer.

Those who resigned talked of the 'right of the free citizen to go to work' on these days. But for whom were they demanding protection when the entire citizenry was with the Bandh? Obviously for provocateurs and strike-breakers, to give the police a pretext to mow down the common people.

This is why the role of united mass struggle is basic and vital.

In fact, just as our new revolutionary tasks are a continuation of what we achieved on 15 August 1947, the powerful wave of mass struggles now arising in India is also a continuation and further development of the traditions of our pre-independence struggles.

Demonstrations, dharnas, non-cooperation, satyagraha, civil disobedience, hunger strike, pada-yatras, hartals—were these not the most extensive forms of political struggle in our freedom movement? What wonder if they are being used today on a far more extensive scale?

Besides, as has been pointed out earlier, in the pre-independence period, the working class went on mammoth

strikes, not only for its economic demands, but also on political issues. The high water-mark of the workers' political general strike in India prior to independence was at the time of the Indian Naval Mutiny, in Bombay, in February 1946. This strike, in fact, was followed by barricade fighting by the workers against mass shooting by the British armed forces.

What is the bandh movement of today which has gained momentum during the last three years, and during the last three months has engulfed Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam, Bombay and Bengal in its sweep? What is it if not a continuation of the old hartals? What are the pen-down strikes of bank and government employees if not non-cooperation?

We are clearly advancing towards a Bharat Bandh, not because it is somebody's brain wave (if there is one thing in politics which can never be imposed on the people, made to order, so to say, it is mass struggles) but because it is profoundly inherent in the economic and political situation in the country. Bharat Bandh is in the offing for no other reason than this that crores of people in India see no future before their eyes, no way out of the darkness and misery which envelop them, excepting through an advance to Bharat Bandh.

One difference there is between the bandhs of today and the hartals of the pre-independence period. And that is vital. Whereas the stamp on the old hartals was put by the small traders and students, and the national leadership did not generally encourage the workers to join them, the stamp on the bandh is put by the industrial working-class and middle-class employees.

The role of leadership in the bandhs is clearly that of the workers whereas formerly it was mainly the shopkeepers and the students who were in the lead.

But what could be come natural than this development? Is it not a continuation of the process described earlier with regard to our freedom movement? The focus of mass struggles prior to independence was against foreign rule.

The problem of foreign economic strongholds still continues. But, inevitably, there is a growing shift of the focus against internal monopoly capital and landlordism.

The struggle against imperialism for national independence is growing over into a struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression, foreign and internal. It is advancing in the direction of a struggle for socialism. Nothing could be more natural, more inevitable, than that the working class, industrial workers and middle-class employees (it is high time the latter started boldly calling themselves workers) should move to the forefront in this new and more advanced phase, the phase in which socialism is on the horizon.

Those who repeat in parrotlike fashion, and many of them sincerely want socialism, that Marxism is out-dated, that it is not applicable to Indian conditions, and so on, should ponder deeply over this phenomenon.

The leadership of the working class, of those who have no means of livelihood except selling their labour power to the capitalist, whether a textile millowner or a banker—the leadership of this class in the struggle for socialism, and later in its construction, is one of the highest principles of Marxism.

Such leadership is rapidly taking shape in India before our eyes in the struggle for the transition to socialism. There is no doubt that it will become far more evident when we reach the stage where socialism will start being built in our country. If such is the evidence of the out-dating of Marxism, what is corroboration called.

Already, the working class, the poor urban sections, teachers, government employees, bank and commercial employees, petty traders, students, are being swept into the mighty wave of struggles spreading from state to state. Practically the entire urban population, from metropolitan cities to small towns, is moving in unison.

The peasantry also is stirring, though it is yet not in the picture in a big way. It will not be long before it takes its place of honour in the countrywide upsurge.

Who else can and will join in the march? It is highly significant that in the very recent period, even well-paid (relatively) university teachers and doctors have taken to formulating their demands, forming trade unions (inconceivable for them only a few years ago), and even more, they now march through the streets shouting slogans, waving banners and placards, and finally organising dharnas before ministerial residences for days and nights. Clearly, the policies of the government are hitting at social sections and strata much above the traditional 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'.

And there is no doubt that if the government persists in its ways, thousands of medium and small industrialists are also going to be smoked out in the period ahead. No one expects them to become revolutionaries. But they will come over to the right side of the dividing line. Only the foreign and Indian monopoly interests, the bankers, big traders, speculators and the landed interests will rule the roost.

