

long discussion, but as a general conclusion, it is not difficult to understand that anti-Imperialist anti-capitalist Socialist revolution that would happen now would be a new kind of Socialist revolution.

•••

Overlooking these changes and blindly following the footprints of past revolutions is not the way to prepare for new revolutions. While studying past revolutions, issues of similarities and differences have to be known and important lessons have to be learned, but it is a major responsibility to find, after a concrete study of concrete conditions, as to what is new in today's new revolutions. Young generation of revolutionaries will have to accept the challenges of paving a new path. The tendency to accept general conclusions of old revolutions as formula and performing routine exercises, the tendency to blindly emulate great revolutions of the past; we see them as main obstacles to revolutions because these tendencies are dominating. This is to shirk effort for understanding and developing the science of revolution and is like living in the fool's paradise of achieving a revolution through enthusiasm and revolutionary optimism alone.

Therefore, we emphasise this point that it is not enough to keep hope alive merely as a sentiment. Optimism has to be given a scientific base. To avoid dogmatism, science of revolution has to be understood and with the help of this scientific understanding, a path of revolution has to be paved by interpreting temporal-spatial conditions of a country.

This is the paramount historical responsibility of the young generation of Revolutionaries!

(Ahwan Campus Times, January-March 2004)

Where Should Students and Youth Make a New Beginning?

Those youth who do not think that this misanthropic capitalist system is the last stage of human history --- 'End of History', who have not accepted present victory of the tyrannical powers of reaction as their fate, who have the memories of past revolutionary struggles as a legacy, they would definitely come forward to forge dreams of future into new projects of liberation. In the preparation for a new world-historical epic war these youth would be in the forefronts.

Where future-symphony is playing

Where dreams are on a journey to discover

Where audacious projects of the approaching is being forged

Where memories are fuel,

Filled in the heart of workman's furnace

Where restless hot air is giving momentum to life,

You have to be there,

If you are young!

(Shashi Prakash)

All brave, self-respecting, visionary and sensitive youth in the process of becoming thoughtful -- understanding the science of revolution -- have to first internalise the fundamental lesson of history that is that with mere emotions of valour and martyrdom it is not possible for youth to complete a revolution. Even if majority of the youth of a country stand up in revolt it is not possible for them to attain the goal of revolution. The romantic notion of triggering a revolution usually attracts the restless and the rebellious hearts of youth, sinking the youth movement in the self-defeating mire of adventurism. Despite good intentions and pure feelings this adventurism is as lethal to Revolution as the reformism which begs

for crumbs of favour and concessions. A true revolution in all cases is a people's revolution. Only an organised power of the majority of working people can make a revolution possible. It destroys like hurricane the military might endowed with the most lethal weapons, that is equipped for the protection of the rule of capital. History is made, not by heroes but by common masses, that builds all social

wealth and culture. This fundamental rule should never be forgotten.

There is nothing like a born hero. In the perennial process of struggle and creation the rank and file of the vanguard which emerges from the masses, only they perform the role of leaders and some of them become the symbols of revolution.

Martyred revolutionary thinker **Bhagat Singh** also came to this conclusion, based on the history of revolutionary movement in India until his time and on experiences of his generation, that a few revolutionary youth without awakening and organizing the masses cannot make a revolution successful by taking to arms. Undoubtedly, in the process of transforming the social system, the role of force is that of a mid-wife, without use of force it is not possible to smash the state power. However, such a use of force can be deployed only by an awakened and organised peoples' power. To arouse and organise this peoples' power, enlightened and advanced elements from society have to go amongst the people, perform the task of revolutionary political propaganda and teach how to struggle in an organised way on small demands of everyday life. And even before this, they study society first hand in this process, test their understanding and consolidate it; understanding production, governance and society they acquaint people with the fundamental reasons for their exploitation and repression, they provide a credible and practical picture of a just and egalitarian alternative social structure and then organise masses for a struggle to achieve this model. In this background, the relevance of that great message is easily understood that, seventy-five years ago, Bhagat Singh addressed to youth of the country from the gallows:

"Youth have to spread the message of revolution in every nook and corner of the country, in factories and industries, millions of people who live in dilapidated huts in squalid hamlets and villages have to be illuminated with the glow of revolution which will bring freedom and then exploitation of one human being by another would become impossible."

