

The Freedom Struggle of India And Masterda Surya Sen

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The day 12th January is soaked with tears of profound grief and pain on one hand and glorified by great valiance and sacrifice on the other. This day is associated with the memory of embracing martyr's death by the great revolutionary Masterda Surya Sen. Earlier when the Chapekar brothers, Kshudiram, Prafulla Chaki sacrificed their lives for freedom, the consciousness regarding the concepts of freedom and nationalism were yet to develop properly within the country. Their sacrifices to a great extent went unnoticed and unsung, although their martyrdom caused the awakening of the youth of our country with the consciousness of patriotism and freedom. But afterwards, especially two incidents of martyrdom on the gallows stirred the entire nation — one of Masterda Surya Sen and the other of Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh. As a consequence of both of these deaths, on the one hand the waves of shock, grief and tears, and on the other hand a storm of protests swept the entire country. The intense hatred against the British imperialism reverberated across the length and breadth of the land. Netaji Subhaschandra, Saratchandra, Rabindranath, Nazrul all were alive during the hanging of Masterda Surya Sen. All of them were shocked. When the order of hanging was officially pronounced, that was a day of great anguish and agony not only in undivided Bengal, but also in the then undivided India, a day totally different from others. On the day of hanging, every home and hearth was swept with a deluge of tears. In the district of Chattagram (then a district of undivided Bengal, now in Bangladesh) for a few days following it, cooking remained stopped in many homes to express grief. How many people of today remember the 12th January, that historic day of 'Agnijug'? How many people know it? It is a matter of deep regret. The students and youths of today not are at all acquainted with the nature of the struggle of those days. At the beginning of our boyhood, during the freedom struggle, in the social environment throbbing with vibrant patriotism, these names were referred to in every home with profound respect. Those used to be engraved in our minds and inspire us deeply. But that history has almost been lost into oblivion even among many who are aged like us—the teachers, the guardians. The same thing would have happened with us also had we let us be swept by the trend in vogue within the society. But we couldn't, and that was due to the role of a great man. Accidentally I happened to

come into his contact, which changed the course of my life. He started as a volunteer of the revolutionary trend of our freedom movement. Later in course of the struggle and development he emerged as a great Marxist thinker. He was the great leader of the emancipation struggle of the proletariat, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. He did not let us forget the glorious renaissance and freedom movement of our country, the great men and the revolutionaries of those ages. It was he who rekindled the memory of the almost forgotten glorious past of our country. He built the bridge between us and the great men, the noble characters of that age, the stalwarts of the days of renaissance who emerged as the shining stars in different fields of knowledge, in the fields of science, literature, culture, patriotism, who sacrificed their lives as great revolutionaries, with them he established our link. He built the bridge between that age and our times so that we can assimilate the valuable ingredients of those days and be able to surge ahead in the struggle to acquire revolutionary communist character.

Today who addressed in the beginning, he in course of introducing me, made a mistake. He placed me in such a manner that Surya Sen was a revolutionary leader of that era and myself Provash Ghosh, I am a revolutionary leader of the present era. I feel very abashed at this. That Masterda Surya Sen was an outstanding revolutionary fighter and leader of the era of national freedom struggle, this evaluation is correct. He had to undergo many a ordeal in course of his struggle, while I am only a soldier of the struggle of today, armed with Marxism-Leninism and the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. I am yet to face those tests and trials in my life, which Masterda Surya Sen had to undergo as an icon of revolutionary struggle of those days. Hence the placing is not proper.

Today, whatever I am going to tell you about Masterda Surya Sen that is not only for you, but to awaken my own conscience also. That is why, like the organizers of this programme, I myself also have been eager to come here.

Both the historic revolutionary uprising in Chattagram and an unforgettable great revolutionary character are very much educative and significant for us. At the outset I want to say that starting from Kshudiram, Bhagat Singh, the label 'terrorist' was attached to anybody linked with the uncompromising trend of Indian freedom struggle, by the British imperialist rulers themselves. Almost all are accustomed to reading about and referring to them in this way, but this is not correct. It is observed in all countries that in the national freedom movement, the concept of organising insurrection by developing revolutionary consciousness of the masses does

not appear at the initial stage. The struggle begins on the basis of a few individuals' protesting mind, personal courage, valiance and boldness. That's why punishment to the enemies of people, death penalty to the symbolic representatives of the oppressive rule – generally the revolutionary struggles took such forms at the initial stage in different countries. Those who started the struggle in this way, they used to think that such punishments would incur fear in the minds of the enemies of the people and oppressive rulers, they would restrain their oppression and exploitation and the struggle and sacrifice of the revolutionaries would result in awakening of the masses, many more volunteers would come forward for the struggle. This concept and form of struggle should be viewed as the primary stage of revolutionary movement. The course of development in our country was similar. The national freedom movement of our country started with this kind of revolutionary struggle.

The National Congress was established in 1885. It became the platform of national freedom movement after quite a few years. In the beginning it was a kind of association of some rich people groomed in western education. Except adopting some resolutions during its sessions, there was virtually no other activity of it. Alongside it, on the basis of nationalism and patriotic feeling of the educated middle class, some rudimentary revolutionary activities began mostly as individual endeavour or through formation of some small revolutionary groups, which is known as petty-bourgeois revolutionism. Here petty means small, the middle class is known as petty bourgeois, i.e. small bourgeois. In a capitalist society chiefly two classes exist – one is the bourgeois and the other is the working class. The middle class is a sub-class. It stands in between, the bourgeoisie and the working class. The class aspirations of the middle class sometimes coincide with those of the bourgeoisie and sometimes do not. In freedom struggle the bourgeois class and the working class can play an organised role; the middle class or the petty bourgeois class cannot do so alone. As they are a sub-class in between the two main classes, they cannot rise up as an organised class. But the limited extent to which there had been the spread of education in those days, due to the impact of that and due to growing sense of self-respect, the sense of humiliation resulting from bondage was most trenchant among the middle class. The role of capitalism having turned reactionary at the stage of imperialism in the international arena and for the fear complex of working class revolution, the

compromising mental make-up was predominant among the national bourgeoisie of this country. Naturally, the uncompromising struggling spirit prevailing among the middle class was totally opposite to it. The National Congress was built up as a platform only for debates and discussions, adopting resolutions and submitting memorandums to the government containing charter of demands, etc. Therefore, the Congress leadership, as a whole, had developed as a mouthpiece of the compromising and reformist national bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeois revolutionism could not emerge as an alternative to the compromising bourgeois class, within the leadership of Congress. It was historically necessary for the working class leadership, on the basis of proper realization of the role of the petty-bourgeois revolutionism, to utilize it in the interest of working class revolution. The great leader comrade Lenin showed that in twentieth century, during the reactionary stage of world capitalism, in no country, under the leadership of national bourgeoisie, freedom struggle can reach its complete logical culmination. That responsibility must be shouldered by the conscious working class. In 1925, on the basis of this teaching, the great leader Comrade Stalin told the so-called communists of this country, that the national bourgeois class of India had been split into two parts. One was out to compromise with the imperialists for fear complex of working class revolution and the other was conducting an uncompromising struggle. It was the responsibility of the Indian communists to unite with the uncompromising that is the segment representing the petty-bourgeois revolutionism, and by that isolate the compromising national bourgeoisie and establish the leadership of working class within the freedom movement. [“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. 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.”(The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East, Speech Delivered at a meeting of students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in 1925)] But the so called communists of this country went exactly opposite to the teachings of Lenin and Stalin. Due to the painful absence of a real working class party, i.e. a real communist party at that time, this task of the freedom movement could not be fulfilled. In spite of a number of opportunities, the so called communist party continued to support and strengthen the compromising national bourgeoisie. So the petty-bourgeois revolutionism could not be well established as an alternative to bourgeois reformism. At the initial stage none of the isolated and scattered attempts of insurrection could be successful. But by dint of glorious sacrifices those attempts awakened the youth of this country with the consciousness of struggle. On that count it was quite successful.

