

SHAHEED-E-AZAM
BHAGAT SINGH
A MARXIST OUTLOOK

PROVASH GHOSH

Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)

Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh — A Marxist Outlook
— Provash Ghosh

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Publisher's Note

On the occasion of the Birth Centenary of Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh a discussion was organized on 28th September 2008 in Kolkata at the joint initiative of AIDS0, AIDYO and KOMSOMOL to pay tribute to this great revolutionary taking lesson from his life and struggle. Comrade Provash Ghosh, the General Secretary of our party SUCI (Communist) was the speaker of this meeting. He dealt with many aspects of the life and thoughts of the great martyr Bhagat Singh in his discussion. During publication of this speech Comrade Provash Ghosh has edited his speech and added many important points. The book was, first, published in Bengali. Now, it is rendered in English.

31 July, 2016
48, Lenin Sarani
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Shaheed-e-Azam
Bhagat Singh
A Marxist Outlook

We have assembled here to pay our deep respect to Bhagat Singh, the unforgettable and courageous soldier, a martyr of the freedom movement, on the occasion of his birth centenary. Bhagat Singh, whose glowing patriotism, invincible courage, undaunted spirit, unshakable belief in his convictions, depth of knowledge and uncompromising search for truth led him to sacrifice himself on the gallows with pride and honour, as a result of which his countrymen in deep respect adorned his name with the title '*Shaheed-E-Azam*'. It is Bhagat Singh, against whose death sentence and after whose execution, a wave of protest and agitations surged in all the cities and villages across the length and breadth of India, thousands faced the lathis and bullets of the police to boldly voice their protest. It is Bhagat Singh to save whose precious life Subhas Chandra himself had rushed to Gandhiji requesting him to put forward the annulment of Bhagat Singh's death sentence as a precondition in the impending talks with Lord Irwin, the then British Governor; but Gandhiji did not comply with this request for which he was shown black flag and had to face an agitation in the All India Congress Committee session in Karachi.

While paying respect to this great revolutionary, I have to ask how many of our countrymen are remembering him today? The ruling bourgeoisie and the big parliamentary parties of independent India through their benevolent rule have created such progress in our country that the glorious memories of our great men and the revolutionary warriors have almost sunk into oblivion. It is only our party SUCI(C) who has not forgotten

them. This is because the founder of our party, our teacher and the great Marxist thinker and leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has taught us that to acquire a noble character today in order to be worthy of carrying the banner of proletarian revolution, firstly, we will have to achieve the various qualities from the characters of the great men of the Renaissance along with the martyrs and revolutionaries of the freedom movement, and learn from their life-struggles. Thereafter, we will have to cross this level and struggle to acquire a greater proletarian revolutionary character.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had realized the crisis of ethics and morality in capitalist India and with deep concern he said, "I cannot but emphasize here that a nation going without food, suffering the worst kind of oppression and exploitation, and half-fed and half-clad for days together can also stand up, fight, acquire the power to combat, organize itself and rise up holding its head high, provided its moral strength remains intact and the people have a correct ideology before them. ...The ruling class in India is engaged in a conspiracy to totally destroy that very moral character of the nation. They are shrewd to the bone. ...The Indian bourgeoisie, the ruling clique, has not learnt the good part of the lesson of history. Devils as they are, being the exploiting ruler, 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."⁽¹⁾ He further said, "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... We are completely cut off from the

cultural heritage of the past – we have become rootless today. We are failing to maintain continuity with the high cultural standard attained during the day 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.”⁽²⁾ Being inspired by his teachings, our party was the first to begin observing the days including 23rd March, in which the revolutionaries sacrificed themselves along with the commemorative days in respect to other great men with due honour as a noble movement, so that we can derive lessons from their life-struggles and fulfill the necessity of acquiring a humanist revolutionary character as an indispensable necessity for the next stage, that is, to acquire proletarian revolutionary character. Today, as we are observing this 23rd day of March at Mahajati Sadan in Kolkata, likewise our workers are observing this martyrs’ day in various states of the country. In this assemblage, while paying respect to this great revolutionary, I would like to remind you all, in particular the students and youth of the present times, of some chapters of the past which have been sunk into oblivion.

How many, belonging to the present times are aware that on 23rd March, 1931, at 7:21 pm, Bhagat Singh, Sukdev and Rajguru raised the slogan – ‘Long live revolution. Down with imperialism-capitalism’ boldly and resoundingly before their voices were stopped for the last time on the gallows by the noose. I would like to remind you that as martyrs of the freedom movement of this country, they were the first to raise these two slogans. How many of our countrymen are aware that on 22nd March 1931, the day before Bhagat Singh was to mount the gallows, a few of his comrades sought his permission to take him out of prison in secrecy, to which he replied in writing after rejecting the proposal – “The desire to live is natural. It is in me also. I do not want to conceal it. But it is conditional. I don’t want to live as a prisoner or under restrictions. My name has become a symbol of Indian

revolution. If I escape gallows, this weakness will come before them and the symbol of revolution will get tarnished or perhaps it may vanish altogether. On the other hand, if I mount the gallows boldly and with a smile, that will inspire Indian mothers and they will aspire that their children should also become Bhagat Singh. Thus the number of persons ready to sacrifice their lives for the freedom of our country will increase enormously.”⁽³⁾ You think over that even though a proposal for an attempt to save his life was given, how this great revolutionary rejected it, preferring to mount the gallows only for the sake of inspiring the students and youth of the country, so that the mothers of India could prepare their children to sacrifice themselves at the altar of the freedom movement and the symbol of revolution could not be maligned. How many are aware today that when the veteran leader of Gadar Party, Sardar Sohan Singh, a prisoner of the British jail, asked Bhagat Singh just before his execution – ‘Bhagat, why did your relatives not come to see you?’ A smiling Bhagat Singh had replied – ‘My blood related relation lies with the martyr Kshudiram Bose and the martyr Kartar Singh Sarava. Our blood is alike, it has appeared from the same origin and will return there.’ Just observe how he had acknowledged his kinship with only martyrs and revolutionaries with the declaration that they belonged to the same bloodline.

An incident in Lahore Central Jail on the day of execution at noon is notable but unknown to the most of us. Sardar Chatar Singh, the Chief Warden of the jail brought a religious scripture to Bhagat Singh and requested him to read it; he knew that Bhagat Singh was an atheist and so he felt that Bhagat Singh should remind himself of god at least a few hours before his execution. Bhagat Singh rejected this proposal, and replied with a loud laughter, ‘If, in the last moments before my death, I take the name of ‘Lord’, He will definitely say, ‘look at this coward, he never thought of taking my name in his whole life, but now, facing the gallows, he is scared and so he is invoking my name.’ Far better it will be that I leave this world in the

same manner as I have lived in it. It is true that some people have condemned me as an atheist, but at least nobody will call me a coward or traitor to my beliefs. None will be able to say that at the final moments, while facing death, his legs start trembling with fear.’ Just think of his conviction in his own ideology and strength of belief in atheism, to say this in such an undaunted manner in the final moments before his death.

I would like to say something in the very beginning of the discussion, that is, in order to realise the character, the ideas and thoughts of the martyr Bhagat Singh, I have decided to read out the excerpts from some of his valuable speeches and writings. For, it is my considered opinion that since the cult of these noble characters have been completely and deliberately stopped in this country, many are not acquainted with their ideas and thoughts, which, if they come to know, would overwhelm them with profound astonishment. Moreover these ideas and thoughts are extremely valuable, educative and very much relevant till now.

Before discussing the several chapters of the extra ordinary and unforgettable life-struggle of this great revolutionary fighter who of only 23, we have to ask ourselves, how could such a character emerged in the then India subordinated to the chains of British imperialism. In respect to this, the great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, “We shall have to realize that qualities and attainments do not fall from heaven – these are particular products of a particular struggle. I am not at one with those who believe that genius, personality, talent are in-born. In my opinion, man’s consciousness is always in contradiction and conflict with the environment in which he is born and lives. Actually man develops in conflict and contradiction with environment. In this very process of perpetual contradiction and conflict of man’s consciousness with the social environment – how and in what manner a man conducts this struggle and guided by which ideal, which morality, which outlook, and how ably he succeeds in conducting this struggle – on these solely depend what

character he will emerge with. Naturally, a genius, a personality, a talent, they are particular products of particular struggles.”⁽⁴⁾ Therefore, we are to comprehend the environment, the ideology and the manner of struggle of Bhagat Singh to acquire such an extraordinary character and talent. In that period, freedom movement against British imperialism was being waged and his family was directly involved in the freedom movement. It was in such a family that Bhagat Singh was born on 28th September in 1907. In this period, just as in the undivided Bengal, preparation for armed revolutionary struggle was going on in the undivided Punjab. The Punjabis returned from abroad, had built up ‘Gadar’ Party in the Punjab as the organizations like ‘Anushilan Samity’ and ‘Jugantar’ groups in Bengal. The very meaning of ‘Gadar’ is revolt and many in that party were influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. A few days before Bhagat Singh’s birth, his father Kishen Singh and his two uncles namely Ajit Singh and Swarna Singh, who were freedom fighters, had come home being released from the prison on bail. This gladdened his grandmother who began to call him (Bhagat Singh) ‘Bhaganwale’ which meant lucky. Later on, this nick name turned into his real name i.e. Bhagat Singh. Bhagat Singh’s grandfather belonged to ‘Arya Samaji’ sect and he had vowed to sacrifice Bhagat Singh and his elder brother in the altar of the freedom struggle of the country. Bhagat Singh, however came to know of this later on. He had seen his father and his uncles jailed several times due to their participation in the freedom movement. He had also seen his youngest uncle Swarna Singh die of tuberculosis in the prison after being tortured there severely. On watching his aunt weeping frequently, he used to console her by telling even at that young age – “When I grow up, I will take avenged by throwing out the British from this country.” Even at that early age, he had the opportunity to come in close contact with Punjab Keshri Lala Lajpat Rai, the revolutionary Rashbehari Bose along with other leaders of the freedom movement and revolutionaries at his home. His house became a centre of

political activities. In his early childhood the leaders like Kartar Singh Sarabha, one of the foremost leaders of Gadar Party, who had embraced martyrdom at a very young age of 20, and other leaders visited his house. He came to know it later on and the history helped him to develop his patriotic feelings. The indomitable character of Kartar Singh Sarabha, his sacrifice, his courage and undaunted spirit had inspired Bhagat Singh to a great extent and he used to keep a photograph of Kartar Singh Sarabha always in his pocket. It was in this environment that he began to grow up from adolescence, to his youth with the dream of building up himself as a worthy revolutionary fighter by accepting the ideology of the freedom movement of his country.

At this time, a heinous genocide by the British government made his dream stronger than ever. The incident was the ruthless mass-killing of Jalianwalabag and all of you know about it. At that time the British government promulgated the Rowlatt Act which after coming into effect banned all meetings, rallies or agitations against the government. Protests were started throughout the country against this Act and the Government tried to suppress this using savage force. The atrocities became most ferocious at Jalianwalabag in the undivided Punjab. On 13th April, 1919, in protest against the Rowlatt Act, about 20 thousand a crowd consisting of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, even ladies with their babies in laps assembled in Amritsar near the Golden Temple in the fields of Jalianwalabag. To enter there was a narrow lane. All the sides of Jalianwalabag were surrounded by walls. The crowd was listening intently to the speeches of the various speakers. All of a sudden at the order of General Dyer, the army blocked the narrow lane and started firing on the crowd without prior warning. 1500 rounds were fired indiscriminately and as there was no way out for the crowd, more than a thousand men, women and children died on the spot. Several thousands were severely injured and many of them died in the hospital. A storm of protest arose in the

country and Rabindranath Tagore denounced his Knighthood. The ruthless genocide tremendously shocked and perturbed twelve years old Bhagat Singh to such an extent that next day from the school he went to Jalianwalabag directly by bus instead of returning home. Bhagat Singh stood there and heard the cries of innumerable grief-stricken people. Somehow controlling his tears, he stared unblinkingly at the soil stained in the blood of thousands. In deep respect Bhagat Singh touched his head to the blood soaked soil, filled a small bottle with it and then returned home. He could not eat anything on that day. He showed his entire family the bottle filled with the blood soaked soil. Every day Bhagat Singh used to pay respect to this bottle of blood soaked soil and take vow. Apart from this, the deep-seated agony for the impoverished used to perturb his mind. The anti-imperialist freedom movement in the country, the deplorable life of the poor multitude, the environment of freedom movement at home, the imprisonment of his father and uncles, the death of his younger uncle in the prison, the martyrdom of Kartar Singh Sarabha and above all the ruthless killing at Jalianwalabag influenced Bhagat Singh to such an extent that he relinquished the hopes and desires of a conventional life and decided to embrace the revolutionary ideology as the only object in his life. Think of the fact that he was only 12 at that time.