One might ask why this responsibility has to be on the shoulders of youth? A befitting answer to this was given quite a long time back by the great leader of Chinese revolution, Mao Zedong in these words: *"Youth are the most active and most lively power of society. They have an intense desire to learn and their thoughts are least affected by orthodoxy."* Once while speaking to the students he said; *"This is your world, it is ours' too, but in the end it will be yours' only. You, the young people full of power of life and vigour, like the sun of morning at 8 or 9' o'clock are at the peak of life, our hopes rest on you."*



The widespread working people for two square meals and for fundamental needs toil to the point of being crushed and are ground in the mill of wage slavery. By depriving them of the heritage of civilisation-culture and the knowledge of history, even the fundamental conditions of human living are snatched away from them. Revolting against circumstances their consciousness continuously moves towards social revolution, but without the study of society and history and without the understanding of the science of revolution, organisation for revolution is not possible. In this situation the responsibility for making them acquainted with the form, practice and path of revolutionary change devolves on the shoulders of those few educated youth who are equipped with the heritage of knowledge and culture and are capable of critiquing a civilisation. Surely enough these educated youth cannot perform the tasks who are born with a silver spoon in their mouth and whose "paradise" is secured in this system. Only in exceptional cases, brave young people will come from this parasitic exploitative strata, who can break themselves away from their class and join the project of liberation of the oppressed people. This responsibility in all circumstances would be of brave and wise children of common masses.

Youth with such revolutionary feelings and thought would not take the message of revolution among people as mere preacher or propagandist. To become vanguard of the people they will have to become 'one among people', they will have to internalise the life and struggle of the masses; they will have to learn before they can teach. They cannot become capable of executing action merely based on

bookish knowledge about revolution. Not only from life reflected in the world of knowledge, they would also have to learn directly from real life. Then only can they become true revolutionary youth. In a famous essay titled '**The Orientation of Youth Movement**' Mao Zedong has written: *"Is somebody a revolutionary youth or not, what are the parameters of judgment? How to recognise? There is only one parameter, that is, it should be observed whether they are able to assimilate themselves with wide worker-peasant population or not, and whether they execute this or not? A revolutionary is one who wants to assimilate with the workers and peasants, and in practice become one with the workers and peasants, otherwise one is not revolutionary but a counter-revolutionary."* Certainly, in today's scenario peasants can only mean small peasants that are victims of capitalist plunder, not the profiteering, prospering landowning farmers who themselves indulge in exploitation of toiling workers. The essence being that firstly, revolutionary youth will have to assimilate with the labouring class which is the producer of all social wealth; they will have to go amongst them; through diverse reform activities serve them with true devotion; they will have to renounce completely the mentality of accepting special rights and superiority of intellectuals that are born as a result of the social division between physical and mental labour; only then the common people will trust them as one of their own, will listen to them intently and act on it. Then only a revolutionary youth can become a practical revolutionary, can understand every contradiction of social life and can be successful in the preparation and progress of revolutionary struggles.

Along with this, to win the confidence of people and to understand the application of the science of revolution it is essential that revolutionary youth implement their ideals in their own life. For example, apart from being completely free of the notion of considering physical labour as lowbrow, they have to be liberated from notions of caste discrimination and every evil social practices and orthodoxy; not a speck should remain. Then only can they carry a continuous struggle against socio-cultural obstacles on the path of revolution and can establish a pervasive peoples' unity, which is a fundamental condition of militant mobilisation of masses to change the system.

It is very important that there is a clear view on what is known as "reform activities" in order to rebuild a revolutionary student-

youth movement. If our final goal would be an improvement of living conditions of the masses, to get some concessions within the prevailing socio-economic structure, then it would be reformism. It would mean keeping this exploitative system intact and alleviating a little its naked licentiousness, atrocity and ensuring the longevity of this system.