It has to be remembered that the historic revolutionary uprising at Chittagong was different in many respects from all the earlier attempts. It was not just a revolt, nor a so-called armoury raid; rather it was a total revolutionary insurrection. The Chittagong town was situated in a remote corner of the then vast country, India. It was not a village, nor an ordinary town, it was a large port city. To keep the port city under siege for four days, form the first ever revolutionary government in our country, force the all powerful British administration to leave the city, was not an ordinary thing. In the history of freedom movement of India, it was the first of its kind. Afterwards, during the Quit India movement in 1942 ‘Tamralipta Government’ was formed at Tamluk in Midnapur District of Bengal. During that movement a similar independent government was formed also in Balia of U.P. During the 2nd world war the Azad-Hind Fauz fought under Netaji’s leadership and Azad-Hind Government was formed. Such large scale

uprising occurred in 1946 when Naval Mutiny erupted in Bombay. Secondly, this revolutionary uprising at Chittagong was highly well-planned, well-organised. Taking lessons from the experience of the foregoing revolutionaries, from the experience of revolutionary movements in different countries Masterda Surya Sen formed his organisation. In Masterda's character there was a strong influence of the character of Sabyasachi or the 'Doctor' in Saratchandra's novel 'Pather Dabi'. One can understand that in order to build his own character, besides other foregoing revolutionaries, Masterda especially tried to emulate different qualities of 'Sabyasachi'. This was also obvious to the members of his organisation and for that it was a subject matter of discussion among them – "who is superior, Sabyasachi of 'Pather Dabi' or Masterda?" You will find it in the writings of Kalpana Dutta, one of the woman volunteers of Masterda's revolutionary organisation. On this issue once there had been a discussion between Kalpana Dutta and Pritilata Waddeder, and both agreed that Masterda was greater in character.

The armed revolutionary corps under Masterda's leadership occupied the Chittagong city for four days, drove out the British administration and defeated the British troops in two encounters. Immediately after launching the attack, Masterda's corps, as per the plan, first captured the armoury, then severed all links of the city with outside through telephone, telegraph and the railway tracks, so that the British troops could not enter the city. In this way through sudden and swift attack they achieved initial victory. They were well aware that it would not be possible to hold out the position for long, but this battle and the victory, though temporary, would strongly inspire the revolutionary youths of the country at large. This was their sole objective. Thereafter, in order to confront the organised British troops they took shelter in the nearby hills. A large British military contingent came to Jalalabad hills, encircled the revolutionaries from all directions and launched the attack. But there too the British troops faced defeat. Therefore, the revolutionary corps formed by Masterda Surya Sen twice achieved victory in face to face battle, with British troops, and thereafter continued the guerilla war, in the rural areas surrounding the Chattagram city, for four years, i.e. 1930 to '34 which was an insuperable task. Even after arrest of Masterda that war continued for two more years. He continued to abscond for three years within an area of only twenty kilometres of radius around the city. The British administration assembled the most efficient troops of military, police and intelligence personnel from different parts of the country, set up military camps in the villages and conducted combing operations in village after village to hound him out. They introduced identity cards for the students and the

youths, searched door to door, clamped Punitive Tax on the common villagers. Tortures, ruthless beating, outraging of modesty of women, everything they tried. To arrest Masterda the administration announced a huge amount of money as the price of his head. Yet they failed to arrest him for three years. In spite of such huge strength and all out attempts of the British government, this was possible because of people's deep respect and emotion towards Masterda's struggle. People made it possible by throwing a challenge to the entire British administration. We must evaluate Masterda in the backdrop of this unforgettable revolutionary struggle. He must be understood on the basis of his undaunted patriotism, outstanding intelligence, indomitable courage, unparalleled firmness of character and depth of values, foresightedness, extra-ordinary ability to take decision in critical moments, readiness to sacrifice his life unhesitatingly, immense love for the people and revolutionary activists, the rare quality to bear any pain, shock or trauma calmly, and such other qualities. In fact it would not have been possible for the British to arrest him at all had a person not betrayed him for money. Countless ordinary, poor men and women, even the mothers of Muslim families, guarded him facing all odds. We wonder how close to their hearts he was that such a thing was possible. Just here is the indication of greatness of character, qualities and organizing ability of this unparalleled revolutionary hero. These aspects of his character stand out as lessons worth learning for all, for me, you and those who dream of social revolution and have feelings of duty and responsibility towards it. That is why Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, time and again, advised us, the proletarian revolutionaries, to learn from these characters. I shall try to place before you some glimpses of these qualities of Masterda. You will get in books the details of the incidents at Chittagong, in those days. I shall only try to briefly place the educative aspects of his life and struggle.

I can recollect my childhood days. I heard of both the names, Surya Sen and Masterda – more of Masterda than of Surya Sen. At first I thought them to be two different persons. In villages, towns, market places, everywhere, these names were often referred to in common talks among the people. Later I came to know that the two different names were of the same person. At that time the name of Bhagat Singh was not known to us. We were acquainted with the names of Kshudiram, Masterda, Netaji Subash Chandra etc. I have also gone through the writings of some of his close colleagues and followers and was simply overwhelmed. From those writings it becomes clear that he took lessons from the foregoing revolutionaries and made himself more and more matured.