The beginning of Bhagat Singh's direct political life started at the age of 14 years when he was a student of Class IX. At that time, non-cooperation movement was continuing across the length and breadth of the country. Bhagat Singh plunged into this movement and like others, he too engaged himself in collecting and burning foreign clothes. The elderly amongst you may perhaps remember that at the very moment when this movement was spreading throughout the country and gaining strength, Gandhiji, being angry with an incident at Chourichoura, suddenly decided to call off the movement. Here, I would like to discuss certain relevant political issues. You are aware that Gandhiji was very much opposed to armed

revolution and as a student of Tolstoy, he was a believer in the creed of non-violence of 'Ahimsa'. He was unaware of the fact that this belief in non-violence was acting in the interest of the Indian national bourgeoisie very much afraid of an armed revolution by the working class. Not for a moment did he believe that in a class divided society, any individual, knowingly or unknowingly is compelled to think in the interest of either the bourgeoisie or the working class. So, the outlook of Gandhiji practically opposed the revolutionary ideology in the interest of British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. British imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, from the very beginning regarded him as a friend and ally instead of an enemy. In respect of this, let me read out to you the views of the British historian Michael Edwards – "The British felt that they had little to fear from Gandhiji himself, for they soon recognized him for what he was – an anti-western reformer. As long as Gandhiji was in control of the Congress, they knew they had an ally. As long as civil-disobedience remained non-violent, it did not greatly worry the government. ... Gandhiji's whole aim was to minimize violence; the government's was the same ... but if once Gandhiji ceased to dominate Congress, the machine he had built up might well be used by more dynamic and violent people. A full scale rebellion could not be crushed, So the government obliged Gandhiji by treating him with considerable respect – jailing him occasionally to keep up appearance – while they took much more positive action against terrorists and those western-styled revolutionaries whom they really feared."⁽⁵⁾

Gandhiji used to remark honestly – 'Non-violence is my creed'. He even said further, "Obviously, I am putting an emphasis on non-violence from the standpoint of principle. Even if I am assured that India would gain freedom through armed struggle, I would surely reject it."⁽⁶⁾ So, he did not support martyrs like Kshudiram, Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Surya Sen and others, on the contrary he used to think that these revolutionaries were damaging the freedom

movement and even conceived that they were not patriots. He opposed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose tooth and nail for the same reason. It was Gandhiji's desire to conduct the non-cooperation movement in his planned path of non-violence. However, at Chaurichoura in Uttar Pradesh, the British police fired on a peaceful assembly killing a number of persons. Then the infuriated crowd attacked the police station in which several policemen were killed. Gandhiji concluded that this act was a 'Himalayan blunder' and called off the non-cooperation movement all of a sudden. To him even though police had shot and killed people in a peaceful and unarmed assembly, it was very much an unjust action on the part of the excited crowd to attack the police station. He didn't even express any sorrow or condemn the killing of the unarmed villagers by the police. The decision by Gandhiji to call off the movement was vigorously opposed by the leaders like Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. The great revolutionary litterateur Saratchandra in an extreme mortification and rage remarked – "Mahatmaji has committed a great blunder. To stop the movement at this stage literally means throttling the movement, thus causing its untimely death. The scope of mass revolution is completely destroyed. ... Will there be no bloodshed in the liberation struggle of such a vast country? Of course, there shall occur bloodshed. A river of blood shall flow and in that current shall blossom the blood red lotus of freedom. Where is the ground for grievance in this? What for will we grieve? Why will we repent? Non-violence is a noble idea, but achievement of freedom is hundred times nobler."⁽⁷⁾ Later on Saratchandra had even remarked – "Gandhiji is surrounded by the capitalists. His real fear is from socialism and revolution."⁽⁸⁾ Bhagat Singh was too young then to realize all this sort of politics. However the movement being halted broke his heart and cut him to the quick which roused some questions in him.

After this incident, he left school responding to the call – "Education can wait but struggle for Swaraj cannot." Sometime

later, he admitted himself to Lahore National College which had been established by the leaders of the freedom movement. Here he came in contact with a number of nationalist teachers and it was here that he availed himself of the opportunity of studying many books and magazines of various countries which developed his patriotic mind, thinking faculty. It was from this time onwards that an intense thirst for knowledge, an untiring truth seeking mind and a keen rational outlook began to develop within him. He used to visit various libraries where he meticulously searched out books on philosophy, politics, economics and history of revolutionary movements of various countries and lives of great men and revolutionaries and read thoroughly all of which he had collected. The intensity of his inquisitiveness and endeavour at such an early age is rare indeed; he cultivated this practice not being inspired by any leader but on his own initiative. Though the qualities of patriotism, a mental frame to withstand cruel torture and an urge to sacrifice oneself were cultivated by the revolutionaries of that era, there was little urge for cultivation of theory or a struggle to acquire knowledge. The leaders too did not give much encouragement to this but put an emphasis on inspiring their cadres to sacrifice their lives for the country. Bhagat Singh was an exception to this. The books he read, he used to read meticulously. He also carried on discussions frequently on various issues and ideas he got from books with the professors and his friends and in these exchanges he used to put arguments or logic with a mind to understand. This cultivation of knowledge in the life of Bhagat Singh in this period had a significant role in his development in the subsequent years.

In this period, at the age of 16 only, the important struggle that Bhagat Singh had to release against his family and which resulted in his leaving home for ever, which was an education to the revolutionaries not only of that era, but even today. He had a very sweet relation with his family. He loved everybody, was loved by all also and he had deep respect for the elders. The conflict appeared when his father, according to the desires

of Bhagat Singh's grandmother took the initiative to arrange his marriage. Bhagat Singh objected to this strongly. Let me remind you that in that period, he did not belong to any party and there was no leader to guide him in this matter. In those days, whether a revolutionary worker would marry or not or what should be the approach to his family – in all these questions leaders in the revolutionary movement did not bother. They used to delegate some responsibility to the workers of an action programme and made plans to execute it. So, on the question of marriage, Bhagat Singh of 16 had to decide for himself and he said 'no' to his father, but finally with all efforts when had failed to dissuade his father, he wrote a letter to him, left home and came to Lahore. In this letter, he wrote – "Respected father, my life has already been committed to a noble cause – the cause of freedom of India. For that reason, comforts and worldly desires have no attraction in my life. You must be remembering that at the time of my sacred thread ceremony, when I was quite young, Bapuji (grandfather) had declared that I was being pledged for the service of the country. I am therefore honouring the pledge of that time. I hope you will excuse me."⁽⁹⁾ In reply his father wrote – "...Both you and me should honour your old grandmother's desire. Therefore, it is my instruction that you will not cause any hindrance in respect to the impending marriage and will prepare yourself with joy in your heart."⁽¹⁰⁾ Bhagat Singh replied strongly opposing to this – "You are concerned about my grandmother only, but who will feel for the distress and agony of our mother India, who is the mother to 33 crores of our countrymen? It is my considered opinion that we will have to sacrifice everything in order to relieve our mother India from her sorrow and distress. We will have to sacrifice ourselves. I am aware that in spite of this, I will be forced to marry and therefore I am leaving my home and going elsewhere."⁽¹¹⁾

Consider for once, at such a tender age, how deep a patriotism did Bhagat Singh possess, what a firm resolve he had developed to sacrifice himself for the cause of freedom

movement of his country and what maturity his thoughts and ideas had attained to enable him to reach at such a decision through such a letter. However, in respect to this none should assume that like many revolutionaries of that era, Bhagat Singh considered the life of a Bramhachari as an ideal. For 1929, in a letter to his friend and another revolutionary Sukdev, he wrote differentiating between animal's physical impulse and the emotions of man – "...As regards the moral status of love, I may say that it in itself is nothing but passion, not an animal passion but a human one, and very sweet too."⁽¹²⁾ Regarding the exact nature of human love, he further added – "Love always elevates the character of man. It never lowers him, provided the love is genuine love...."⁽¹³⁾ This is a very advanced and correct concept of love educative for all. To Sukdev, he mentioned when Mazzini after crushing defeat in his first uprising suffered from the heart-breaking remembrance of his dead comrades, then one letter from a girl he loved, inspired him. Now, a question arises, why did Bhagat Singh object to his own marriage? It seems, he came to realize that, through marriage, an attempt was being done to enmesh him in family life, while his uncompromising stand was that he would sacrifice his life for the country. Moreover, at a very early age, he had observed his aunt shedding tears over the death of his uncle in prison and so he did not want to bring about a similar pain in the life of another woman after he had sacrificed his life. Before he left home, in a letter to his friends, he wrote – 'If I have my marriage ceremony in this subjugated India, it will be with a bride named 'death' and the companions accompanying the groom to the wedding will be the companions in a funeral procession.' Consider for one moment, in a bid to sacrifice one's life in the freedom movement, how unwavering he was to utter such words with such a tinge of wit and humour!

His studies being completed in National College of Lahore, he was involved in revolutionary party in 1924 in contact with Joy Chandra Vidyalkar, his teacher, who introduced him to the reputed revolutionary leader of Benaras, Sachindranath

Sanyal and in this way he joined 'Hindustan Republican Association'. In the meantime, Bhagat Singh's grandmother became critically ill and wanted to see Bhagat Singh for the last time before her death. In this situation, his father put up an advertisement in the newspapers, appealing to Bhagat Singh to come home. He further gave assurance that he would not insist any more on Bhagat Singh's marriage. Bhagat Singh came home for a few days, but returned after the death of his grandmother. After leaving Lahore, he arrived in Kanpur, but here he had to spend his days in severe financial crisis. Even, he had to resort to selling newspapers for his own sustenance. For sometimes, he worked as a trainee in the newspaper, 'Pratap'. And then his party sent him to Aligarh to get the job of a headmaster in 'Aligarh National School' so that he could inspire the students in revolutionary ideology and at the same time collect funds for the party. In this period, Bhagat Singh worked in various villages and towns of Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab where he had shown great skill in distributing pamphlets containing revolutionary ideas and successfully recruiting a number of students and youth. He also began to collect books containing revolutionary thoughts and ideas of various countries and by going through these he gradually became attracted to the socialist revolution in Russia and communism. In the meantime, in an effort to collect funds for the revolutionary activity, on instruction from the leadership, government money was forcibly taken from a train in Kakori, Uttar Pradesh. Bhagat Singh did not, however, participate in this action directly, though he was indirectly involved. Many were imprisoned for this incident. Joining hands with another great revolutionary Chandrasekhar Azad, he attempted several times to free the imprisoned comrades from jail. On the instruction of the party in order to avoid arrest, he went into a hide out and in this period he along with some of his comrades formed a new organization named 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha'. This organization played a significant role in inspiring and organizing the youths of the Punjab. I would like to make you aware that

at this phase his thoughts, ideas and political belief underwent a significant change.

The quest for knowledge led him meticulously go through various books of Marx and Lenin by which he freed himself from religious influences and became an atheist, felt the necessity to build up mass organization, mass awakening and mass revolution instead of isolated sporadic action programme.

Today, in our country, when at the initiative of BJP, RSS and Congress in collusion with the exploiting bourgeoisie class, an intense religious fanaticism is being generated to confuse the people, it is necessary to remind them of what this great revolutionary expressed in his article 'Why I Am An Atheist' written in jail. In this historical article he writes – ‘I was an atheist. I thought that I would settle it to myself whether I could brag only in days of peace and happiness that I was an atheist, or in those hard times I could be steadfast in my convictions. After a long debate with myself, I reached the conclusion that I could not even pretend to be a believer nor could I offer my prayers to God. No, I never did it, it was time of trial and I would come out of it successful. These were my thoughts. Never for a moment did I desire to save my life. So, I was a true atheist then and I am an atheist now. It was not an easy task to face that ordeal. Beliefs make it easier to go through hardships, even make them pleasant. Man can find a strong support in God and an encouraging consolation in His Name. If you have no belief in Him, then there is no alternative but to depend upon yourself. It is not child's play to stand firm on your feet amidst storms and strong winds. In difficult times, vanity, if it remains, evaporates and man cannot find the courage to defy beliefs held in common esteem by the people. If he really revolts against such beliefs, we must conclude that it is not sheer vanity; he has some kind of extra-ordinary strength. This is exactly the situation now ... A God-believing Hindu may expect to be reborn a king; a Muslim or a Christian might dream of the luxurious he hopes to enjoy in paradise as a reward for his sufferings and sacrifices. What hope should I

entertain? I know that will be the end when the rope is tightened round my neck and the rafters move from under my feet. To use more precise religious terminology, that will be the moment of utter annihilation. My soul will come to nothing. If I take the courage to take the matter in the light of 'Reward', I see that a short life of struggle with no such magnificent end shall itself be my 'Reward'. That is all. Without any selfish motive of getting any reward here or in the hereafter, quite disinterestedly have I devoted my life to the cause of freedom. I could not act otherwise. The day shall usher in a new era of liberty when a large number of men and women, taking courage from the idea of serving humanity and liberating them from suffering and distress, decide that there is no alternative before them except devoting their lives for this cause...