From this it follows that the key task of all true socialists in India today is to build a broad national-democratic front through struggles. From what has been explained till now, it will be obviously broader than a left or socialist front. Such a front can and has to be built because the interests of all classes and social elements participating in it correspond to the objectives of the democratic revolution which is the vital need of the country at the present stage of its advance to socialism.

In terms of political parties and mass organisations, clearly the left political parties, trade unions, peasant organisations and student and youth organisations have to take the initiative in building such a front and being at the head of it. Independent democrats and patriots have also to be drawn into it. Once again, this is precisely what is happening before our eyes which corroborates the correctness of our analysis and conclusions in respect of the conditions prevailing in our country.

Such a front will, of course, be directed against the

parties of communalism like the Jana Sangh and the Muslim League and against other parties of right reaction like the Swatantra party. There can be no question that these parties are the spearhead of reaction in the country. They are a danger for the country. Their policies have to be mercilessly exposed and they have to be thoroughly isolated from the people.

How about the Congress, the ruling party for the last nineteen years?

Clearly such a front must be directed against the anti-people policies of the Congress. This has already been stressed earlier.

It follows that in the field of electoral struggles it is necessary for all left and democratic parties, groups and individuals to unite for breaking the monopoly of power exercised by the Congress since independence, and to throw it out of office in as many states as possible.

Most left parties have been attempting, for quite a considerable period, to bring about an electoral understanding between all opposition parties, right or left. But the rightist parties are conscious of what they want, and are by no means eager to join hands with left parties to defeat the Congress at the polls.

With the growth and intensification of mass struggles, in particular, the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh are moving further and further away from any idea of having an anti-Congress truck with the left parties. What many left parties did not accept as a principle, they are learning through the experience of life.

In the event of securing a majority in one or another state, the parties of the left democratic front are duty bound to form non-congress, progressive ministries to utilise their power for alleviating people's distress and introduce radical reforms to the maximum extent possible.

It is clearly on the cards that such popular ministries would come into conflict with the central government leading to a constitutional and political crisis. How to tackle

such a situation will have to be decided when the situation arises.

But this, by no means, exhausts the question of the attitude of the growing democratic front to the Congress and all congressmen. The problem is far too serious for such a lighthearted and cavalier treatment.

The problem arises, at root, because the Congress was the leading political organisation of our freedom movement.

What with its anti-people policies, corruption and factionalism, its influence has undoubtedly sunk to a far lower level now. But it still has a mass base, and because of the traditions inherited by it, it has progressive elements and cadres in it. There are hundreds of rank-and-file congressmen, even today, who work sincerely and hard in the village panchayats, cooperatives, rural uplift schemes and so on.

That is why it would be not only wrong but harmful for the growing democratic front in the country not to distinguish between progressive congressmen and congress cadre and the anti-people policies of the leadership and the governments led by it.

To equate the policy of making such a distinction with a 'soft' attitude towards the Congress or toning down mass struggles against its governmental policies is, at best, sheer prejudice, at worst, a failure to take one's responsibilities towards the task of broadening mass struggles and the democratic front, seriously.

More recently, the capitulatory policies of the congress government are creating a serious crisis in the organisation. Plenty of congressmen, from the Parliament downwards are speaking up more boldly against such policies and their consequences.

Systematic evasion of food procurement by the states, the unbridled rise in prices, leniency towards big tax evaders, hoarders and profiteers, corruption, the fertiliser deals and above all, devaluation have raised bitter protests within the Congress itself.

In Bengal, an influential section of the Congress has actually broken away from the parent organisation and joined the left democratic front.

Under the impact of the growing mass movement and pressure from within, the central government had to withdraw the Unlawful Activities Prevention Bill. The Indo-American Foundation is as good as dead.

In Maharashtra, the massive strength and discipline of the recent Bombay Bandh precipitated a crisis in the cabinet. Its extreme rightwing, under instructions from S. K. Patil, demanded that the bandh be drowned in brutal repression. The cabinet did not accept the line, leading to the resignation of some ministers among whom the most notorious anti-working-class minister, Shantilal Shah, has had to stay out for good.

We notice, and must notice, the deterioration of the congress organisation and its governments. We have to struggle, and do struggle, to oust them from power. At the same time if we are serious about broadening our struggles and the democratic front, we have also to find out ways and means to link up with progressive congressmen, strengthen their resistance to the anti-people policies of their governments and seek their participation in as many popular activities as possible.

It is necessary to refer to one more question in this connection.

The struggle for reversing the path of capitalist development is not only an economic or political struggle. It is also a grim struggle against reaction in the sphere of culture.