Masterda Surya Sen mentioned it again and again, 'We are striking at the British imperialism. We know the government that we have formed in Chittagong, will not sustain. We shall be defeated in the war. But it will set an example and pave the way for greater struggle in the years to come.' Being sure of the impending defeat, with what a firm conviction he said, not 'do or die' but 'do and die'! "We will fight; die and by embracing death we will awaken this country. We are delivering one after another blow at the British Imperialism, at its machinery of plunder and oppression. Our success lies in the fact that we are able to deliver this blow. This will prepare the ground for the future massive liberation struggle." He said, "The waves of struggle created in the limited periphery of Chittagong will reach every nook and corner across the length and breadth of the country, this is our dream, our hope. We are paving the way for it." He used to say this to the generals, to the soldiers of his army. He said, "Our agenda is death agenda. Only those among you, who are ready to die, join our organisation." So before recruiting anyone, he examined everyone through tough tests and trials. No harm if the number was small. He used to verify which was a real piece of diamond and which was only a piece of glass. One old man, who, in those days, took part in the youth uprising of Chittagong and battle of Jalalabad as a soldier, is still alive. He survived a bullet injury. Now he is a hundred and one years old. He is the respected Binod Behari Chowdhury. I met him twice. Once at a meeting at Barasat of West Bengal, and in another occasion, when I was visiting Bangladesh, I went to his house. Seeing him one can feel how the influence of Masterda is still glowing in him. He was a good student, when he wanted to join the organisation, Masterda submitted him to the ordeal. He asked him to wait at midnight in a cremation place in Chittagong town, situated at a place where people usually would not go. He waited there alone for a long time, with keen interest. Suddenly he felt the touch of a hand on his back and was startled to see that it was Masterda. In fact Masterda wanted to take the test of his seriousness and patience. Then he tried to dissuade him, saying "You are a good student, you can do good result in examinations. You can earn fame and find a good job in a high post. Why should you join this life and death battle?" Binodbabu replied with firm determination, "I don't want any of them. I want to fight and die for the country." He said further, "If you don't allow me to join your organisation then there are many other revolutionary organisations in the country, I'll join one of them." Surya Sen then embraced him. Another person also came from a very poor family to join the organisation. Masterda told him, "If you sacrifice your life who will look after your parents?" He discussed with him a lot, tried to

dissuade him, studied him deeply and realized that he was very bold and determined. Similarly, he tried Pritilata also asking, “Which is greater to you – the country or the family?” She answered unhesitatingly, “I have deep feeling for my family, but if the call of the country comes, it will be the priority.” In this way he used to take test and trial of everyone. The tests were held on three stages before recruiting anyone into the organisation. He gave them books to read. Among the books, ‘Pather Dabi’, the novel of Saratchandra, was a must. He also made them read ‘Anandamath’ and biographies of the revolutionaries. He did not come in contact with Marxism-Leninism. Naturally, he had no ideas of class struggle and anti-capitalist socialist revolution. So he did not get the ideas of class consciousness and the scientific concepts of the processes of social change. But he hailed the Soviet Revolution as the ‘Sunrise of a new civilisation’. The biography of Lenin highly impressed him. We came to know these things from the discussions of Binodbabu during our visit.

Another important aspect deserves to be mentioned. In those days the revolutionaries collected money to buy weapons through ‘dacoity’(robbery). This used to be called ‘Swadeshi dacoity’. Masterda abandoned this path. He said, “Those who are ‘Swadeshi’ patriots, who will die for the motherland, why should they do ‘dacoity’ in others’ homes? They will collect money, ornament, whatever they can, from their own families. Only he will get the honour of taking part in action who has passed this test.” This method of collecting fund from one’s own home, this process of sacrifice, this struggle to get rid of personal interests, and thereby building up the party fund – this was a new concept introduced in revolutionary movement by Masterda. Masterda asked everyone to collect money from his own home. But there were also such instances where, a boy belonging to a very poor village labourer family, had nothing in his home to contribute into the party fund, excepting two broken silver bangles of his mother. The boy was weeping for his inability to offer more. Masterda hugged him passionately and said, “Your contribution may be insignificant in terms of its money value, but your heart is invaluable. You will be in the first rank of the battle.” Outside the organisation, common people knew Masterda as a dedicated organiser of the National Congress. He organised many clubs, gymnasiums, wrestling clubs etc. so that outsiders be unable to guess the underground preparation for the revolutionary uprising. There the student-youth volunteers underwent training. The common people, even the men of the administration, believed that the boys practised sports, games, wrestling etc. Many students and youths got involved in those organisations. From out of them

he selected and recruited into his revolutionary organisation. He made them organise many body-building or wrestling shows, with those youths, in order to hoodwink the police and administration regarding the real motive of these organisations. He also allotted specific separate assignments to his followers to build up the student, youth and women's organisations. At the same time the collection of weapons and arms training went on secretly. Within the revolutionary organisation, various specific responsibilities were distributed among the volunteers – one group to take part in combat, another group to organise propaganda, another group to collect money, again another group to keep vigilance on the activities and movements of the enemy. He organised many relief works and social service activities with his volunteers, not only within the city, but also in the surrounding villages. The purpose was to develop a mind for social service among the volunteers and also to build-up a support base among the people for the organisation and its activities. In this way Masterda initially became popular as a patriot and an ideal teacher. The students and youths were used to get attracted to him, at first, by his qualities as an ideal teacher. It was from him that they could learn about the society and the country at large and got inspired to take part in the freedom movement. Before assigning any responsibility to anyone, or sending someone to some confrontation, he assessed carefully if he was fit for that responsibility. He verified the courage, efficiency and ability of the volunteer through variety of tests and trials. In these matters he demonstrated extra-ordinary skill as an organiser.

Another point I would like to mention here. At that time, among different revolutionary groups existing in the country, there had been differences and contradictions, leading to conflicts at times. But often, they used to stand united against the onslaughts of the police and administration. Surya Sen was free from any narrow sectarianism on this question. At first he got involved in the Jugantar group. In that group there was the practice of taking oath, touching the Gita. But he did not believe in this kind of practices. He understood that such rituals created a bar to the Muslim community, from joining the freedom movement. Yet he did not contradict those who believed in these customs. He maintained relation with all of them. He wanted all of them to unite and thus develop a strong organisation for conducting the freedom struggle. In this period, after the demise of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, the Bengal Provincial Congress was split into two parts over the question: who will be in the leadership, Subash Chandra Bose or Jatindra Mohan Sengupta? Even serious clashes occurred centring this issue. Jatindra Mohan Sengupta

belonged to the Chattagram district. Although Masterda too belonged to Chattagram district, he was a follower of Subhash Bose. To him eligibility was the only yardstick, not the district sentiment. He had also been elected the president of the Chattagram District Congress as a follower of Subhash Bose. At this the other group became irate and even attacked and injured Masterda. He was bleeding; one of his followers was also killed in the incident. This infuriated the followers of Masterda and they wanted to take revenge. Masterda was so profusely bleeding that he was unable to stand on his own feet. Even then he managed to come forward and supporting himself on the shoulders of two of his colleagues said, “Don’t waste your strength in this way. That will help our main enemy. Why are you agitated seeing this small amount of blood? Our main enemy will shed much more blood of us. Keeping the struggle against the main enemy in mind, do not let your strength be wasted in suicidal conflicts.” In those days such thinking was not observed in anybody, belonging to any of the groups involved in such squabbles. Just consider once, the judgment he made in that particular situation, of what a high standard it was! He was attacked, injured and was shedding blood, one of his followers was dead, other colleagues were furious and ready to retaliate – still he was insisting that it was unethical to waste strength in that manner, instead of fighting the main enemy, the British imperialism, unitedly. In spite of himself being so severely injured, he never allowed any personal sentiment to overtake himself, because he had no other objective of life than the struggle for freedom. He did not want to weaken the struggle through internal conflicts and clashes.