I think I have made it clear that I did not turn atheist because of vanity. Only my readers, not I, can decide whether my arguments carry weight. If I were a believer, I know in the present circumstances my life would have been easier; the burden lighter. My disbelief in God has turned all the circumstances too harsh and this situation can deteriorate further. Being a little mystical can give the circumstances a poetic turn. But I need no opiate to meet my end. I am a realistic man, I want to overpower this tendency in me with the help of reason ... Being atheist, I ask a few questions from theists: If, as you believe there is an Almighty, Omnipresent, Omniscient God, who created the earth or universe, please let me know, first of all, as to why he created this world. This world which is full of woe and grief, and countless miseries, where not even one person lives in peace. Pray, don't say it is His law. If He is bound by any law, He is not Omnipotent. Don't say it is His pleasure. Nero burnt one Rome. He killed a very limited number of people. He caused only a few tragedies, all for his morbid enjoyment. But what is his place in history? ... Pages are blackened with invective diatribes condemning Nero: the tyrant, the heartless, the wicked. One Genghis Khan killed a few thousands people to seek pleasure in it and we

hate the very name. Now, how will you justify your all powerful, eternal Nero, who every day, every moment continues his pastime of killing people? How can you support his doings which surpass those of Genghis Khan in cruelty and in misery inflicted upon people? I ask why the Almighty created this world which is nothing but a living hell, a place of constant and bitter unrest. Why did he create man when he had the power not to do so? Have you any answer to these questions? You will say that it is to reward the sufferer and punish the evildoer in the hereafter. Well, well, how far will you justify a man who first of all inflicts injuries on your body and then applies soft and soothing ointment on them?... That is why I ask: Was the creation of man intended to derive this kind of pleasure? ... I ask why your Omnipotent God does not hold a man back when he is about to commit a sin or offence. It is child's play for God. Why did He not kill war lords? Why did He not obliterate the fury of war from their minds? In this way He could have saved humanity of many a great calamity and horror. Why does He not infuse humanistic sentiments into the minds of the Britishers so that they may willingly leave India? I ask why He does not fill the hearts of all capitalist classes with altruistic humanism that prompts them to give up personal possession of the means of production and this will free the whole laboring humanity from the shackles of money. You want to argue the practicability of Socialist theory, I leave it to your Almighty God to enforce it. Common people understand the merits of Socialist theory as far as general welfare is concerned but they oppose it under the pretext that it cannot be implemented. Let the Almighty step in and arrange things in a proper way. No more logic chopping! I tell you that the British rule is not there because God willed it but for the reason that we lack the will and courage to oppose it. Not that they are keeping us under subjugation with the consent of God, but it is with the force of guns and rifles, bombs and bullets, police and militia, and above all because of our apathy that they are successfully committing the most deplorable sin, that is, the

exploitation of one nation by another. Where is God? What is He doing? Is He getting a diseased pleasure out of it? A Nero! A Genghis Khan! Down with Him!... You may thrust yet another question at me, though it is merely childish. The question is: If God does not really exist, why do people come to believe in Him? Brief and concise my answer will be. As they come to believe in ghosts, and evil spirits, so they also evolve a kind of belief in God: The only difference being that God is almost a universal phenomenon and well-developed theological philosophy. However, I do disagree with radical philosophy. It attributes His origin to the ingenuity of exploiters who wanted to keep the people under their subjugation by preaching the existence of a Supreme Being; thus claimed an authority and sanction from Him for their privileged position. I do not differ on the essential point that all religions, faiths, theological philosophies, and religious creeds and all other such institutions in the long run become supporters of the tyrannical and exploiting institutions, men and classes. Rebellion against any king has always been a sin in every religion.

As regard the origin of God, my thought is that man created God in his imagination when he realized his weaknesses, limitations and shortcomings. In this way he got the courage to face all the trying circumstances and to meet all dangers that might occur in his life and also to restrain his outbursts in prosperity and affluence. God, with his whimsical laws and parental generosity was painted with variegated colours of imaginations. He was used as a deterrent factor when his fury and his laws were repeatedly propagated so that man might not become a danger to society. ... He was the cry of the distressed soul for he was believed to stand as father and mother, sister and brother, brother and friend when in time of distress a man was left alone and helpless. He was Almighty and could do anything. The idea of God is helpful to a man in distress... In this way man will try to stand on his feet. Being realistic, he will have to throw his faith aside and face all adversaries with courage and valour. That is exactly my state

of mind. My friends, it is not my vanity; it is my mode of thinking that has made me an atheist. I don't think that by strengthening my belief in God and by offering prayers to Him every day, (this I consider to be the most degraded act on the part of man) I can bring improvement in my situation, nor can I further deteriorate it. I have read of many atheists facing all troubles boldly, so I am trying to stand like a man with the head high and erect to the last; even on the gallows... Readers and friends will term this feeling as vanity. If it so let it be there."⁽¹⁴⁾

I have read out to you this historic writings of Bhagat Singh as many in this country are not aware that in his quest for truth after reading many books, and finally coming in contact with the ideas of Marx and Lenin, he freed himself completely from religious influence and just before his execution by hanging, he had appraised his countrymen of his convictions to the book 'Why I am an Atheist' to free the young men of the country from religious books. From this aspect also, he has provided an example of an extra-ordinary revolutionary character. Many in this country carry an erroneous belief that those who do not believe in God, bear no moral character. What will they say about Bhagat Singh?

Are they aware that the great Vidyasagar, the bold pioneer of Indian Renaissance to whom Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Deshbandhu, Lala Lajpat, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Saratchandra, Premchand, Subhas Chandra, Gandhiji and many others of that era used to pay deep respect did not believe in the Vedas and Vedanta including any other religious scriptures? Vidyasagar had struggled to liberate education from religious influences. He neither went to any temple, nor did he indulge in any form of worship. Ramkrishna, the mentor and spiritual teacher of Vivekananda went to Vidyasagar's house, paid his respects and invited him to visit Kali's temple at Dakshineswar, but Vidyasagar never went there. In 1853, in a dauntless voice, he informed the British Government – "For certain reasons, which is needless to state here, we are obliged to continue the teaching of the Vedanta and Sankhya in the Sanskrit College. That the

Vedanta and Sankhya are false systems of philosophies is no more a matter of dispute. These systems false, as they are, command unbounded reverence from the Hindus. Whilst teaching these in the Sanskrit course, we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English course counteract their influence.”⁽¹⁵⁾ Is there any man greater than atheist Vidyasagar in this country in that era? Incidentally, Saratchandra, the litterateur imbued with the uncompromising trend of revolutionary ideology also did not believe in God. In his literature, he had fought against traditionalism and religious influences. In the entire freedom movement of this country, the Gandhites and most of the revolutionaries had conducted the struggle, being influenced by religious ideas. It is in this context, that Saratchandra wrote in sorrow – “Those who were destined to be hermits (*Sannyasi*) became politicians and it is for this reason that politics in India is in such a miserable state.”⁽¹⁶⁾ In order to free the revolutionaries from the religious influence, in ‘*Pather Dabi*’, he wrote – “All religions are false. They are the superstitions of the primitive era. World humanity does not have any greater enemy than this.”⁽¹⁷⁾ Many are aware that in the early part of his life, Subhas Chandra, from the philosophical stand point was a believer in spiritualism while opposing materialism. He was influenced in the beginning by the Vedanta and later on by Hegelian Philosophy. But, what many are not aware of is that his inquisitive mind in search of truth changed in the later stages. He found out that his earlier thoughts opposed to materialism were erroneous and therefore he advised the students and youth to take up science as the only weapon in search for truth in the universe. Many are aware that before leaving this country, during his imprisonment, he began fast till death on certain demands in jail. It was his apprehension at that time that the British would not concede to his demands and he would have to die like the great revolutionary Jatin Das. In this period, he wrote two documents as his last testaments. The first was regarding the policy and programme of the party he had founded. The second one was an invaluable appeal to

the students and youth. Here he writes – “...On the question as to the nature of the world of phenomenon, we better keep an open mind while making note of all that science has revealed to us. More light is bound to come, as science makes further advance. Meanwhile, we should bear in mind that the old conception of materialism has broken down completely. It has been under a cross-fire, being attacked by scientific research on one side and by philosophical reasoning and speculation on the other.”⁽¹⁸⁾ In other words, through the discoveries of science, philosophical reasoning and inferences, his earlier erroneous ideas about materialism had been almost negated. According to him science would discover newer and newer truths and so for the correct realization of the universe, science has to be accepted with an open mind. This message he had written taking into account that he would probably die from the hunger strike. We can surmise that he made this appeal so that the students and youth of the country would not commit the same mistake that he had done in his earlier life by believing in and accepting spiritualism and the Vedanta. Have the students and youths succeeded in honouring this appeal by Netaji? Therefore, on the question of religious thoughts and ideas, as Vidyasagar and Saratchandra were exceptional characters in that era, so, among the revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh was a rare character. Today, this country is engulfed in a wave of religious fanaticism. Numerous temples, mosques and churches are being built, innumerable religious fairs and festivals are being held and all the leaders of the big parliamentary parties cannot render any speech without a reference to religion into them. On the other hand what remarkable (?) development of character our students and youths are showing is self evident to you!

Now, let us come to a discussion regarding the building up of the organizations by Bhagat Singh. In 1926, while absconding, he took the initiative and with the help of several comrades he built an organization in Lahore named ‘Naujawan Bharat Sabha’. After gathering contacts and connections in Calcutta and various parts of India, he also expanded this

organization. The objectives and the programmes of this organization established by Bhagat Singh including his political outlook have been mentioned by his associate Yashpal, in his book 'Sinhabolokon'. I feel that you should be apprised of an excerpt from this to know his political outlook at that time. Yashpal wrote – "the foremost programme of 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' was to expose the compromising policies of the Gandhite Congress and make the people realize the necessity of revolutionary politics and at the same time generate public sympathy for the revolutionary movement. ... In its political activity, 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' considered the work of cementing communal unity with utmost importance. The outlook of this organization was unlike Congress who either incited or appeased the people of all religious, sects. In other words 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha', unlike Congress, did not raise the slogan of 'Allah ho Akbar', 'Sat Sri Akal' or 'Har Har Mahadeo', in order to appease all the religious groups ... apart from this, it considered movements against superstitions, communalism and blind religious faith as essential. On behalf of 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' pamphlets were distributed with the objective of removing blind faith, puritanism, communal divide and with the aim to extend scientific and materialistic thoughts and ideas."⁽¹⁹⁾ From this, it can be understood that on the one hand while Bhagat Singh was fighting against the compromising line of the Gandhites in the ideological sphere in order to propagate revolutionary ideas, on the other hand, not appeasing the various religious sects, he was putting an emphasis on genuine secular humanist and scientific materialistic outlook, free from religious influences. In this country, when for many days, the ruling class and big parliamentary parties in their vested interest are promoting religious ideas and fanning up religious fanaticism and communalism, at this juncture, this view of Bhagat Singh and his role is particularly memorable. Shiv Verma, another associate of Bhagat Singh, in his 'In Memory of the Martyrs' writes about 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha', "Whenever Bhagat Singh visited Kanpur, along with other

books and pamphlets, he used to bring with him some books about 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha'... Bhagat used to say 'The struggle for independence against British subjugation is only the first stage in our struggle. We will have to fight our final battle against exploitation – either exploitation of man by man or of one state by another. This battle cannot be fought without active help from the people. That is why we should continuously attempt to utilize all means to become close to the masses.' Before Bhagat Singh, no other among the revolutionaries had attempted mass contact in such a large dimension and in such an organized manner. Even after being arrested he utilized the court in order to propagate his ideology. He was not only a good soldier, but he was a good campaigner too."⁽²⁰⁾

Consider for once, at an early age of only 18 years how much matured and progressive his thoughts were to voice these ideas and adopt programmes of this nature. Firstly, he realized that not isolated and sporadic actions but the masses had to be imbued with revolutionary consciousness to draw them in favour of revolution, and for that regular campaign had to be conducted. Secondly, the masses had to be made aware of the danger of compromising Gandhites by continuous ideological campaign. Thirdly, the first stage of this struggle should be the abolition of the British rule and exploitation; thereafter the subsequent programme should be to end all sorts of exploitation. Fourthly, and the most important was to conduct the freedom movement with an outlook of secular humanism and scientific outlook, free from all religious influences. The Gandhite Congress used to campaign for the unity of the people on the basis of combinations of all religions, but Bhagat Singh had opposed this. He had realized that in order to fight against religious thoughts and ideas along with communalism, spread of scientific and materialistic thoughts and ideas were essential. How many in that era were able to think like this?