The fomentation of chauvinism, of Hindu-Muslim conflict, of casteism, of all kinds of religious obscurantism, a most poisonous weapon in the hands of reaction for diverting popular attention from real people's problems and for dividing and attacking the forces of democracy and the class solidarity of the toilers.

The new addition to this armoury for degrading the minds of youth is degenerate Western films on sex and

sadistic violence. The essence of bourgeois culture lies in the worship of money, expressed in the cynical proverb that one must first try to get on, then honour and then honest. Brutalising the minds of youth, teaching them in a thousand subtle ways that anything is fair in the 'struggle' for personal aggrandisement, is the weapon of all reaction for ultimately organising hooligan bands to terrorise and suppress the forces of democracy and socialism.

It is the duty of all socialists and democrats to expose and attack reaction in all these spheres of culture, both because of the dehumanising content of reactionary 'culture' as also because it provokes various elements of society against one another, instead of uniting them in the cause of economic and democratic progress.

Those who stand for democracy and socialism must also take a deep interest in education, in the problems of the students and the teachers.

Youth needs more and better education, better both in its socialist and patriotic content and in its utility for modern avocations of life. Teachers need a better standard of living and more leisure to be able to concentrate on becoming experts in the subjects they teach. More schools and colleges, more technical schools, are needed. The teacher-student ratio has to be normalised.

After the recent mass explosion of student discontent in many states, the problem cannot be neglected for a moment. The explosion is the price the country is paying for such prolonged neglect.

Capitalist development cannot solve the problem of unemployment staring the young generation in the face. This is at the root of the frustration and outbursts.

And when things reach the stage of an extreme crisis, the ruling party starts moaning about the loss of values and tells us that it is a 'law and order' problem. Working-class strikes are a 'law and order' problem, student strikes are a 'law and order' problem, every popular discontent is a 'law and order' problem!

Students are told to be 'disciplined' and 'keep out of politics'. And this by leaders who swear in the name of Gandhi who brought millions of students into the streets and made them valiant fighters for freedom and for truth.

This is not to compare the problems of today with the problems under British rule. The point is that the problems of culture and education cannot be divorced from politics and economics. Prior to independence, they were mainly linked up, and correctly linked up, with the patriotic appeal of anti-imperialism and national independence. Today they have to be linked with anti-imperialist patriotism plus democracy plus socialism.

Bemoaning the collapse of values 'in general', asking the youth and the working class to keep out of politics 'in general', is nothing short of giving an alibi to the sinister and often concealed forces (for instance, the CIA) of reaction. It is to leave them free to play havoc with the youth, the working-class and other democratic elements. At best such breast-beating is futile, at worst it is a cover for reaction.

The only solution is for the forces of democracy and socialism (economic and political) to carry the struggle against reaction into the sphere of culture. Only thus can communalism, casteism, chauvinism, and all the variants of obscurantism, vulgarity, cynicism and sadism be defeated.

This also is the path to genuine national integration, economic, political, cultural and emotional. All the rest is pious platitudes, sermonising and drawing-room sophistication, parading as national integration.

It is the *entire process* described in this section that we refer to when we speak of the struggle to reverse the path of capitalist development being pursued by the rulers.

As yet, the struggle is not very advanced, it is gathering volume and momentum. A far greater expansion and intensification of the process is still needed. As it rises to a higher pitch, it has got to lead to a far deeper crisis in the Congress, similar crises in its central and state govern-

ments, which means a crisis and split in the ruling capitalist class itself.

This will open up new prospects of advance for the people's movement, the prospects of a broader unity and striking power for the national-democratic front. This is what is meant by the struggle to reverse the path of development along which the country has moved since independence.

What will be the end result of the struggle? Surely not majority democratic governments at the centre and in the states within the framework of the existing economy and political relations in the country. It would be a mockery of the government of the national-democratic front as visualised by us here to imagine that it can function with the hold of foreign and internal monopolies intact, landed interests intact, the present bureaucracy intact.

These forces would have to be tremendously weakened and paralysed in the course of the struggle itself. The struggle for the achievement of a government of the national-democratic front is a revolutionary struggle, a struggle for a radical and revolutionary transformation of the existing correlation of forces in our country.

The fact of the working class, peasantry and youth being in the forefront of the mass struggle that will create the government will be a guarantee that it will make a decisive break with the path of capitalist development, the path of compromises with imperialism, feudalism, Indian monopoly capital and all reaction. It will be a guarantee that the government will break the shackles to India's economic and democratic advance and make a sharp turn towards the achievement of socialism.

Only in such a context can a truly national-democratic government come to power. And having assumed power, it will stamp out all vestiges of the reactionary forces and classes and advance towards the task of reconstructing India on a socialist basis.