In those days most of the congress leaders, even many leaders of the revolutionary parties maintained a distance from the party workers. The workers of the revolutionary organisations obeyed the leaders as the devotees obey God. They just carried out their instructions. There was no scope at all to differ, to question and to debate. Rather, to carry out instructions without any question was considered a condition of membership of the organisations. In this question Masterda was an exception. Of course, for security reasons, there were some restrictions to meet him during the underground days, but he mixed with all the leaders and workers, as a friend, without any complex or vanity, and so easily that they took him to be one of their own. He had intimate relations with all of them. This was one of the important traits of his character. It was a very common scene to find him engaged in making fun or laughter, gossiping or discussing literature, enjoying songs or playing cards with the juniors. He used to say, “The revolutionaries

should always be in a happy mind.” The environment within the organisation was such that even a school boy, a volunteer of the revolutionary movement, could easily open his mind to Masterda; anyone could express to him his differences of opinion, without any hesitation. Some distinguished colleagues of Masterda have said that he never used the method of command, nor imposed any of his intentions on anybody, because Masterda knew imposition or commanding would impede the voluntary action. His way was to inspire with arguments. He kept on arguing with patience until the other person was convinced. He never ignored the opposing views, listened to them patiently and used to win over others with precise and penetrating arguments. In this way he won the heart of every one. In those days, this kind of environment was quite unthinkable in other revolutionary organisations. Never, as a leader, any ego, vanity or command centric attitude was observed in him. On the contrary Masterda used to say, ‘All my colleagues have various and many qualities. I am astonished and overwhelmed why they consider me their leader. I don’t understand what specialty they have discovered in me. But I am impressed by their qualities. It is they who have made me leader.’ Once Kalpana Dutta went to Masterda to know about his life. Instead of talking about his own life, he discussed about the life struggles of Ganesh Ghosh, Ambika Chakraborty, Ananta Singh and other leaders of the organisation and said, “I have nothing worth telling about me. It is they who made me what I am today.” There was not an inkling of vanity or self-propaganda. Imagine, how great a character he was, so that it was possible for him to recognise the qualities of his colleagues so earnestly! Due to these noble qualities Masterda earned a place in the hearts of all, evolved as an emotional leader of all. He always remained engrossed with the thoughts about others’ problems and never engaged others for any of his personal problems. He had no personal desires. He lived in the Congress office. The date April 18, 1930 was the day of Chittagong uprising. He used to do private tuition for his minimum personal needs, which he continued upto 16th April. He also helped many poor students. Sometimes he had to starve, but never let anyone know about that. He never spent a single farthing from the Congress fund for his personal needs. Before the uprising, he silently left the Congress office, leaving behind a detailed account of income and expenditure of the fund.

Once, Tegra, the younger brother of Lokenath Bal, a teenaged volunteer, who later became a martyr at Jalalabad battle, asked for some paisas to Masterda, in order to give that to a beggar waiting in front of the office. Masterda was reading a book inside. He said, “I have no paisa.” Tegra then went to kitchen looking for some rice for giving the beggar as charity. Masterda used

to do cooking for himself. But he found the cooking pot dry, no rice in the container and even fire was not made on that day. He asked Masterda, "Haven't you eaten anything?" Masterda remained silent. Another leader Ganesh Ghosh had a shop adjacent to the office. Tegra rushed to him and shouted, "Masterda is going without any food and you know nothing about it? Don't you care to look after him?" Ganesh Ghosh rushed into the office and with emotionally injured feeling said, "We should no more maintain any relation with you. We are none of your own. You remained unfed for two days, couldn't you tell us for once?" Masterda smiled and said, "No, I have taken tea." How many days passed in this way! It is not without reason that so many persons had given away everything – money, career and even life at the call of Masterda. This valuable wealth of his character earned him a place in every heart. His followers wrote, "Any moment, at his call, command or even a gesture, all of us were ready to die." But what made it possible? No doubt the unique revolutionary character of Masterda. Such character is rare in all ages. I am discussing all these things to show how educative these things are to us today.

At a delicate moment of weakness Ananta Singh surrendered to the police in Kolkata. After that he was writhing in self-reproach. A volunteer of the organisation secretly met him and came to Masterda to say, "I am going to give potassium cyanide to Anantada." Being astonished Masterda asked, "Why?" The worker answered, "He wants to commit suicide." Masterda asked, "What? Ananta had done it at a delicate moment. But suicide for that! Convince him. Tell him it is my instruction that he must not do this and a serious assignment is awaiting him." That worker conveyed the order of Masterda to Ananta Singh at the gate of the court. Painfully Ananta Singh said, "Won't Masterda even allow me to die in peace?" Masterda sent a coded message, "A big operation is in the offing. I need you for that. This is my order" This approach that treachery and weakness are not the same, this exactly was the approach of Sabyasachi towards Apurba, in Saratchandra's novel 'Pather Dabi'. Some teenaged workers were arrested, beaten and brutally tortured by the police. The police pulled off their nails and tortured them with hot red iron rod. Failing to withstand this brutal torture they disclosed some information to the police. Knowing this, some workers became very agitated. One of them said, "I will somehow manage to get imprisoned and punish them like Naren Gosain, for this betrayal." The decision of punishment was almost final. Masterda, having heard all that said, "This is not at all proper. They are too young, joined the organisation very recently. They came with romantic dreams. Never did they imagine of so much suffering and torture in this struggle. The responsibility lies with us. We

failed to prepare them properly. Think of your main enemy. Why do you think about them only and be frustrated? The twelve teen aged comrades who died in the battle of Jalalabad hills, their names will be written in letters of blood. None can erase them from the pages of history. Remember those heroes. Don't try to punish them who are weak and have failed in the test." Immediately after this, Masterda continued, "Each of us could have been killed on that day. Those who have survived have to march on along the path of struggle. Those who can't should go back home, but I will bid farewell to life on this hilly soil of Chittagong." Here also the distinct influence of Sabyasachi's approach towards Apurba, in Pather Dabi can be observed. Such balanced approach couldn't be observed in other revolutionary organisations. For such an incident in other organisations, punishment by death was inevitable. But Masterda was able to distinguish the difference between act of immaturity or weakness and treachery.