Later on, the great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has shown that Gandhiji unknowingly opposed armed

revolution and cultivated religious nationalism which served the interest of the Indian national bourgeoisie, who was afraid of armed working class revolution. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has elaborated the exact nature and essence of secularism – “In actuality, secularism means non-recognition of any supernatural entity. Thus, a secular state puts religion in its proper place by making religion a purely personal affair of faith having no connection with the state and no bearing on politics, social action and education system of the country. In a secular state both the believers as well as non-believers enjoy equal rights and opportunities. It is one thing not to interfere in one’s faith and injures one’s religious feelings, while it is altogether a different thing to encourage and indulge in one’s religious susceptibility. So, the attitude of secular state shall be that it will neither encourage religious faith nor obstruct it... Moreover, if secularism means equal encouragement to all religions then have the protagonists of the idea ever thought over that then the difference between India and Pakistan objectively boils down to this that the latter is an Islamic theocratic state while the former is a multi-theocratic state?”⁽²¹⁾ Comrade Ghosh further showed that in the Gandhite National Congress the cultivation of religious nationalism resulted in the dominance of the upper caste Hindus as a result of which it failed to make the common Muslim people and even the so called lower caste Hindus to participate in the freedom movement. This difference was used by the British imperialists to ignite the flames of communal riot and in collusion with the then Indian capitalist class they divided the country. Even now, as a consequence of that in this sub-continent communalism, religious fundamentalism, regionalism, caste conflicts, lingual and racial animosity have been further intensified. The capitalist class is inciting this sort of animosity to break the unity of the common people and the ruling parties both national and regional bourgeois are using it with a base motive of creating their respective vote banks. Above all, they are destroying the scientific process of thinking and rationalistic frame of mind to

create a fascistic mind-set by intensifying religious fanaticism. So, it can be said that at a very early age Bhagat Singh created a rare example by acquiring a secular humanist and scientific outlook, free from religious and communal influences.

The reminiscence of his friend Shiv Verma will very much surprise you. In 1928, Bhagat Singh when he was only twenty had shown a profound thinking power, sharp intellect, knowledge about human psychology and organizational matters. The incident relates to the prisoners namely Bismil and others, in the Kakori Case. An action programme was planned to free the imprisoned revolutionaries. But as Shiv Verma was physically weak at that time, Bhagat Singh did not include him in the group who were to execute the programme. Shiv Verma felt pain and with a pale face he went to lie down in the adjacent room. I am reading out to you the subsequent incident from 'In Memory of the Martyr' (*Shaheed Smriti*) by Shiv Verma: "Bhagat Singh knew that I was not sleeping, He lay down by my side and for sometime leafed through the pages of a book. Then he touched my shoulder and gently called 'Shiv'. I turned towards him and asked him 'What is the matter?' He said, 'May I ask you a question?' I said, 'Yes'. He asked, 'Who is greater, an individual or party work?' I replied, 'Party work'. He then said, 'That the party work be conducted uninterruptedly, all our action programmes be successful, our words can reach countrymen regularly and in our freedom struggle, we can attain success at every stage. What is the first condition to achieve this?' I replied, 'A strong and extensive organization.' Bhagat said, 'Organization and campaign. The people of our country, though appreciative of our courage and deeds, are unable to make contact with us directly. Still now, we too are unable to tell them openly what would be the frame work of the freedom that we are demanding, what will be the nature of the government and particularly to whom it will belong after the British is driven out. To provide our movement with a mass-base we have to take our intention to the masses because unless we succeed in securing the support of the masses, it will

not be sufficient anymore to kill one or two British officials or government informers or an approver in the old style... We will have to discard this style of functioning. I want to keep Vijay and you in the background for the work of organization and campaign.' Bhagat remained silent for a while and then he said further, 'We are all soldiers and soldiers are mostly attracted to the battlefield and so when the question of going into action arises, all of us become impassioned. However, remembering ourselves the course of movement, somebody has to leave aside the fascination for action-programmes. In general, those who fight in the action-programmes or as a consequence mount the gallows, it is true that the garland of martyrdom is placed around their necks, their value is like the glittering diamonds that decorate the main entrance of a building. But, in respect to the building, their value is nothing in comparison to one of the stone-slabs buried in the foundations. They can increase the beauty of the building, dazzle the eyes of the audience, but they can never be the foundation of the building, neither can they increase its permanence. They are unable to hold the building erect for hundreds of years by shouldering its entire weight. Till now our movement has acquired some diamonds, but has failed to collect the stone-slabs for the foundation. That is the reason, why even after so much sacrifice, let alone the building, we could not even erect its structure. Today we need stone-slabs for the foundation. Apart from this, there are two aspects of sacrifice and self-sacrifice. Firstly, it is to die from a bullet or mounting the gallows. Here the sparkle is more, but the suffering is less. Secondly, it is to remain in the background and to carry the burden of the building for the whole life. In the ups and downs of the movement, in an adverse situation sometimes there comes a moment when all the companions leave you one by one and a man becomes covetous for even some sympathetic words. At that time, those who remain unwavering and do not deviate from their path, whose legs do not tremble and shoulders do not sag with the burden of the building, those who burn themselves down so that the brightness of the lamp

is not dulled and darkness does not cast a shadow, aren't their sacrifices more than that of the first group?"⁽²²⁾ Now judge yourself, is it not surprising that so much depth of knowledge, wisdom, such perception of human psychology and organizational conception would be found in the ideas of a revolutionary only twenty years of age? At that time, and even later, how many among the revolutionaries expressed their views in such a manner? I have already told you earlier that in order to quench his thirst for knowledge, Bhagat Singh used to study books on philosophy, politics and economy, including books on various literatures. Apart from going through the books by reputed litterateurs of this country, he also used to read famous litterateurs of various countries like Victor Hugo, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Gorky, Bernard Shaw, Charles Dickens and others. From the writings of Shiv Verma it can be realized that gradually he was becoming attracted to Marxism and Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and at the end of 1928 he took the initiative to unite the different revolutionary groups in the country to form a new party. Many of these groups responded and according to Bhagat Singh's proposal the old name was changed and this new party was named as 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association'. In the introduction of the book, 'Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh', Shiv Verma writes about the intentions of Bhagat Singh – "His proposals were (1) it is high time to boldly declare socialism as our ultimate goal, (2) the name of the party should be changed accordingly to make the people aware of our ultimate aim, (3) we should undertake only such actions which might have direct relationship with the demands and sentiments of the people and we should not fritter our time and energy in killing petty police officials or informers, (4) for funds, we should lay our hands on government money and avoid as far as possible actions on private houses and non-government institutions and (5) the principles of collective leadership should be strictly observed."⁽²³⁾

You can well realize that in this period Bhagat Singh

accepted the ideas of socialism after being influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. He emphasized more on the organized mass-movements instead of the isolated and sporadic action programmes led by his predecessors. The most significant aspect of all these was that till then among the revolutionary groups, individual leadership was dominant and the instruction of the leader was considered to be the last words, while Bhagat Singh, instead of it wanted to introduce collective leadership. This does not mean that the realization of Marxism in Bhagat Singh was complete and comprehensive and accordingly he proposed the concept of collective leadership, because it is a fact that at that period he did not get the necessary time and opportunity for this. But he was intensely attracted to Marxism, and finally with firm determination according to his perceptions he considered himself to be a communist. It is unfortunate that after this he only lived for three more years. However, in spite of his complete confidence and intense attraction to communism and socialism, he did not get a genuine Marxist party or a worthy communist leader who could guide him in his progress because neither such a party nor such a leader was present at that time in this country. It is noteworthy that Muzaffar Ahmed, one of the foremost founders of CPI and subsequently the undisputed leader of CPI(M) had met Bhagat Singh in 1926 and discussed with him on various issues. However, it is obvious that Muzaffar Ahmed was unable to exert any influence on Bhagat Singh because in spite of the presence of the party like CPI, Bhagat Singh being attracted towards Marxism and Socialism built a separate party namely, 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' in 1928. Again, Muzaffar Ahmed also did not acknowledge Bhagat Singh as a revolutionary and termed as a 'terrorist', the appellation used by British imperialism, Indian capitalism and the Gandhites. In the Meerut Conspiracy case, from 9th to 17th June in 1931, what Muzaffar Ahmed said about Bhagat Singh in court was published in 'Ganashakti' the Bengali organ of CPI(M) on 6th July, 1989, on the occasion of Muzaffar Ahmed's birth

centenary. If you read it, you may be surprised and can easily understand what kind of communists they are! In court after being accused in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, Muzaffar Ahmed said about Bhagat Singh and his party - "All the revolutionaries will praise the sacrifices of the terrorists, but can the terrorists be called revolutionaries? I will definitely say – no, they are not revolutionaries... We did not permit any infatuation in the name of 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' or by the working class like slogans of the prisoners of the Lahore conspiracy case."⁽²⁴⁾ You should know that this analysis is completely anti-Marxist. Marxism-Leninism had shown that in the liberation struggle against imperialism, apart from the working class, the national bourgeoisie too exhibit a revolutionary role. In China, the Communist Party led by the great Mao Tse Tung, fighting against imperialism and feudalism utilized the revolutionary role of the national bourgeoisie and after building a united front with them, successfully completed the people's democratic revolution. In India, during the stage of anti-imperialist freedom movement, due to the fact that the national capital here being much more powerful than the other colonies and due to its fear of working class revolution it compromised with imperialism. Accordingly great Stalin, the leader of the international communist movement determined the duties and responsibilities of Indian communists in 1925 and said, "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... It is forming a bloc with imperialism against the workers and peasants of its own country... 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.”⁽²⁵⁾

This analysis of Stalin shows that the uncompromising fighters who had come from the petty bourgeoisie or middle-class families were revolutionaries. Moreover Bhagat Singh had in that early age and by his own initiative read Marxist literature and was already struggling to become a communist. He had already declared that his objective was to establish Socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Now, which analysis should be considered to be correct, Stalin’s of Muzaffar Ahmed’s? Inability to recognize Bhagat Singh, branding him the appellation ‘terrorist’ instead of a revolutionary was not a sporadic incident to the undivided CPI and later on the CPI(M) leader. It is in the same manner that they failed to recognize Netaji Subhas Chandra who was a firm supporter of Marxism and Soviet Socialism. Many of you are not aware that in that era Netaji alone among the Nationalist leaders paid his respects to Marxism and Soviet Socialism and said, “In the 19th century, Germany through Marxist philosophy made a significant contribution to the civilization and in the 20th century, Russia through its proletarian revolution, working class government and through the upliftment of the cultural standards of the people, have enriched the civilization and culture in the world.”⁽²⁶⁾ Regarding what would be the subsequent objective after attaining freedom, in 1930, he wrote in a letter to the revolutionary Barindra Ghosh (*Barin Ghosh*), “The object of freedom movement should be liberation of the people from three types of oppression namely, political, economic and social. It is only when all manner of chains of subjugation can be abolished only then a new society shall be established on the basis of communism. The main aim of our freedom struggle is to establish an independent class-less society.”⁽²⁷⁾ In 1936, in a workers’ conference he remarked, “There is not an iota of doubt in my mind that on socialism depends the liberation of India and also the world.”⁽²⁸⁾ Again in 1939, in an assembly where he was felicitated, he said, “Among the present social systems in the world numerous currents and counter-currents

can be classified into two main divisions, in other words, imperialist powers and racing in their opposite current the forces of communism, and that is why the end of Hitlerism virtually means the establishment of communism. Therefore, if we possess a preliminary knowledge about world politics then we should not let go this opportunity.”⁽²⁹⁾ In 1938, in the Haripura Congress session, in his Presidential address he acknowledged the then Stalin-led Soviet Union as the only friend and said, “Against this background of unrest stands Soviet Russia, whose very existence strikes terror into the heart of the ruling classes in every imperialist state.”⁽³⁰⁾ In the subsequent Tripuri Congress session in respect to the imperialist conspiracies aimed at destroying Soviet Union, in deep concern he said, “The so-called democratic powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics, for the time being.”⁽³¹⁾

While discussing on Bhagat Singh, I have read out excerpts from some of Netaji’s speeches and writings to let you know how deep respect and how much confidence Netaji had in Marxism, communism and the Soviet Union. Now let me tell you how the undivided CPI (which later on split into CPI(M) and Naxalites) ignored the invaluable guideline of Stalin and what manner of behavior they exhibited towards Netaji. The national bourgeoisie considered his confidence for armed revolution and socialism to be extremely dangerous. That is why Gandhiji himself made Pattavi Sitaramaiya to stand against Netaji in the election to the post of President of All India Congress Committee so that Netaji would be unable to become the President of Congress for the second consecutive time and this is the reason that Nehru, Patel and others plunged into the fray on behalf of Pattavi. Even after all these Netaji became victorious, mainly due to the support from the revolutionary youths. Both the Indian capitalism and British imperialism became panicked at this victory. Thereafter, in the Tripuri Session of AICC, Gandhite Gabinda Ballav Panth

brought an ill-motivated proposal. Until then, it was the rule in Congress party from its inception that the President would nominate the working committee. The Panth Proposal suggested that (1) from now on the President could nominate the working committee only with the approval of Gandhiji, (2) the President would first have to take the consent of Gandhiji in order to take any decision. In other words, all arrangements were made to tie the hands and feet of Netaji as President. Netaji was then suffering from high fever, but nevertheless, he somehow managed to attend the session as all his political opponents including the Gandhites mocked at his illness, calling it a 'political fever'. In the ensuing voting, the Panth Proposal was upheld. How it happened, allow me to explain this to you in Netaji's own language. In a letter to Amiyanath Basu dated 17th April, 1939, he wrote, "Tripuri was frankly a defeat for us. But it was one sick man lying in bed fighting twelve stalwarts of the old guard, seven provincial ministers, Jawaharlal Nehru and the name, influence and prestige of Mahatma Gandhi. Our defeat was due further to the betrayal of the CSP... The Communist Party was also sailing with the CSP."⁽³²⁾ Referring to this period, the reputed English historian Michael Edwards in his famous book 'The last days of British India' wrote – "Gandhiji now turned the technique of non-violence not against the British but against Congress's own President." Again, what would you call this role of the CPI? They had blatantly supported the compromising trend of the national bourgeoisie by remaining on the side of the anti-revolutionary Gandhite leadership thereby practically going against the revolutionary Subhas Chandra. Not only this, when Netaji was compelled to resign from the Presidentship of Congress and was suspended by the party ('expelled' in the language of Netaji), even then CPI did not support him, but remained by the sides of the Gandhites. Thereafter when Netaji, in a bid to unite all the leftist groups in India organised the convention at Ramgarh in the undivided Bihar and appealed to CPI and others – "It was generally felt that all progressive,

radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress who might not be ready to join the Socialist or the Communist Party should be organized on the basis of a common minimum programme. I felt further that only by these means would the onslaughts of the rights be resisted and the ground to be prepared for the growth of a Communist Party.”⁽³³⁾ CPI did not even heed to this appeal.