It would imply removing blood stains from the fabric of capitalism. It would imply telling people that it is possible to make a whole shirt by begging for patches of cloth, that is, make your life worth living by reforms and fight for small concessions, because only this much is possible and revolution is either impossible or impractical. It would imply giving an illusion to people that it is possible to attain rights by convincing the ruling class or applying some pressure on them or system can be changed using peaceful means through a change of heart or supplication, therefore it is not necessary to take the "troubles" of forceful change or revolution. In societies with class exploitation, and especially in capitalist society, reformism is present in various forms and comes up in ever-new garbs. This acts as a 'safety valve' to reduce the pressure of public anger, as a second line of defence of the system and as a 'smoke screen' to the people. All electoral left parties of India that have renounced the path of revolution act on reformism and today an increasingly active NGO reformist politics all over India is its newest and most effective organ.

However, those revolutionary youth who want to organise people for a decisive revolutionary struggle against Imperialism and Capitalism, even they, along with revolutionary political propaganda and education, have to not only organise mass struggle for small demands of everyday life but also have to organise reform activities on various levels. If we have the goal of revolutionary change and a definite strategy, then to unite with wider population, to make its consciousness militant, with an objective to arouse, mobilise, and organise them organized activities of reforms and small struggles for rights become a link in the long revolutionary struggle. These ventures give youth an opportunity to come close to the life of people, unify with them and win their confidence. During this period, the youth also gets an opportunity of studying and examining social realities. It cannot be over-emphasised that it is imperative to know

things in order to change them.

Take some concrete examples. In any system, the form of education and culture is decided by the fact as to what the character of political-social system is and which class controls the state power. In all class societies, it is the education and culture of the ruling class that dominates. The structure of education-culture can be changed decisively only when the ruling apparatus is in the hands of the people. However, even during the preparation for revolution we organise alternative ventures of education and culture that are used to revolutionise the consciousness of people. For example, revolutionary organisation of students and youth, to fight against casteist-religious- social orthodoxy and superstitions and to increase awareness among youth as well as the widespread population, will have to establish study circles, night schools, libraries, dramatic and music teams etc. By doing this, they certainly cannot challenge the capitalist educational and communication medium, but with concerted efforts like these if they can free a large section of common people and youth from their mental bondage, then commensurate to that the possibility of recruiting youth for the revolutionary columns would be increased and creativity and initiative of common people would accordingly become free from restrictions. Let us assume that any organisation of revolutionary youth organises a medical camp in a workers' settlement, then along with serving people and winning their confidence they publicise that free medical facilities is a fundamental right of people and is not a commodity to be sold in the market. From here, the preparation of a struggle for basic rights begins. Let us assume that a youth organisation to awaken peoples' initiative take up activities like cleanliness drive, road repair, construction of bridges on a settlement. or village, then they also convince people that they put government and peoples' representatives in the docks and prepare for a movement for these rights. When links of these innumerable efforts start joining, then the masses themselves move forward realizing their capability for organisation and creativity, self-confidence to take decisions is generated (that afterwards develop into the self-confidence to rule) and in this process, platforms for alternative peoples' power emerges in embryonic form at various places. The youth should not forget this fact that the struggle for revolutionary change is a class-war between the exploiting and exploited class, in which a final verdict

will not be reached merely by a few sporadic skirmishes or swerving wars. The verdict would, although, finally come with a lightning strike of peoples' revolt which blows away the fort of capitalist state power, the process of reaching that stage, however, would be in such a way as if two flanks themselves have been battling for a long time by taking 'positions'. To achieve this, along with peoples' struggle and revolutionary political propaganda amongst masses such institutions and ventures would have to be raised using peoples' initiative and creativity that can act as turrets and ramparts of the formative "peoples' fort". Only then, this trust would be generated in the masses that it is possible to create a system in which the structures of production, governance and society would be in their bands.