It is true that Masterda was not totally free from religious beliefs. In this respect Sabyasachi's thoughts and ideas were not reflected in him. There was a limitation. Saratbabu's Sabyasachi said, "All the religions are false, superstitions of the primitive mind. There is no greater enemy to humanity than religion" Such thing can't be found in any of the revolutionaries of those days, excepting Bhagat Singh. Though unable to be totally free from religious thoughts, in politics and lifestyle Masterda was strictly secular. Unlike other groups, there was no practice of taking oath touching the Gita, or standing in front of goddess Kali in his party. His party was open to all irrespective of caste, creed and religious belief. Masterda spent most of the three years of his underground days in poor Muslim peasant families. Often, when someone went to see Masterda to provide some secret information, found one old Muslim woman was lying on a cot (bedstead) and in a hole under that cot Masterda was hiding. What an unfathomed love and faith they held for him! He had been to many such places during his underground days. In spite of physically being feeble, he many times escaped arrest only due to his intelligence and presence of mind. His colleagues and followers used to do jokes with him saying, "What can you do? This is the condition of your health. You cannot run like us. Can you save yourself?" They used to say this just for fun, because they knew it well what an enormous power Masterda had due to which he could overcome all his physical limitations. On many occasions he escaped just in time amid shower of British bullets. In the last such incident also it would not have been possible to arrest him but for the betrayal of a person. Sometimes in the guise of a farmer wearing a Tonga (a kind of hat used by farmers for tilling) on his head, some other time dressed as a boatman with a row

in his hand, sometimes in the guise of a fisherman or a driver of bullock carts, even in the guise of a Shari or Borkha clad woman, Masterda evaded arrest befooling the British police and intelligence. Sometimes he could be found taking shelter among the women, inside the restricted parts of the houses. How could the British police find him out? The British police searched every nook and corner to get him but in vain. In this way he stayed in each and every home of the villagers as one of their own. What a great risk the villagers had taken, because to provide shelter to Surya Sen meant to invite the wrath of the British government and resultant ruination. Still they saved him by holding him tight to their breasts. Imagine only because of what an enormous support and heartfelt love of the people for him it was possible. Knowing fully well how the police had been searching for him everywhere, had been offering the temptation of big amount of money as price of his head, he refused to leave Chattagram. Many repeatedly requested him to leave Chattagram. Sarat Chandra Bose (The Congress leader and elder brother of Netaji Subhas) wrote to him, "I've sent money. Get out of there." Surya Sen replied, "I will be here and conduct the organisational activities." He remained in the villages there by hoodwinking the all powerful British imperialism. No other revolutionary of that era could build up such mass base. On this question also Masterda was peerless.

He created some extraordinary women characters like Pritilata, Kalpana, etc. There was a difference of opinion within the organisation over the question of enrollment of women. One even left the party on this issue. In those days there was a general debate on whether women should take part in political activities. Many argued that the women could at best spin yarns on charka. They should not take part in the meetings, processions etc. The question of taking part in revolutionary activities could not be imagined even. This was the outlook deep rooted in the society, under the influence of feudal thinking. Saratchandra vehemently opposed this outlook, saying "The freedom movement in which there is no link, no participation of women, where women have been kept confined within the walls of homes to spin yarns, that freedom cannot be achieved, even if achieved, that cannot endure." He urged upon the youth saying, "Women must be by the side of men in the pursuit of freedom. I know if it is done, the slander mongers will hurl slanders. Let them slander. We can't stop our work for that." Masterda translated this call into action. Among the revolutionaries the women were at best involved in such works like carrying secret letters, carrying revolvers under the cover of their sarees etc., not in anything more than that. At first, till 1930, Surya Sen also thought in the same way. Later he changed his

mind. The women volunteers of his organisation began to insist on taking up arms and participating in direct armed offensive. On that count Pritilata was his successful creation. He involved Pritilata into the battle and she fought and embraced a martyr's death providing leadership in the battle. The purpose of it was to uphold a woman character as a revolutionary before the country. Earlier, in all such actions invariably the leadership had been provided by men. When Surya Sen asked Pritilata to lead the team, she asked, "Why me? The male members are there." Masterda replied, "No, it is you who will lead, and you can." He upheld an example before the whole country that not only men, women also could sacrifice lives as a revolutionary. At the time of martyrdom Pritilata was only 21 years old. Belonging to a poor family, just had got the job as a teacher, yet she did not hesitate for a moment to sacrifice her life at the call of the motherland. When Pritilata was finally going out of her home, she wrote a letter to her mother. If you go through it, you cannot hold your tears. While leaving, her mother told her to go after taking the meal. She did not have even time for that. When her mother tried to embrace her, she darted out. Pritilata's mother could not realize at all that her dear daughter Pritilata had rushed out to plunge into a deadly venture. On the day before her martyrdom, Pritilata wrote a letter to her mother, the emotional appeal in it cannot but touch the heart of a conscientious man. She wrote, "O mother, don't cry out in that way. See, I am going to die for the sake of truth, for the sake of freedom. Don't you find joy in it? What else can we do? The country is in bondage! The people of our country are tormented due to foreign oppression. Our motherland is insulted, humiliated, bent down under the weight of shackles. Will you be bearing all this in silence? Can't you sacrifice one of your daughters for freedom? Will you be shedding tears only?" As if this appeal was written to all the bereaved mothers of the martyrs dedicated to the altar of freedom. Can you imagine? A woman of only 21 made this appeal! In those days there were no political study circles, political classes, nor so much theoretical discussions, etc. Yet this kind of woman character flourished. Such was that era! There was very strong influence of ethics and human values within the society. Just on the eve of her self-sacrifice this revolutionary lady sharply criticizing the feudal outlook and mental make-up, prevailing in our society, regarding the role of women of the revolutionary trend in the freedom movement, wrote, "I have got something to say to my countrymen. Many of them may think how it is that an Indian woman, throwing all her indigenous education and culture to the wind, can involve in the gruesome act like 'homicide'. I cannot but wonder how discrimination between men and women could be

made in the struggle for freedom. ...When men and women worked side by side in civil disobedience movement, then why women will not be allowed to work together with men in the revolutionary movement? Is it due to the fact that the process is different or that the women are unfit? It's nothing new for the women taking up arms. In all countries where revolution were successful, there the women joined by hundreds. Why shall it be so deplorable in India alone? If ability is the yardstick of judgment, is it not unjustified to always consider the women as less able than men in the freedom struggle? Time has come to get rid of this false notion'. After these words she wrote expressing hope, "I believe our sisters will forsake their weaknesses and join the revolutionary organisation by thousands." It is necessary to mention here that at first Masterda did not want Pritilata to give away her life in the battle. Pritilata herself, through her repeated appeals convinced him that her sacrifice of life would set an example before the country. That like men, women also can sacrifice their lives in revolutionary movement, if such an example can be created, the women of the country would be inspired to join the revolutionary struggle by thousands – with this argument she obtained permission of Masterda. Think for a moment, leaving what an unforgettable appeal and with what a dream, this unparalleled woman character of Masterda's organisation sacrificed her life! In those days and also today, how much value have the men and women of this country been able to attach to that? Even today, if women participate in the service of the country, political movements and revolutionary activities, what a storm of questions, criticism and opposition is created? Just think, Pritilata belonged to a lower middle class family, after completing studies just got a teacher's job. Had she done the job it could have brought solvency in the family and happiness in the minds of her parents. Pritilata had deep love for them. Yet to her, their tears never surpassed the tears of countless people, of society and motherland.