It is in this way that CPI objectively helped the bourgeoisie to firmly establish the leadership in the freedom movement in India. In the next stage, when Netaji, taking the opportunity of the Second World War and the conflict between the British and Japanese imperialism, reorganised INA with the aid of Japan in order to try to attain freedom, CPI joined its voice with British Imperialists, national bourgeoisie and the Gandhites calling him an ‘agent of Japan’. There may be debates regarding the tactics adopted by Netaji, on whether it was right or wrong, but can anybody think for a moment that a great patriot like him wanted his country to be ruled by the Japanese imperialism instead of the British imperialism?

It is noteworthy to remind everybody of his statement from Berlin to the World Press in 1942. In this statement he said, “While standing for full collaboration with the Tripartite Powers in the external sphere, I stand for absolute self determination for India where her national affairs are concerned and I shall never tolerate any interference in the internal policies of the free Indian state. No one should make the mistake of concluding the external collaboration with the Tripartite Powers means the acceptance of their domination or even their ideology in our internal affairs.”

Before leaving the country, on observing this role by CPI, Netaji in great sorrow had said – “Communism as it appeared to be demonstrated by many of these who are supposed to stand for it... in India, it seemed to me anti-national... However, I should add that I have always understood and have been quite satisfied that Communism as it has been expressed in the writings of Marx and Lenin and in the official statements

in the policy of the Communist International gives support to the struggle for independence and recognizes this as an integral part of the world outlook.”⁽³⁴⁾ You can now understand well enough, out of what sorrow and agony due to CPI’s various activities, did Netaji utter these words. For CPI, not implementing Stalin’s guideline, but acting just in an opposite manner and its failure to understand Bhagat Singh, Netaji and other freedom-fighters – was it just a simple error? Certainly not. They behaved in that way only because they were not genuine communist party and taking this opportunity, the bourgeoisie, keeping Gandhiji in front, used the freedom movement and seized power. They are now exploiting and robbing the people in all aspects which Subhas Bose and Bhagat Singh had never wanted. I would like to further add that even today, CPI, CPI(M) and the Naxalites are acting in a non-Marxist manner in every aspect.

A proper and correct evaluation of the then revolutionaries was made by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh who clearly mentioned the differences between these revolutionaries and the Gandhites by saying, “... That is why during the period of our freedom movement we witnessed two opposite trends in outlook, one was compromising with imperialism and feudalism and ... Gandhiji was the representative of the compromising reformist line of national bourgeoisie, in opposition of that there was Netaji Subhas Chandra, the bold representative of the uncompromising trend reflecting petty-bourgeois middle-class and common people’s interest.”⁽³⁵⁾

Now I would like to say something more about Bhagat Singh because in the interest of the ruling bourgeois class and its parties, the people of this country, particularly the students and youths have been deliberately kept completely ignorant about this great revolutionary and other revolutionaries of that era. In 1928, when Bhagat Singh was absorbed in expanding the organization of his party ‘Hindustan Socialist Republican Association’ (HSRA) the British Government sent the Simon Commission to recommend reforms and to assess whether the

Indian people were fit for reforms and to come under the purview of parliamentary democracy. Stormy protests burst out throughout the country against Simon Commission and everywhere a worthy answer to the intentions of the Commission was provided through protest, boycott and strike. The National Congress led by Gandhiji boycotted the Commission for the sole reason that there was no Indian representative in it, whereas the unequivocal protest lodged by 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' founded by Bhagat Singh said, 'The British government has no right to determine the fate of India, and therefore, this commission has to be boycotted'. The difference in outlook between the Gandhites and Bhagat Singh is clearly seen from this.

In 1928, on 30th October 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' held a mammoth rally against the Simon Commission in Lahore. 'Punjab Keshri' Lala Lajpat Rai led the rally and it was, in the main, organized by Bhagat Singh. The police, on orders of the British Government made a ruthless lathicharge on this rally and Lala Lajpat Rai, an old man at that time sustained severe injuries at the hands of Deputy Police Commissioner Saunders himself. In this critical condition, on the very same day, in a huge public meeting he told the police officers who were present there, "I declare that the blow struck at me will be the last nails in the coffin of the British rule in India". The severely injured Lalaji breathed his last on 17th November and thousands of citizens of Lahore took part in the last journey. A grief-stricken Bhagat Singh and his comrades decided that the murderer Saunders should be meted out a worthy punishment in reply to this savage killing. In 1928, on 17th December, in front of the police headquarters in Lahore, Saunders was executed by Bhagat Singh and his comrade Rajguru. Other members of their organization were present there and took important role in the operation. With all their desperate efforts the police failed to get hold of them, since they were aided in their escape by another great revolutionary Chandrasekhar Azad, who later on, after being surrounded by the police in

Allahabad, went on fighting and finally shot himself to death refusing to surrender and embracing the death of a martyr, just like Prafulla Chaki, who was the comrade of the great revolutionary and martyr Kshudiram Bose.

After executing Saunders, the manner in which Bhagat Singh escaped from the police in Lahore, arrived in Calcutta and made contact with the revolutionaries in this city was a thrilling incident. At that time, when intense police-patrolling was going on in every railway station, an Englishman with his beautiful fair-skinned British wife carrying a child in her lap boarded the train right in front of the police and arrived at Calcutta. The man dressed in British apparel was none other than Bhagat Singh and the woman carrying the child, accompanying him was Durga Devi, the wife of the revolutionary Bhagabati Charan Bhora. Many of you are not aware of this woman. On coming into contact with her husband and the other outstanding revolutionaries, she had developed such patriotism and courage that when she was given the responsibility of helping Bhagat Singh's escape by pretending to be his wife, she did not hesitate for a moment. Even though her husband was in Calcutta at that time and there was no way to take his permission, there was no time left to inform any of her relatives, she did not even raise a question but prepared herself and taking her child with her left immediately. There was so much risk in this. If they were caught there might be police firing, the life of her child would have been endangered, but she cared for nothing else but only for the mission. I would like to say something more about this woman revolutionary. At that time when Bhagat Singh was imprisoned and Chandrasekhar Azad had planned to take him out forcibly of jail, during the preparation for this, Bhagabaticharan Bhora tragically lost his life in a bomb explosion while testing the bomb. In this condition, when for the second time again, a preparation was made to take Bhagat Singh out of jail, Durga Devi, just widowed at that time came forward to fulfill her husband's unfinished task. Chandrasekhar Azad tried to dissuade her by

saying “No, we cannot allow you to do this. Bhagabati is no more and you have a child.” Durga Devi boldly replied, “My child now belongs to you all. He will remain in your care.” In that period some immensely courageous patriotic revolutionary women characters like Durga Devi had appeared in this country. How many in this country today are aware of them?

Now I tell you, at that period, Bhagat Singh was absconding and by evading the police he was moving from place to place to carry out his revolutionary activities. He threw bomb in Delhi Assembly and deliberately surrendered according to a specific plan in order to fulfill a definite revolutionary objective knowing fully well that for this act extreme penalty was awaiting him. Why did he do this? I’m explaining that. In 1928, in the month of April, workers’ strike took place in Tata Steel Factory, at Jamshedpur for a period of five consecutive months under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose. This working class movement spread to various parts of India. Before this, the November Revolution had been made successful with seizure of power by the working class in Russia in 1917. Afraid of these working class movements, the British Government along with the Indian capitalist class to nip it in the bud brought two bills, namely ‘Trade Dispute Bill’ and ‘Public Safety Bill’, and made arrangements so that the Central Assembly could pass them. A storm of protest arose throughout the country. Even the majority of Indian members in the Assembly opposed this, but the British Government remained unyielding. Bhagat Singh and his comrades influenced by the communist ideology saw in this newly awakened working class movement the possibility and potentiality of future working class revolution, and so they decided to take the path of the French revolutionary Valliant. To make the French bourgeoisie aware of the demands and rights of the working class, Valliant threw a bomb in the French Assembly and in a statement said, “It takes a loud voice to make a deaf hear.” In the Central Committee meeting of the HSRA, Bhagat Singh referred to this French revolutionary and proposed that on the day when the

above mentioned bills would be raised in the Assembly, a bomb would be thrown there. The plan was not to kill or injure anyone by the bomb, but to awaken the Indian people and to reach the deaf ears of the British Government. Immediately after the bomb was thrown, Bhagat Singh and his comrades would distribute handbills containing the protest against the bills, along with their intentions and motives, following which they would not escape but surrender deliberately and during the trial, they would utilize the court to spread their ideology. This plan was unanimously accepted by all those present in the meeting. In the interest of the then working class struggle and revolutionary movement, Bhagat Singh took a historic and immensely courageous decision. Today, how many people can understand its significance? In 1929, on 8th April, when discussion was going on in the Assembly regarding the above mentioned bills, the first bomb was exploded by Bhagat Singh followed by the second bomb which was exploded by his comrade Batukeshwar Dutta. Thereafter both of them loudly raised the slogan ‘Long Live Revolution’, ‘Down with imperialism – capitalism’, ‘Workers of the world unite’. Then they distributed pamphlets with the declaration of HSRA in it. The Assembly had become empty by this time. In the pamphlet was written, “It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear. With these immortal words uttered on similar occasion by Valliant, a French anarchist martyr, do we strongly justifies the action of ours ... and let the government know that, while protesting against the ‘Public Safety Bill’ and ‘Trade Dispute Bill’ and the cruel murder of Lala Lajpat Rai, on behalf of the helpless Indian masses, we want to emphasize the lesson often repeated by history that it is easy to kill individuals, but you cannot kill the ideas. Great empires crumbled. But the ideas survived. Bourbons and Czars fell, while the revolution marched ahead triumphantly ... The great revolution will bring freedom for all by ending exploitation of man by man, lives of some individuals are to be sacrificed at the altar of the great revolution – it is an inevitable truth.”⁽³⁶⁾

This incident and these words created an intense stir throughout the country at that time. Though Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutta had loaded revolvers with them, they didn't shoot anybody. Nobody was injured by the bomb since it was designed only to make a loud noise without hurting anybody. Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutta could have easily fled the place, but they stood fast. When Sergeant Terry, along with some police officers, while arresting them asked, "Have you done it?", Bhagat Singh boldly replied, "Don't worry, we shall tell the whole world that we have done it."

On the next day in Delhi Session Court, Bhagat Singh refuted all accusations against him by saying: "Despite the evidence of the Government Expert, the bombs that were thrown in the Assembly Chamber resulted in slight damage to an empty bench and some slight abrasions in less than half a dozen cases, while Government scientists and experts have ascribed this result to a miracle, we see nothing but a precisely scientific process in all this incident. ... Bombs of the capacity deposed to by the Government Expert (though his estimate, being imaginary is exaggerated), loaded with an effective charge of potassium chlorate and sensitive (explosive) picrate would have smashed the barriers and laid many low within some yards of the explosion.