• • •

Undoubtedly, only the slogan of 'equal education to all and equal opportunity of employment to all' can be the central slogan of a revolutionary student-youth movement. It can be asked then, instead of the point why did we discuss at length that youth should assimilate in the large working population, conduct revolutionary propaganda, should conduct creative programmes etc.

A straight forward answer to this can be that the words of Bhagat Singh in today's situation, when there is need for a new beginning by pushing back the surge of reaction which is dominating the surge of progress, is completely apt and relevant that youth would have to take the message of revolution to factories, squalid settlements and dilapidated huts of villages. This is the paramount responsibility of youth. Revolutionary youth with mature consciousness have to take the responsibility of equipping the struggle of working masses with the science of revolution and they can do this only when they participate in movements and creative activities amongst people, assimilate in their life and metamorphise their own personality through practically educating themselves about life and revolution.

The struggle of youth on question of education and employment is not an isolated struggle from the rest of struggles in the society, but is indivisibly linked to the latter. If seen from the perspective of political economy, then unemployment is a phenomenon that necessarily prevails in a capitalist system and becomes a crisis of the system. In the same way, unequal education that is divided according

to the status and is like a saleable commodity in the market is in fact a fundamental characteristic of capitalism. That is, a struggle for equal education to all and equal opportunity of employment to all is a struggle against the general and fundamental tendency of capitalism. This struggle is an anti-capitalist struggle and can become meaningful and successful only when it aligns and becomes a part of the anti-capitalist struggle of all classes. Otherwise, its fate is doomed and is going to be lost in the blind, labyrinthine alleys of reformism.

This is why along with organising an extensive population of student-youth for equal education to all and equal opportunity of employment to all' it is a job of the vanguard of revolutionary youth to go to the working masses that have been pushed on the streets by capital and are displaced and are grounded in the mill of wage slavery; by undergoing class transformation accept the role of the vanguard in initial stages of struggle, acquaint the masses with science of the revolution and perform a role in generating vanguard units from the masses. Additionally, it is also their responsibility that they tell the restless and the agitating student-youth population on question of education and employment that without aligning themselves to the struggles of extensive working population against Capitalism- Imperialism they can get a few relief or concessions, but they cannot hope to succeed in their mission. This is why they not only have to align themselves to the revolutionary struggle of the masses but also will have to perform a role in organizing them anew. A new beginning is possible only when student-youth become a revolutionary recruitment center for the struggle of all classes of common people: This aspect of the student-youth movement is its most important aspect today.

The point to ponder is that when nearly all organisations of student and youth talk about fighting for equal education and employment to all, then why a student-youth movement cannot be organised on these demands. Most student organisations that pay lip service to these slogans are appendages of this or that capitalist electoral party. They throw these slogans to deceive the student population' To save their face, they sometimes ritualise movements and sometimes, even if they get some concessions, it becomes handy in increasing the influence of a particular party or the incumbent government. The student-youth organisations like these can never

associate the movement with struggles of extensive working population. This is never their goal. Their only goal is to ward off the student-youth population from revolutionary target, to distract them from fundamental issues by flaring up non-issues, to divide them based on region, taste, religion, language etc. and to keep student-youth movement as a perennial recruiting and training center for capitalist electoral politics. The student-youth organisations which are appendages of sham left parties that indulge in parliamentary debates play the same game, but the difference is that they play with some fiery slogans and by paying lip service to "workers' revolution". The electoral left parties indulge in some economic-reformist gimmicks and their student-youth organisations perform yearly ritual of some movements and carnival. In recent years, there have been some changes in as much that the false revolutionism of their namesake left student-youth organisations have been stripped naked in the eyes of common student-youth. However, their vulgar farce of revolutionary student-youth politics continues unabatedly even now.