Even the boys of Muslim families joined Masterda's organisation, because in his organisation religion was considered as a matter of personal belief. It never created any barrier in political or social movement or day to day mixing and behavior. He conquered the hearts of many, educated and uneducated Muslim men and women, who provided shelter to him in spite of the risk of their lives. Like Pritilata, he decided, to assign a Muslim youth, Mir Ahmed, some revolutionary task so that he could also create a historic example, by fulfilling that. That youth, while in jail, happily accepted the responsibility to deliver death sentence to the tyrant English jailor. But unfortunately that attempt could not be successful. While Mir was in jail, Masterda

took shelter in his house, along with some of his followers in the guise of Kshirodbabu, for some days. Mir's mother did not know Masterda. One night she prepared sweets made of palm juice, which all of them were relishing. While serving them sweets the old woman ruefully said, "How I wish I could see your Masterda for once! It would be a pleasure if I could feed him!" Kshirodbabu said smiling, "I can make you meet him aunt if you give me some more sweets. But do you know the British has announced a bounty on his head? So there is danger in seeing him" The anxious old woman said "Then leave it. I need not see him. May Allah keep him alive!" Surya Sen did not forget her wish. He told his colleagues to inform her that she had seen Surya Sen and he had enjoyed her sweets. After being released from Andaman they met her and gave her the information. This very small incident reveals another aspect of Masterda's sensitive heart.

Surya Sen never did deliver long speeches, nor did do long discussions. In a very few words he used to say something in such a manner that it touched one's heart, aroused one's conscience. This appealing discussions, sensitive behavior, simplicity and earnestness, simple lifestyle, a caring mind all these created an irresistible attraction towards him among others. The boys and girls considered themselves fortunate if they could find a chance to talk to him, to be introduced to him for once. He told them, "Once, we are born, death is inevitable, when to die, is it not proper dying a worthy death? We will embrace death that will come in our effort to break the shackles of slavery of the millions." Life and death had no different bearing to this great revolutionary. In victory or defeat, success or failure, pain or pleasure, grave crises or disaster, he always remained calm, unwavered and determined. In those days among the revolutionary groups there was the custom of obeying the leader's instructions without any question. In this matter also Masterda's approach was completely different. He used to say, "Don't accept any ideal or any argument if you cannot accept it from within" that is, "Let nothing be accepted without judging it by reason, not blindly or mechanically, not even if I tell that." He also said, "It's true we kill, but we kill the oppressive rulers. Thieves and dacoits also kill. But we are not killers of that type. For the good of the country we have to fight against the enemy and in course of that battle we have to kill. But no less is our love for the humanity." He also referred to a comment of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, who once said, "If love for motherland is a crime, then we are also criminals." Masterda said, "We have no mercy, no compassion, only love for our motherland is everything and that's all. Freedom is our only desire." This also echoes the

historic comment of Sabyasachi in the novel 'Pather Dabi' of Saratchandra, "I have no compassion, no mercy, no affection. Virtue and vice all are ridiculous to me... My only contemplation is India's freedom. My well being, ill being, everything is that."

In another discussion Masterda said, "The country is first, creed, justice and truth come later. Whether the struggle of the revolutionaries is just, truthful and legitimate that is the essential question." Here you remember another observation of Sabyasachi in this context. We can see its influence here too, though Saratchandra's thinking was much more developed. He said, "You say, 'Absolute truth', 'Eternal truth'. Those meaningless phrases appear to be very valuable to you. There can be no better magical chant than this to befool the ignorant. You think only lies need be created and truth is absolute, eternal and beyond human capabilities to create? It's a lie. Like lies mankind has always been creating truth also. It is not absolute, nor eternal – it has its birth and death too. I do not lie; I create truth if need be." To create truth when it is needed does not mean that I tell whatever I like according to my need and that becomes truth. Here the word 'truth' is related to the need of social emancipation, to the need of emancipation of civilisation, it is to search out new truths in that purpose. When the old truth or concept, in course of time, in a new situation turns obsolete, in that sense it becomes a lie, it becomes a necessity to discover new ideals or truth suitable to the new age. So newer ideals, that is the new truth, appears for the sake of emancipation of the society and civilisation. So there is no such thing as eternal truth. Although not so clearly stated, Masterda's words, 'the country comes first; creed, justice, truth come much later', contained this concept. It can be understood that in those days arose the question whether the revolutionary struggle was consistent with creed, truth and legitimacy. Masterda spoke those words to answer that. Masterda, on one hand, was very strict in the matter of fulfilling duty on the other he was very tender and soft in love and affection. His colleagues and followers viewed him as a father, such was the relation. When he sent someone to fight knowing well about his sure death Masterda's face flushed with pain and compassion, as if a rib of his breast were falling apart. Yet he never became moved.

We found another great aspect of Masterda's character in the battle of Jalalabad. He was the commander in chief, but at the time of the battle he gave the command to Lokenath Bal, while he himself fought under his leadership as an ordinary soldier. The soldiers were in the line. The commander was Lokenath Bal. They saluted him. Masterda saluted him too. The fight went on according to the directions and planning of Masterda. But he was fighting under the command of

his chosen commander. Amidst the barrage of the enemy's fire he moved from place to place to find where the enemy was more vulnerable, there the attack could be launched and on the side they were strong that was to be avoided. He supplied ammunitions to the soldiers, when exhausted, and replaced the damaged arms and sent them for repairing. Again, think of the moment when he was coming out from Jalalabad, at the end of the battle – the bullet-riddled bodies of his sons, dearer than his own life, were lying all around and he was looking at them again and again with tearful eyes. How dear was each and every face! With how much care and love he had nurtured them! Many emotional memories created a storm in his mind! Tears were becoming uncontrollable as he had to bid goodbye to them forever! But he had to, because as long as they were alive they would have to continue the struggle. So it had to be resumed afresh. Collecting the papers that the brave soldiers had been carrying with them, all stood in a row to offer the gallant fighters the last revolutionary salute. Just imagine, each of them was but like a son to him! 15 days after the martyrdom of Pritilata Waddedar, Masterda, on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami (The last day of Durga pooja in Bengal on which the idol of Goddess Durga is disposed in river water. A very emotional festival in Bengal fraught with a sense of departure of a daughter.) wrote a piece named 'Vijaya' so touching to one's heart, "Today I remember how many beautiful and precious jewels who, viewing all the happiness, wealth and luxuries of life as trifles, have dedicated their lives for the freedom of the motherland without any wavering or hesitation! At the feat of joy they willingly plunged unto the lap of death! By turning how many affectionate mothers' lap void I have snatched their golden dolls and offered them for sacrifice at the altar of freedom! How many have I sent behind the bars, exile and deportation! In how many homes have I caused the outburst of lamentations; invited the government's tortures and repressions on the people of the country! How can I absolve myself of it? Am I doing any wrong? I still hold on to my conviction that I am not doing any wrong, nor committing any sin. The torture, the wail of lamentations that has been created in our country due to the battle for freedom, compared to that much more had been there in all other countries. With fullest confidence on my ideology I am treading my own path. Yet there has been no hesitation. ... Am I doing wrong only because it causes tears of so many mothers, heart-rending lamentations of so many fathers, piercing sighs of so many brothers and sisters? But I think I have been in the right path. So, though being sad to see cremation grounds coming up all around, I have held in tight

the swell of tears in my heart with the hope that one day monuments of freedom would be built on those sacred cremation grounds.”