Again, had they been loaded with some other high explosive, with a charge of destructive pellets or darts, they would have sufficed to wipe out a majority of the Members of the Legislative Assembly. Still again we could have flung them into the official box which was occupied by some notable persons. And finally we could have ambushed Sir John Simon whose luckless Commission was loathed by all responsible people and who was sitting in the President's gallery at the time. All these things, however, were beyond our intention and bombs did no more than they were designed to do, and the miracle consisted in no more than the deliberate aim which landed them in safe places.

We then deliberately offered ourselves to bear the penalty

for what we had done and to let the imperialist exploiters know that by crushing individuals, they cannot kill ideas. By crushing two insignificant units, a nation cannot be crushed. ... Gallows and the Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian Revolution.

By “Revolution”, we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society which may not be threatened by such breakdown, and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognized and a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and misery of imperial wars.

This is our ideal, and with this ideology as our inspiration, we have given a fair and loud enough warning.

If, however, it goes unheeded and the present system of Government continues to be an impediment in the way of the natural forces that are swelling up, a grim struggle will ensure involving the overthrow of all obstacles, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat to pave the way for the consummation of the ideal of revolution. Revolution is an inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is an imperishable birth right of all. Labour is the real sustainer of society, the sovereignty of the ultimate destiny of the workers. For these ideals, and for this faith, we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. At the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as an incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content, we await the advent of Revolution.”⁽³⁷⁾

Bhagat Singh was just 21 when he placed this statement in the Court on 6th June in 1929. Just consider how a deep compassion this young revolutionary had for the exploited workers and peasants and how much he was influenced by Marxism and Socialist Revolution in Russia to present such a bold statement. It was a rare instance at that period, though Muzaffar Ahmed, the founder of the undivided CPI and subsequently CPI(M) failed to acknowledge this character as a revolutionary, but labelled him as a terrorist. This was their

understanding of Marxism for which the parties founded by them have been degraded to such a position!

However, even though the Court failed to conclusively prove the allegation that Bhagat Singh and his comrade Batukeshwar Dutta, threw the bombs inside the Delhi Assembly, with a motive to kill the members, it, nevertheless, convicted them with a life sentence. The British Government did not stop here, but linked this case with another case concerning the killing of Saunders in Lahore and trial began again. At this time, Bhagat Singh and his comrades began a hunger strike till death demanding due honour and facilities of political prisoners. It is this movement in which, after 63 consecutive days of hunger strike, Jatin Das, the extraordinarily courageous revolutionary died. The last journey bearing his dead body was a mammoth rally in mourning led by Subhas Chandra Bose in Calcutta.

I would like to tell you that the then revolutionaries had intense opposition to Gandhiji's line of non-violence. In 1929, on 23rd December, the revolutionary Yaspal by causing an explosion attempted to destroy the train in which Viceroy Irwin was travelling. The Gandhites criticised this act severely, passed resolution against this and gave out statements in the newspapers condemning it. Gandhiji himself attacked the revolutionaries furiously by writing an article named 'The Cult of Bomb'. In reply, in 1930, on 26th January, from the prison, Bhagat Singh wrote 'The Philosophy of Bomb' and it being published caused an intense sensation within the country. I would like to read out an excerpt from this article – "Let us, first of all, take up the question of violence and non-violence. We think that the use of these terms in itself, is a grave injustice to either party, for they express the ideals of neither of them correctly. Violence is physical force applied for committing injustice, and that is certainly not what the revolutionaries stand for. On the other hand, what generally goes by the name of non-violence is in reality the theory of soul-force, as applied to the attainment of personal and national rights through courting

suffering and hoping thus to finally convert your opponent to your point-of-view. When a revolutionary believes certain things to be his right he asks for them, pleads for them, argues for them, wills to attain them with all the soul-force at his command, stands the greatest amount of suffering for them, is always prepared to make the highest sacrifice for their attainment, and also backs his efforts with all the physical force he is capable of. You may coin what other word you like to describe his methods but you cannot call it violence, because that would constitute an outrage on the dictionary meaning of that word. 'Satyagraha' is insistence upon truth. Why press, for the acceptance of truth, by soul-force alone? Why not add physical force also to it? While the revolutionaries stand for winning independence by all forces, physical as well as moral, at their command, the advocates of soul-force would like to ban the use of physical force. The question really, therefore, is not whether you will have violence, but whether you will have soul-force plus physical force or soul-force alone." In this article, in respect to Gandhiji he wrote, "He thinks that on the basis of his experience during his latest tour in the country, he is right in believing that the large masses of Indian humanity are yet untouched by the spirit of violence and that non-violence has come to stay as a political weapon. Let him not delude himself on the experiences of his latest tour in the country. Though it is true that the average leader confines his tours to places where only the mail train can conveniently land him while Gandhi has extended his tour limit to where a motorcar can take him, the practice of staying only with the richest people in the places visited, of spending most of his time on being complimented by his devotees in private and public, and of granting Darshan now and then to the illiterate masses whom he claims to understand so well, disqualifies him from claiming to know the mind of the masses. No man can claim to know a people's mind by seeing them from the public platform and giving them 'Darshan' and 'Updesh'. He can at the most claim to have told the masses what he thinks about things. Has

Gandhi, during recent years, mixed in the social life of the masses? Has he sat with the peasant round the evening fire and tried to know what he thinks? Has he passed a single evening in the company of a factory labourer and shared with him his vows? We have, and therefore we claim to know what the masses think. We have, and therefore we claim to know what the masses think. We assure Gandhi that the average Indian, like the average human being, understands little of the fine theological niceties about 'Ahimsa' and 'Loving one's enemy'. The way of the world is like this. You have a friend: you love him, sometimes so much that you even die for him. You have an enemy: you shun him, you fight against him and, if possible, kill him. The gospel of the revolutionaries is simple and straight... Gandhi declares that his faith in the efficacy of non-violence has increased. That is to say, he believes more and more, that through his gospel of love and self-imposed suffering, he hopes someday to convert the foreign rulers to his way of thinking. Now, he has devoted his whole life to the preaching of his wonderful gospel and has practiced it with unwavering constance, as few others have done. Will he let the world know how many enemies of India he has been able to turn into his friends? How many O'Dwyers, Readings and Irwins has he been able to convert into friends of India? If none, how can India be expected to share his 'growing faith' that he will be able to persuade or compel England to agree to Indian independence through the practice of non-violence? Why should Gandhi mix up the revolutionaries with the various constitutional reforms granted by the government? They never cared or worked for the Morley-Minto Reforms, Montague Reforms and the like. These the British government threw before the constitutionalist agitators to lure them away from the right path. This was the bribe paid to them for their support to the government in its policy of crushing and uprooting the revolutionaries... The revolutionaries believe that the deliverance of their country will come through revolution. The revolution, they are constantly working and hoping for, will not

only express itself in the form of an armed conflict between the foreign government and its supporters and the people, it will also usher in a new social order. The revolution will ring the death knell of capitalism and class distinctions and privileges. It will bring joy and prosperity to the starving millions who are seething today under the terrible yoke of both foreign and Indian exploitation. It will bring the nation into its own. It will give birth to a new state, a new social order. Above all, it will establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and will forever banish social parasites from the seat of political power.”⁽³⁸⁾ After listening to some parts of this article you must have realised how powerful logical arguments he had boldly refuted the ideas of Gandhiji.

In the Lahore Conspiracy Case (LCC), Bhagat Singh and his colleagues decided that they would not avail themselves of the opportunity of self-defence and they would completely disregard and ignore the court. Why they had taken such a decision was explained by Bhagat Singh in a statement prepared by him and read out in the court – “We do not propose to take any part in the proceedings of this case because we do not recognise this government which is said to be based on justice or established by law ... We believe that imperialism is nothing but a vast conspiracy organised with predatory motive. Imperialism is the last stage of development of insidious exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation. The imperialists, with a view to further their piratical design, not only commit judicial murders through their law courts but also organise general massacres, devastations and other horrible crimes like war. They feel no hesitation in shooting down innocent and unarmed people who refuse to yield to their depredatory demands or to acquiesce in their ruinous and abominable design. Under the grab of custodians of law and order they break peace, create disorder, kill people and commit all conceivable crime... The sanctity of law can be maintained only so long as it is the expression of the will of the people ... We believe that Law and Order is for men and not

men for Law and Order. When it becomes a mere instrument in the hand of an oppressing class, it loses its sanctity and significance.”⁽³⁹⁾ In that era under the British Imperialist Rule, Bhagat Singh presented an invaluable argument regarding what should be the outlook of the exploited and oppressed Indian people towards British law and order. We feel that the same outlook should prevail today in respect to the law and order created in the interest of the Indian capitalist class.

In the light of Marxist ideology, even at that early age, he succeeded in realizing that the compromising Gandhite movement served the interest of a handful of capitalists and traders and it was very much afraid of an uprising by the workers and peasants. Therefore, in order to alert the people regarding the then situation and determine the tasks to be carried out, he sent out a message to the ‘young cadres’ from the prison. He wrote, “I have said that the present movement, that is, the present struggle, is bound to end in some sort of compromise or complete failure. I said that, because in my opinion, this time the real revolutionary forces have not been invited into the arena. This is a struggle dependent upon the middle class shopkeepers and a few capitalists. Both these, and particularly the latter, can never dare to risk its property or possessions in any struggle. The real revolutionary armies are in the villages and in factories, the peasantry and the labourers. But our bourgeois leaders do not and cannot dare to tackle them. The sleeping lion once awakened from its slumber shall become irresistible even after the achievement of what our leaders aim at ... We want a socialist revolution, the indispensable preliminary to which is the political revolution. That is what we want. The political revolution does not mean the transfer of state (or more, crudely, the power) from the hands of the British to the Indians but to those Indians who are at one with us as to the final goal, or to be more precise, the power to be transferred to the revolutionary party through popular support. After that, to proceed in right earnest is to organize the reconstruction of the whole society on the socialist

basis according to Marxian thought.”⁽⁴⁰⁾ Again I am to say that the then undivided CPI leadership had failed to understand Bhagat Singh who stated this.

Now I would like to tell you another incident. You are aware that Bhagat Singh and his comrades announced that they would ignore the trial by the British Government in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and they did not even avail themselves of the opportunity for self-defence, declaring their stand publicly. However, his father, without informing him appealed to the tribunal for an opportunity of self-defence in an endeavour to prove Bhagat Singh innocent. At this having a severe mental shock he wrote a letter to his father which will remain as a glaring example in history. In this letter he wrote, “I was astonished to learn that you had submitted a petition to the members of the Special Tribunal in connection with my defence. This intelligence proves to be too severe a blow to be borne with equanimity. It has upset the whole equilibrium of my mind... you know that in the political field my views have always differed with those of yours. I have always been acting independently without having cared for your approval or disapproval. I hope you can recall to yourself that since the very beginning you have been trying to convince me to fight my case very seriously and defend myself properly. But you also know that I was always opposed to it... My life is not so precious, at least, to me, as you may be probably think it to be. It is not at all worth buying at the cost of my principles... Father, I am quite perplexed. I fear I might overlook the ordinary principles of etiquette and my language may become a little but harsh while criticizing or rather censoring this move on your part... Had any other person done it, I would have considered it to be nothing short of treachery. But in your case, let me say that it has been a weakness – a weakness of the worst type. This was the time where everybody’s mettle was being tested. Let me say, father, you have failed ... In the end, I would like to inform you and my other friends and all the people interested in my case that I have not approved of your move. I am still not

at all in favour of offering any defence. Even if the court had accepted that petition submitted by some of my co-accused regarding defence, I would not have defended myself... I want that public should know all the details about this complication, and, therefore, I request you to publish this letter.”⁽⁴¹⁾ This was the letter by a courageous revolutionary sharply criticizing a weak-minded father, who had appealed to save the life of his son. This was published in newspapers. What a great character Bhagat Singh acquired to make this possible!