This small portion of Masterda’s composition shows as a great patriot and revolutionary fighter, what a great character and higher emotional values he possessed and how determined he was in following the ideals of freedom struggle. Every line of this composition reflects what can be the bereaved state of mind of a great revolutionary leader, after the sacrifice of lives of the extremely dear and affectionate disciples, brought up with immeasurable love and care. In another portion of this very composition he wrote about Pritilata. “... Today I remember most the immaculate, innocent and sacrosanct golden idol, whom, just fifteen days ago, I dressed up with weapon in one hand and nectar in the other, and sent for immersion...whom I myself had dressed in a hero’s attire and sent to the battle field, gave her permission to plunge into the lap of sure death, after adorning her when I said gloomily, ‘Here I dress you up for the last time. Your Dada (the elder brother) will never do so again’, she flashed a smile, how sad the smile was, how many issues of pleasure, melancholy and sentiment were inherent in that! I had so much affection for her because she had the possession of so many qualities — I gave her the whole of my heart and in return got immeasurable joy, joy that I never had in my life ... may be because I took you as so close to me, I often rebuked you so harshly for your slightest fault or for no fault at all. May be sometimes I did hurt you by wrongly understanding you. I had so deep affection for you that is why I never hesitated to scold you. Somehow I felt that however I might scold you, you would never be aggrieved with me and in fact you had never been. May be you have gone with a sentiment as I rebuked you at the last moment.... as I let you suffer in the last moment due to that my mental peace is being tormented day and night....”

In this country not only the British Government, in those days, but those who were compromising and anti-revolution, they also let loose a campaign that the revolutionaries were cruel, killers, having no emotion or compassion whatsoever. What do you feel after reading this extract from masterda's writing? That’s why the great Marxist thinker, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, “Politics calls for noble feelings of heart. Nobler still is the feeling that spurs on to revolutionary politics.” (Selected Works Vol-3, Speech in the memorial meeting of Subodh Banerjee) Being impressed by Pritilata’s outstanding character, Masterda, in profound emotion and affection, wrote in a unique literary style, “A sacred flower full of serene grace and splendour came to a humble worshiper with irresistible urge to become a tribute to the Mother’s

feet. How great she thought the priest to be and held him in high esteem with the hope to be dedicated to the Mother! The priest took the flower with great care, was charmed by its unblemished purity and fragrance, respected her seeing the eagerness to be a tribute to the Mother's feet. Finally helped to fulfil her dream by placing at the Mother's feet." You can well understand from this piece of writing how the mind of the man was. The 'Mother' repeatedly referred to is the motherland, the country. Actually, the country means the countrymen, and the freedom struggle was meant to mitigate the sufferings of the countrymen. At the altar of that freedom he made offerings of Pritilata and others.

Just think for a moment. Can a nation or a country rise up if they forget the outstanding characters like Masterda, Pritilata etc! Can a nation stand erect? But we have forgotten them. As a result of the 'good governance' of the leaders of the parties in power we have made so much 'progress'! But these revolutionary characters were born in this land during the age of freedom movement. What is the condition of free India today? Is it real freedom? Did those freedom fighters dream of such freedom? Did they sacrifice their lives for this kind of freedom? Where we have come and stood today! Today, looking at this country, submerged in the total darkness, devoid of any ethics and morality, can anybody imagine that once those brilliant characters lit the shining flame of humanity? If it was possible in India chained by imperialist rule, then why in the free India there is so great a crisis of moral character?

The Indian capitalism has not only reduced the people into pauper and bankrupt beggars on the street, but also it has destroyed their humanity. 74 years ago, in 1927, Saratchandra, the boldest representative of the uncompromising revolutionary trend of the renaissance of our country, observing how capitalism is out to destroy humanity, said with a feeling of deep pain, in his novel 'Sreekanta', 'How, on the pretext of civility, the greed of the rich can convert human beings into heartless beasts, within only these two days this experience got stored in me for whole life. ... The civilised men seems to have understood well enough that unless men are converted into beasts, the beastly services cannot be exacted from them.'" So he said in great sorrow, "Man's death does not hurt me much, but I feel hurt if I see the death of humanity." In 1974, 47 years after this statement, while discussing in a workers' rally at Durgapur how the bourgeois ruling class is conspiring to crush mass movement, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the leader and guide of the emancipation struggle of the proletariat, said, "The ruling class in India is engaged in a conspiracy to totally destroy that very moral character of the nation. They are

shrewd to the bone; they know that even by extreme oppression and repression, and by keeping starved, a nation or people cannot for long be kept under the boot by police and military alone. The history of oppression and tyranny of the despotic rulers of all ages tells but one thing — that no amount of brutal and coercive forces of the police and the military can ultimately defend the rule of injustice, or put down the organized power of the people. People's power asserts itself and stands up if the masses can keep their moral strength intact and find the correct revolutionary ideology. The Indian bourgeoisie, the ruling clique, has not learnt the good part of the lesson of history. Devils as they are, being the exploiting rulers, they have not failed to take that part of it which serves their need — that is to destroy the moral-ethical strength and ruin the very character of the nation. In that event, people, being starved, will only whine like dogs even when oppressed hundred times and more, they will only vent their grievances, and may even, at times, burst into sporadic revolts but will fail to give birth to the organized revolutionary movement — they will fail to organize revolution.”(Selected Works Vol-3) This is why he put so much emphasis, again and again, on the cult of higher sense of ethics, culture and morality. He repeatedly pleaded to the students and youths to learn from the great men of the past, from the pioneers of the Renaissance and from the character and struggle of the revolutionaries.

Remember, considering the stage of movement we belong to, we are yet to encounter the ordeals that Surya Sen, Pritilata and others did. We are now at the stage of democratic movement. However, even at this stage we are facing the torture and repression by the state. In the days to come when we will be preparing for revolutionary insurrection, the terrible and violent attacks of the state will come down on us. Taking lessons from them we will have to face that situation. To remember the past means to take lessons from these personalities and cull the truth from that.

Here we should remember that following the Chittagong uprising in 1930, another high tide of revolutionary movement arose within the country. From different incidents the fact that the pent up grievance of the masses developed, as gun powder, to the extent of explosion and the people in general and the students and youths in particular became ready to plunge into the vortex of struggle that was becoming evident. In Medinipur the revolutionaries began to deliver death sentence and execute one after another tyrant British District Magistrates. The revolutionary youths there made the open challenging vow that they would not let any of the British rulers return alive from there, and they kept that to the letter and spirit. Bimal Dasgupta