Though Bhagat Singh was sentenced to death, his comrade Batukeswar Dutta was sentenced to life imprisonment for the case of ‘bomb throwing’ in the Delhi Assembly. In November, 1930, Bhagat Singh wrote a letter to him which too is exemplary. The letter by a revolutionary, sentenced to death, to his comrade advising him how to tolerate the misery of life imprisonment is invaluable and I intend to read this out. He wrote, “The judgment has been delivered. I am condemned to death. In these cells, besides myself, there are many others prisoners who are waiting to be hanged. The only prayer of these people is that somehow or other they may escape the noose. Perhaps I am the only man amongst them who is anxiously waiting for the day when I will be fortunate enough to embrace the gallows for my ideal. I will climb the gallows gladly and show the world as to how bravely the revolutionaries can sacrifice themselves for the cause. I will be condemned to death, but you are sentenced to transportation for life. You will live and, while living, you will have to show to the world that the revolutionaries not only die for their ideals but can face every calamity. Death should not be a means to escape the worldly difficulties. Those revolutionaries who have by chance escaped the gallows for the ideal but also bear the worst type of tortures in the dark dingy prison cells.”⁽⁴²⁾

Later, on 20th March, 1931, Bhagat Singh sent a highly spirited letter to the Governor of Punjab. In this letter, he declared with firm conviction that capitalism-imperialism will come to an end with the establishment of socialism. He

demanded that since they were convicted due to waging a war upon the British Government, they should be shot, instead of being hanged. Bhagat Singh wrote, "That we were sentenced to death on 7th October, 1930 by a British Court, L.C.C Tribunal, constituted under the Sp. Lahore Conspiracy Case Ordinance, promulgated by the H.E. The Viceroy, the Head of the British Government of India, and that the main charge against us was that of having waged war against H.M. King George, the King of England. The above-mentioned finding of the Court pre-supposed two things: Firstly, that there exists a state of war between the British Nation and the Indian Nation and, secondly, that we had actually participated in that war and were, therefore, war prisoners... Let us declare that the state of war does exist and shall exist so long as the Indian toiling masses and the natural resources are being exploited by a handful of parasites. They may be purely British Capitalist or mixed British and Indian or even purely Indian. They may be carrying on their insidious exploitation through mixed or even on purely Indian bureaucratic apparatus. All these things make no difference... No matter if once again the vanguard of the Indian movement, the Revolutionary Party, finds itself deserted in the thick of the war. No matter if the leaders to whom personally we are much indebted for sympathy and feelings they expressed for us, but nevertheless we cannot overlook the fact that they did become so callous as to ignore and not to make a mention in the peace negotiation of even the homeless, friendless and penniless female workers who are alleged to be belonging to the vanguard and whom the leaders consider to be enemies of their utopian non-violent cult which has already become a thing of the past; the heroines who had ungrudgingly sacrificed or offered for sacrifice their husbands, brothers, and all that were nearest and dearest to them, including themselves, whom your government has declared to be outlaws. No matter, if your agents stoop so low as to fabricate baseless calumnies against their spotless characters to damage their and their party's reputation. The war shall continue. It may assume different

shapes at different times. It may become now open, now hidden, now purely agitational, now fierce life and death struggle. The choice of the course, whether bloody or comparatively peaceful, which it should adopt rests with you... It shall be waged ever with new vigour, greater audacity and unflinching determination till the Socialist Republic is established and the present social order is completely replaced by a new social order, based on social prosperity and thus every sort of exploitation is put an end to and the humanity is ushered into the era of genuine and permanent peace... The days of capitalist and imperialist exploitation are numbered. The war neither began with us nor is it going to end with our lives. It is the inevitable consequence of the historic events and the existing environments. Our humble sacrifices shall be only a link in the chain that has very accurately been beautified by the unparalleled sacrifice of Mr. Das and most tragic but noblest sacrifice of Comrade Bhagawati Charan and the glorious death of our dear warrior Azad... What we wanted to point out that according to the verdict of your court we had waged war and were therefore war prisoners. And we claim to be treated as such, i.e., we claim to be shot dead instead of to be hanged.”⁽⁴³⁾

In the meantime a cruel and inhuman incident took place. Perhaps, many of you are not aware of it and it is not recorded either in the history of freedom movement; but at that time it created an intense agitation in the country. In respect to this incident, Gandhiji was severely criticised and condemned. After Bhagat Singh had been sentenced to death by hanging, numerous rallies took place throughout the country in which thousands of students, youth and common men participated. Before this never did such a wide spread movement take place in the country with the demand of withdrawing the sentence of death. In this period, i.e. in 1931, from 18th February to 18 March several sittings took place between Gandhiji and the British Viceroy Lord Irwin as a result of which a pact was signed between them known in history as ‘Gandhi-Irwin Pact’. This subject matter of the pact was the release of political

prisoners, i.e. those imprisoned for participating in the law-violation programme by the means of ‘non-violence’ in accordance to Gandhiji’s programme of Satyagraha. Gandhiji requested the release of only such prisoners and the British Government conceded to this. However, though millions of people demanded the annulment of the sentence of death of Bhagat Singh, and even though Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose requested Gandhiji regarding this, he refused to place this demand of the pact before Lord Irwin. I will now read out the conversation between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin in regard to this from the autobiography of Lord Irwin. “If the young man was hanged, said Mr. Gandhi, there was likelihood that he would become a national martyr and general atmosphere would be seriously prejudiced... I told him that, though he would agree that it was impossible from my point-of-view to grant him his (Bhagat Singh) reprieve... at the conclusion of which Gandhi asked ‘Would Your Excellency see any objection to my saying that I tried for the young man’s life.’ I said that I saw none, if he would also add that from my point-of-view he did not know what other course, I could have taken.”⁽⁴⁴⁾ Again let me quote the conversation which took place between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin on 19th March, 1931. Lord Irwin wrote in his autobiography – “As he (Gandhi) was leaving he asked me if he might mention the case of Bhagat Singh that he had seen in the press the intimation of his execution for March 24. This was an unfortunate day as it coincided with the arrival of the new President (of Congress) in Karachi and there would be much popular excitement. I told him that I have considered the case with most anxious care but could find no ground in which I could justify to my conscience commuting the sentence... He appeared to appreciate the force of this argument and said no more.”⁽⁴⁵⁾ On 20th March 1931, Gandhiji had a sitting with Sir Herbert Ammaros who was present during the Gandhi – Irwin talks. After this sitting Sir Herbert Ammaros informed the Viceroy Gandhiji’s stand in this matter – “... He did not seem to me to be particularly concerned in the matter. I told him

(Gandhi) that we should be lucky if we go through without disorder and I asked all that he could do to prevent meetings being held in Delhi during the next few days and restrain violent speeches. He promised to do all he could.”⁽⁴⁶⁾ Dr. Pattavi Sitaramaiya, very much loyal to Gandhiji and whom Gandhiji himself projected to contest the election for the post of President of Congress against Netaji wrote about what Gandhiji told Viceroy Irwin regarding Bhagat Singh and his comrades – “If the boys should be hanged, they had better be hanged before the Congress (Karachi) session, or then after it.”⁽⁴⁷⁾ The excerpts which I have read out to you proves clearly that in the Gandhi-Irwin talks, Gandhiji far from putting a condition for the release of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, did not even submit a proposal in support for this. On the contrary he expressed apprehension that having being hanged to death Bhagat Singh would earn the honour of a national martyr which would result agitations and disturbance of peace in the country. Since the sentence of death of Bhagat Singh was to be executed on 24th March 1931, the very same day of the inauguration of the AICC session, to be held in Karachi, an apprehensive Gandhiji proposed that the execution should not be carried out in any way on that day. He also promised the British Government, he would see to it that no agitative meeting would be held in Delhi after the execution. The Viceroy too accepted Gandhiji’s request and changed the date of execution from 24th March to 23rd March. Generally the sentence of death by hanging is executed at dawn. But in this case an exception was made and the execution took place in the evening. The entire country, Bhagat Singh’s family, his comrades inside and outside the prison along with Bhagat Singh himself, his comrade-in-arms Sukdev and Rajguru – all of them were aware that the sentence of death would be executed on 24th March, at dawn. All of a sudden in the morning of 23rd March, Bhagat Singh and his comrades came to know that their sentence of death by hanging would be carried out in the evening of the very same day. Nobody on the outside had an

inkling of this and everything was done in secrecy. In this way the Viceroy conceded to Gandhiji's request.

Why did Gandhiji take this role? Why did he not place the annulment of the death sentence of Bhagat Singh and his comrades or their release as a condition in his talks with Viceroy Lord Irwin? Had he placed this as a condition in the talks it might be the case that the British Government would not have conceded to it and might the pact have failed. But if the pact not been signed what harm would it have done to the country? Rather a powerful movement would have developed throughout the country with the demand of release of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. In fact Gandhiji had intense aversions to the revolutionaries. So, once at the residence of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das he called the revolutionaries as traitors to the country. Saratchandra, one of the great litterateurs and the representative of the revolutionary line in the field of literature was present in the sitting and he told Gandhiji face to face, "If due to a difference in ideology you can call them traitors, for the same reason they too can call you the same. They are not traitors; on the contrary they are the best sons of the soil as they are sacrificing everything, even their lives for the country."⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is this mental frame which led Gandhiji to project Pattavi Sitaramaiya just before the Tripuri Congress practically as his own candidate against Netaji Subhas Chandra. Subhas Chandra, however, won the presidential election in the Congress party due to the support of the revolutionaries and the youths within the party. Despite this, the Gandhites did not allow Netaji to function. In the Tripuri Session, they managed to pass the infamous Panth Proposal with the help of the undivided CPI and Congress Socialist Party. I have already mentioned this before. Now let me relate the subsequent events which are astounding. Thereafter, according to the 'Panth Proposal' when Netaji asked Gandhiji's opinion regarding the constitution of the working committee, Gandhiji surprised everybody by saying that he knew nothing about this proposal. Even then Netaji sent a copy

of the proposal to Gandhiji, in reply to which Gandhiji answered that he would not give any opinion regarding this. In an effort to break this stalemate Netaji proposed that since he was elected by the support of the leftists and since the 'Panth Proposal' was accepted with the support of the Gandhites, the working committee should be constituted by selecting equal number of delegates from both camps. Gandhiji again informed that he would give no opinion regarding this too, as a result of which the stalemate resulted in a hindrance to the functioning of Indian National Congress. On the one hand, Netaji was unable to constitute the working committee according to the 'Panth Proposal' while, on the other hand, Nehru, Patel and other Gandhites began clamouring that Subhas Chandra was hindering the functions of the Congress Party. In this condition Netaji resigned the post of President of Congress, in other words he was compelled to resign. Subsequently, when he participated in the movement against the British Government, he was accused of violating the discipline of the Congress and due to this 'crime' he was suspended from the Congress Party, which in Netaji's words he was 'expelled' from the Congress Party. Rabindranath himself requested Gandhiji to intervene in this matter, but Gandhiji denounced Netaji as 'indiscipline' and refused to entertain this request. These most disgraceful incidents in the freedom struggle are not known to many. It can be observed that Gandhiji played the same role in respect to Kshudiram, Bhagat Singh Netaji and all other revolutionaries. He did not only express his apprehension to the Viceroy that if these revolutionaries were hanged they would become martyrs of the country and this would cause agitation and unrest throughout the country. He had only sought permission from the Viceroy that he could tell everybody outside that he had wanted their release. He had further requested the Viceroy that since the session of the Congress Working Committee was going to be held on 24th March in Karachi, the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, which the British Government had decided to implement on the same day, should be implemented

before 24th March. I leave it for you to judge this role played by Gandhiji.

Even on the day of his execution, Bhagat Singh set a unique example. How deep a respect and attraction Bhagat Singh held for Great Lenin, the undisputed leader of the international communist movement, can be understood through a very significant incident on the day of his execution. On the day when the sentence of death by hanging was to be executed, i.e. in the morning of 23rd March, 1931, a review was published in the daily newspaper 'The Tribune' on a book about Lenin's life and struggles. After coming to know about it, Bhagat Singh, through his legal advisors collected the book secretly and immediately began to go through it with rapt attention. He was completely unconcerned that the time had arrived for his execution. An official of the jail came to him and told him to prepare himself as the time for his execution was approaching. In reply, Bhagat Singh did not even raise his eyes from the book and said, "Please allow me some time as one revolutionary is holding a conversation with another great revolutionary." A few minutes later he came out. Even a few moments before his execution, there was no other thought, no other contemplation except an earnest inquisitiveness to know about the great revolutionary Lenin. This is an unforgettable incident.

Before mounting the gallows, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukdev embraced each other with deep emotion and will all their might shouted aloud the slogan, 'Inquillab Zindabad, down with imperialism-capitalism'. In the final moments Bhagat Singh smiled at the British Officer and said, "Truly you are very lucky because today you have the opportunity to observe how the Indian revolutionaries embrace their death for a noble ideology with a smile on their faces."⁽⁴⁹⁾ A few minutes after, at 7:21 pm the hanging ropes snatched away the lives of the three noble revolutionaries. The incident after this is also heart rendering and cruel. I have already mentioned that neither Bhagat Singh and others' family nor the countrymen were aware that these

three revolutionaries were to be hanged in the evening of 23rd March. After executing Bhagat Singh and his comrades, the British Government took the dead bodies secretly in the dark of night and on the bank of the Shatadru (Sutlej) river near Firozpur in the undivided Punjab and burnt the bodies and threw the half-burnt remains in the river. On the next day, that is on 24th March the British Government publicly notified “The public are hereby informed that the dead bodies of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukdev who were hanged yesterday evening (March, 23) were taken out of the jail to the bank of the Sutlej where they were cremated according to Sikh and Hindu rights and their remains were also thrown into the water.”⁽⁵⁰⁾ The attitude of the British government was so barbaric and ferocious in this matter that they changed the date of execution, did not allow their families or the countrymen to know about this, did not hand over the burnt corpses to their respective families and finally threw the remains of the bodies into the river so that nothing of the remains would be left there. The same thing happened with Masterda Surya Sen, the leader of Chittagong uprising. After executing where his dead body was left, nobody knows even today. However, in the morning of 24th March, the news of the execution spread across the country like a wildfire and thousands of grieving people including their families rushed to the banks of the Shatadru (Sutlej) River to pay their final homage to these noble revolutionaries in the places where ashes of the funeral pyre were spread. The entire country burst out in grief and anger and Gandhiji was severely condemned in Karachi session of the Congress.

At the time of his execution, Bhagat Singh was only 23 years, 5 months and 27 days old. Just think what an extraordinary knowledge, wisdom and patriotism he had; what a deep compassion for the working class and the peasantry, what conviction for Marxism and Communism and what an undaunted spirit and courage he had revealed in his character! As a student of one of the foremost Marxist thinkers and

philosophers of this era Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, I can unhesitatingly state that the manner in which Bhagat Singh was advancing at such an early age, had he got the opportunity and time to realize Marxism correctly and if he had the opportunity to be guided by a worthy Marxist leadership, he could have played a very important role in developing a communist movement in this country which was absent at that time.

Today we have assembled here to pay our respects to *Shaheed-E-Azam* Bhagat Singh. Just think for once how many in this country are remembering Bhagat Singh today on 23rd March, the day when he embraced martyrdom? Freedom has been achieved so much, progress is taking place to such an extent that the glorious struggles, the arduous contemplations and the sacrifices of the great pioneers of the renaissance, revolutionaries and the martyrs of the then subjugated India under British rule has sunk into oblivion! How could this have taken place? Once our countrymen, even braving the threats, coercion and tortures of the British imperialist rulers used to utter these names in deep respect. Once, in every village or town, within every family, in all the schools and colleges, cult of their characters and their lives was the practice. Today, in our country why did this tragic end occur? This is because the Indian capitalism, which in an understanding with the British imperialism and keeping Gandhiji in leadership, did not allow the revolutionary trend of Kshudiram-Bhagat Singh-Surya Sen-Chandrasekhar Azad-Asfaquallah Khan-Bagha Jatin-Pritilata and finally Netaji to gain predominance and today the same Indian capitalism is in state power. The capitalist rulers are today afraid that the very existence of the capitalist system may be endangered at the rebirth of Bhagat Singhs armed with the revolutionary ideas of Marxism. That is why there is an all-out conspiracy to abolish the memories of all the great pioneers of the Renaissance, revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and all the martyrs of the previous era. Instead their sole aim is to immerse the entire people of this country, particularly the students and youths into the current of de-humanization, individualism and

self-centeredness, consumerism, alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling and pornography along with sexual perversions. This has become the so-called progress of this country. On the one hand a few capitalists and their slaves, the leaders of the big parliamentary political parties, along with the bureaucrats are amassing huge wealth to lead a life of luxury and pleasures like a king, while on the other hand the hundreds of thousands of impoverished and hungry have turned beggars and are screaming in the streets. Thousands are losing their lives without any treatment; they are committing suicide; hundreds of thousands are unemployed and are madly searching for any job; thousands of women are being sold as commodities in the market and hundreds of oppressed and raped women are crying. Could the pioneers of the Renaissance, the brave warriors in the freedom movement or the revolutionaries have ever imagined this terrible and tragic end in their worst nightmares? It is true that the martyr Bhagat Singh, on the basis of the opportunity of understanding Marxism and inspirations from the Soviet Socialism realized that not only imperialist rule and capitalist exploitation had to be abolished but Socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be established. I have at least no knowledge of any other revolutionary or martyr of that era who had such an advanced thinking as Bhagat Singh. Even then, I think that he, too, could not have imagined that the situation in this country would be so terrible after his time. The utmost tragedy is that on the one hand, the leaders of the capitalist class backed ruling parties like Congress, BJP and others are pushing the country to the brink of destruction and deliberately attempting to abolish the memory of Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries from the people's mind, while on the other, they themselves are competing with each other to capitalize on the respect and emotion of the people for Bhagat Singh and others like him with an eye to their election politics.

Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh was executed on 23rd March, 1931. A few days before his death on 2nd February, in a message to the young political cadres, he determined the

class character of Congress and appealed to form a genuine Communist Party on the basis of Marxism in order to carry out the proletarian revolution successfully. I would like to read out the part of this message at the end of my discussion. "... The real revolutionary armies are in the villages and in factories, the peasantry and the labourers. But our bourgeois leaders do not and cannot dare to tackle them. The sleeping lion once awakened from its slumber shall become irresistible even after the achievement of what our leaders aim at ... revolution means the complete overthrow of the existing social order and its replacement with the socialist order... As a matter of fact, the state, the government machinery is just a weapon in the hands of the ruling class to further and safeguard its interest. We want to snatch and handle it to utilize it for the consummation of our ideal, i.e. the social reconstruction on new i.e. Marxist basis... All along we have to educate the masses and to create a favourable atmosphere for our social programme. In the struggles we can best train and educate them... It is essential for gaining the active sympathy of and organizing the peasants and workers. The name of party or rather, (some words are missing here) a communist party. This party of political workers, bound by strict discipline, should handle all other movements. It shall have to organize the peasants and workers parties, labour unions, and may even venture to capture the Congress and kindred bodies. And in order to create political consciousness, not only of national politics but class politics as well, the party should organize a big publishing campaign... We require to use the term so dear to Lenin - 'professional revolutionaries'. The whole time workers who have no other ambition or life - work except the revolution. The greater the number of such workers organized into a party, the greater the chances of your success... Crush your individuality first. Shake off the dreams of personal comfort. Then start to work. Inch by inch you shall have to proceed. It needs courage, perseverance and very strong determination. No difficulties and no hardships shall discourage you. No failures and betrayals

shall dishearten you... Through the ordeal of sufferings and sacrifice you shall come out victorious.”⁽⁵¹⁾

This was the last appeal of this great revolutionary to the students and youth of the country just before his execution. Here, he has clearly shown that the Indian National Congress, a party of the bourgeois class, afraid of working class revolution, had no desire to allow the participation of workers and peasants in the freedom movement. It is also notable that even though the undivided CPI existed in the country at that time, he was appealing to the students and youths to form a separate Communist party instead of advising them to join the CPI. Here, we can remember that even though Netaji Subhas Chandra was very much respectful to Marxism and Communism, he also had become disgusted with the activities of the undivided CPI [whose breakaway fractions are the CPI(M) and the Naxalites] as a result of which he had remarked – “Despite universal human appeal of communism, Indian communism could not make much headway mainly because its principle supporters had adopted such methods and tactics that instead of attracting and make friends with the people, turn them into enemies.”⁽⁵²⁾ Just like Netaji, Bhagat Singh might have had bitter experience about the undivided CPI, otherwise why should he give a call to form a separate communist party? In this appeal, he had clearly expressed that the state and the government, both were the weapons to preserve the interests of the exploiting class and so it had to be destroyed by a revolution to build up a new socialist society on the basis of Marxism.

We cannot forget that the dream and contemplation of Bhagat Singh was to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, through a revolution with the weapon of Marxism-Leninism to abolish the rule and exploitation of capitalism-imperialism in the country and throughout the world. In order to achieve this, his desire was to free the people from religious influences and allow them to acquire a scientific outlook, to make the workers and peasants organized and politically conscious and ready the

students and youth to sacrifice their lives in the revolutionary struggle. We can pay a proper respect to Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh only by wholeheartedly joining the struggle which will fulfill his dreams and contemplation. Otherwise, this programme will become futile and the respect we are paying by garlanding his portrait will become fruitless. In this critical hour of the country we need thousands and thousands Bhagat Singh-Surya Sen-Asfaquallah Khan-Chadraseshkar Azad-Pritilalta Waddedar armed with Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh's thought to achieve the unfulfilled dreams of Bhagat Singh.

Will the mother of this country respond to the appeal by this great revolutionary to give birth to many Bhagat Singhs? Before sacrificing himself on the gallows, he appealed for the last time to the students and youth to renounce their own interest, greed and lust, so that they can engage themselves in the revolutionary struggle to unite and organize the workers and peasants, make them politically conscious so as to form a genuine communist party in the country based on Marxism with the sole objective of abolishing the exploitative system and establishing socialism. Today, the students and youths of this country have to ask their own conscience whether they would honour the appeal of this noble revolutionary.

Lastly, I would like to remind you of a historical appeal by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, who had began his political life in continuity with the ideas of Bhagat Singh and the revolutionaries of that era and developed himself by an arduous struggle into one of the foremost Marxist thinkers and philosophers of this era. He is the founder of the only genuine communist party in India, a party which was desired by Bhagat Singh, and the pioneer of the liberation struggle of the proletariat in this country. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, "Comrades, remember, those who can sacrifice at the initial state for ideology and idea – they are not many people, they are always few people – young, bright and students. At every stage of development of the society, in every country, it is the students

and young people who come forward, being influenced by and imbued with the revolutionary ideology and being completely dedicated, go to the masses, rouse the masses, organize them in thousands and help them in creating their political power. Then the time comes for the masses – that we call revolution. Before that you will have to travel many-a-step, arduous and torturous – painful but happier. I say this is the happier and honourable way. Yes, in this way of fighting things, it may be painful – sometimes even tortuous, but no doubt it is the honourable way to lead a life. Here in this struggle you may die, but you will die with honour, raising your head high. You shall not die with humiliation just as cats and dogs die, rotting in the street. Remember, we are all mortal beings. So if to die don't die begging, don't humiliate yourself. When to die, die with honour, and you have got only one surest way to live and die with honour, that is taking active part in the revolutionary struggle of the masses to bring about a revolutionary transformation of the society, and for that purpose you will have to organize yourselves in thousands, and close-up your ranks.

Comrades, engage yourselves and take active part in all the just struggles of the masses, individually and collectively, and all the while keep up your political initiative at the fore. Your slogan should be – go to the masses, organize them, help them in creating political power so that people, the toiling masses can take up arms and bring about a fundamental change of our society by overthrowing the bourgeoisie from power, replacing capitalism and establishing socialism.”⁽⁵³⁾ In my opinion the proper response to this appeal will determine whether we will be able to pay our true respect to Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh, his comrades Sukdev and Rajguru and all the noble revolutionaries of that era.

Appendix :

1. Carry Proletarian Culture and Ethics to the Workers, Shibdas Ghosh, Selected Works, Vol.-III
2. An Evaluation of Saratchandra, Shibdas Ghosh, Selected Works, Vol.-III
3. Letter to the Second LCC Convicts, 22nd March, 1931, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
4. Homage to Comrade Subodh Banerjee, Shibdas Ghosh, Selected Works, Vol.-III
5. Last years of British India, Michael Edwards
6. Socialism of My Conception, M. K. Gandhi
7. Political Life of Saratchandra, Sachinandan Chattopadhyay
8. Present Political Context, Sarat Rachanaboli
9. Letter to Father, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
10. The Trial of Bhagat Singh, Politics of Justice, A. G. Noorani
11. The Trial of Bhagat Singh, Politics of Justice, A. G. Noorani
12. Letter to Sukdev, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
13. Letter to Sukdev, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
14. Why I am an Atheist, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
15. Letter to F. G. Moyet, Vidyasagar Rachana Sangraha
16. Sarat Rachanaboli, Two Incomplete Essays
17. Sarat Rachanaboli, Vol.-IV
18. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
19. Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Edited by Shiv Verma
20. Bhagat Singh, Shiv Verma
21. A Scientific Approach to Our Educational – Cultural Problems, Shibdas Ghosh, Selected Works, Vol.-IV
22. Shaheed Smriti – Shiv Verma
23. Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Edited by Shiv Verma
24. Ganashakti, 6th July, 1989
25. Political Tasks of the University of the People of the East, Stalin Collected Works, Vol.-VII
26. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
27. Lokmat
28. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
29. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
30. Subhas Rachanaboli
31. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

32. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
33. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
34. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
35. The Cultural Movement in India and Our Tasks, Shibdas Ghosh, Selected Works, Vol.-II
36. The Red Pamphlet (A) - Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
37. Statement in Assembly Bomb Case, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
38. The Philosophy of Bomb, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
39. Statement of the Undefended Accused, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
40. To the Young Political Workers, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
41. Letter to the Father, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
42. Letter to Batukeswar Dutta, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
43. Bhagat Singh's Last Petition to the Governor of Punjab, The Trial of Bhagat Singh, Politics of Justice, A. G. Noorani
44. The Trial of Bhagat Singh, Politics of Justice, A. G. Noorani
45. Home Department, Political Branch, National Archives of India
46. Home Department, Political Branch, National Archives of India
47. The History of Indian National Congress
48. Sarat Rachanaboli
49. Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
50. The Trial of Bhagat Singh, Politics of Justice, A. G. Noorani
51. To the Young Political Workers, Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh
52. Crossroads – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
53. Tasks Ahead of Students and youth, Shibdas Ghosh, Selected Works, Vol.-IV