executed the tyrant District Magistrate Peddy. Following him Douglas and Berge were also executed in the same manner. In Medinipur the British rulers became terrified. On the other hand in Coomilla (Now in Bangladesh) Shanti and Suniti, two school girls, in a daring attempt, fired at the Superintendent of Police. In Dhaka the death sentence was delivered to the S.P. One after another such revolutionary activities continued to occur. These incidents caused a tremendous stir throughout the country. Due to the impact of it the Indian soldiers at Peshawar refused to fire on the unarmed people and went for a mutiny. The struggling people set fire to the police station at Keshpur in Maharashtra. All these incidents occurred continuously following the revolutionary uprising in Chattagram. In the wake of it broke out the August Revolution of 1942. The second government was formed at Tamluk in Medinipur. It was named as Independent Tamralipta Government. Similar uprising occurred in Balia, UP. After Chattagram one after another independent governments came into being. Later the formation of the Azad-Hind Fauz and the gallant fight led by Subhaschandra Bose during the Second World War is an unforgettable history. All these armed revolutionary struggles were inspired by the Chittagong uprising. In the same manner the Naval Mutiny struck in 1946. Just think, what a situation was created within the country in the wake of the Chittagong uprising! An explosive revolutionary situation was prevailing in the entire country, seeing which the frightened British imperialism, the national capitalist class and their agents, the rightist compromising Congress leadership quickly arranged the transfer of power, agreeing to partition of the country. Had there been a real Marxist Party at that time, could this have happened? The consciousness for struggle and the anti-British sentiment prevailing among the people and even within the Army could have taken the shape of a revolutionary insurrection had there been a real Marxist leadership. At that time those who had been there known as Marxists, instead of doing that they did just the opposite. While in 1925, Stalin, the great leader of world communist movement, said to those known as communists in India, 'The Indian big bourgeoisie afraid of workers' revolution were compromising with imperialism and opposing revolutionism. In this situation the communists should make common cause with the petty bourgeois or middle-class revolutionism, isolate the compromising national bourgeoisie and make the revolution a success.' At that time it was possible because various revolutionary groups not only pitted the leadership of leftist Subhaschandra Bose as an alternative to rightist Gandhiji, but made him victorious as the President of the National Congress defeating the candidate of Gandhiji. Next, in the Tripuri Congress, the rightist

leadership, in the interest of the national capitalist class compromising with the British imperialism, conspired to corner Subhaschandra, compelled him to resign and finally expelled him from the National Congress. At that time, the then communist party, instead of standing by Subhaschandra as per Stalin's guideline, sided with the rightist Congress leadership or for that matter the big national bourgeoisie. Even when Netaji, in order to unite all the Indian Leftists, invited them to the historic Ramgarh conference, they did not respond. But under the leadership of the great leader Mao-Tse-Tung, the Communist Party of China, following Stalin's guideline, did unite with the petty-bourgeois revolutionary leadership of Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen and afterwards made the revolution successful under the leadership of the working class. What the Communist Party of China could successfully do, why did they fail to do that? Because they were communists by name only; in reality that party could not develop with the characteristics of a Marxist party at all. Hence the tragic end to such a glorious freedom struggle of our country. Out of correct understanding of this tragedy and with a view to fulfilling the unfulfilled dream of the great men and the revolutionaries of those days, and for the need of unshackling the exploited masses, emerged the leadership of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, making Marxism, the most advanced revolutionary ideology of this era, the weapon.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was a soldier of the revolutionary trend of freedom movement. In course of his journey he accepted Marxism as the philosophy of life. It was he who upheld the concretised form of Marxism in Indian soil. It is very important for us, who want to fight, build up movement and achieve the real freedom of the people at large, to understand struggle for correct application of Marxism in our soil. Had we not come in contact of the thoughts of the great Marxist thinker, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the deep respect towards Masterda, the outlook and attitude to learn from and emulate his life and struggle, with which you have organised this memorial meeting and all of us have assembled here, including myself, would not have done so and come here at all. Had we not been in contact with the real revolutionary party built up by Comrade Ghosh on the basis of correct understanding of Marxism, in this soil, we also like others would have been swept away by the current of heinous, power greedy politics. In that case we also, in the name of politics, would have practiced out and out vulgarism, unbridled corruption, falsehood, hypocrisy and self-centrism, which all other ruling and so-called opposition parties at the Centre or states, have been indulging in today. We could not do that,

because Comrade Ghosh has aroused our conscience and humanity and has shown us the way to live life as a real man. He said, we cannot move an inch in present day mass struggle and revolutionary movement unless we learn from the revolutionaries of the past. Unless we assimilate the lessons of their character we can understand neither Marxism nor proletarian revolution. Here I cannot but refer to one of his observations pertinent to the present context. He said, "...the high moral, ethical, cultural and aesthetic standard of political and literary – cultural movement that was once attained in our country, has fallen down. As a result, we have become rootless. So, we talk big, but do not cultivate noble emotions and delicate feelings. No movement is a mere intellectual exercise or a matter of intellect only; it demands both intellect and emotion. Revolution, too, is not an exception. Thoughts are advancing, if emotion, feelings lag behind, then surely a gap would appear between the two. In that case, the movement as well as the thought would eventually go astray, leading to a blind alley. I note with deep anguish the absence of ethics and morality at all levels of the present-day mass movement in our country.... ...the thing that strikes me time and again is that the moral and ethical basis and the cultural tune of the very base of all these movements have completely collapsed – today most of the movements are virtually reduced to slogan-mongering. That is why, in wave after wave movements are surging forth, cries do reverberate – ‘change we want, revolution we aspire for’. Men are dying, youths are sacrificing their lives; but no change is forthcoming, no revolution is taking place. Changes will never come through such sporadic movements that are thoroughly devoid of culture and ethics – however sincerely you may struggle, however much sacrifices be made. If the mass movements are guided on the basis of definite political objective and morality, then and only then the moral backbone of the nation can be restored.” (An Evaluation of Saratchandra, Selected Works, Vol-3) He said further, ‘we have to revive a link to the renaissance of this land and imbibe the high tone of culture that had developed in course of the freedom movement and the virtues of the great men and the sublime character of the revolutionaries of the era. On the other hand he said that the fight of that era was against feudalism and imperialism, while ours is against capitalism. So the standard of the ideal and character of that era will not be enough in the proletarian revolutionary movement of today. So a difference must be there. (“...we have become rootless today. We are failing to maintain continuity with the high cultural standard attained during the days of our freedom movement. Lofty phrases we are culling from the outside world no doubt, but we have lost the link with the high cultural tune that had once developed on

our own soil. We have to establish that link once again, although a contradiction with it is inevitable today...”, (An Evaluation of Saratchandra, Selected Works Vol-3) Today we have to fight against capitalism, making the revolutionary ideology of Marxism, proletarian internationalism and proletarian culture the weapon, as descendants of the great men of Renaissance and revolutionaries of freedom movement. So first we shall have to assimilate and exhaust the high standard of those days and then transcending that must attain the higher standard of ideology and culture of proletarian revolution. So he taught us to take and cull the lessons from that era first and then attain higher and newer standard by surpassing that. If we don't assimilate from that era, then we will be rootless, unable to attain the new ideology and culture. We will only learn tall talks and babble that but can't attain character, can't be true Marxists. Thus, the only object of gathering here to pay our tribute to Masterda is that we should be able to learn from the great revolutionary struggles, from the outstanding revolutionary characters of those days. I have come here and taken part in this discussion as a disciple of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh with the purpose to recollect and take lessons from the unforgettable character, struggle and sacrifice and carry forward the struggle against the most hated enemy of civilization and mankind today, the capitalism, making the great Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh thoughts the weapon. With this object in view I have placed here a few points as an appeal to your conscience. That's all.