The naked truth of the day is that outside the campus, in the society, on the streets the ritual excitement of any youth movement is visible only in name. The quietude that has been widespread in the colleges and university campuses for the last decade shows no sign of breaking up. The common students since long have stopped looking with hope at the capitalist and spurious left student organisations and individualist, careerist student leaders. However, there is no effective revolutionary alternative in front of them that can awaken new hope. This bitter truth cannot be overlooked that in this milieu of pessimism and stagnation there has been a rapid flourishing of fascist tendencies in various hues among the student population. A sizeable number of pale faced, mentally sick youth belonging to the common middle-class have gone and stood behind the crooked gangsters with shining smooth faces who indulge in politics of religious fundamentalism or fierce casteism or various forms of hooliganism. In this milieu, a sizeable population of common students due to pessimism and helplessness has become the victim of lethal tendency of depoliticisation and has withdrawn into their shell.

The intervention of NGOs among student-youth have made the situation grim. These organisations that run on the money of Imperialists, indigenous capitalists and government, blur class

contradictions in the society by cunningly playing tricks of reformist patchwork, working as a new line of defence for capitalist system, acting as a "safety valve"; along with this, in the name of social Work, they push the militant, honest youth who have the potential to become a vanguard of revolution, in the mire of reformism, corrupt them by turning them into "salaried social worker" and co-opt them in the system. The situation is such that there are some student organizations that were aligned till very recently with the left stream (Ipld claim that they are, even today) are openly courting NGOs and they are the gatherings of careerist, idle, fashionable leftist youth who after pursuing the hobby of student politics become servants or stooges of this or that NGO.

There are several small student organisations of revolutionary left stream that ruminating on some ritualistic work and fiery slogans, have become deviant and are inclined towards group of sham left student organisation. Some are victims of ideological parochialism, dogmatism and ultra-leftist verbosity. Instead of acting on a mass line of awakening-organising extensive student population and doing grassroot activities, they mouth fierce slogans and display romantic dreams of instantaneous armed revolutions. Instead of understanding the changed situation of a New Socialist Revolution against Imperialism-Capitalism they claim even today that India is semi-feudal semi-colonial and give the slogan of National Democratic Revolution. In absence of an understanding about mass action and wrong understanding of socio-economic conditions of the country these student organisations until date have not been able to organise any movement among extensive student population, neither would they be able to do it in future. In practice, these student organisations along with new student-youth recruitment for ongoing armed-struggle in some backward-inaccessible regions on lines of "left" adventurism, either perform some seminar-type ceremonies or do some radical reformist activities.

Whether the issue be of densely capitalist friendly education policy continuously imposed by Birla-Ambani report and several government decisions, or of continuous fee hike and decreasing seats, or of surrendering educational institutions directly into the hands of capitalists, or of continuously shrinking democratic space in the campuses, students' movement is not in a position to organise effective

resistance anywhere.

To break from this status quo it is important to understand its fundamental reasons. First thing is that today when in the entire world and country the surge of counter-revolution dominates that of revolution and due to ideological weaknesses, wrong understanding of conditions, blind imitation of the past revolutions, the stream of revolutionary politics is a victim of stagnation and fragmentation. The whole scenario then also affects the student and youth politics. However, to change this situation again the revolutionary youth will have to perform an important role. Based on true understanding of situations along with reconstruction of student-youth movement the enlightened revolutionary youth would also have to think about re- building the revolutionary politics of working class, work among them and launch an aggressive campaign to recruit student-youth who could form the vanguard of revolutions.

Another important reason for stagnation-fragmentation of student movement in campuses is that for past almost twenty years the structure of student population has undergone some important changes. Due to continuously decreasing seats and increasing fees, the student population at centers of higher education has decreased significantly. In addition, those who are mostly from well-to-do families, selfish, careerist and without social concern, whose 'paradise' is quite secured in this system. The emphasis has been more on the professional courses such as technology, management etc, and these venues of expensive education are dominated by students of the wealthy class. The students of common families are able to study only some neglected subjects and desperately try to get employment by any which way. It is only as an exception that youth from the majority working population reach the campuses of higher education. Now even the majority of lower middle class youth have been pushed out of universities and campuses of reputed colleges. They are either living a desperate, frustrated life floating in the dungeon of an uncertain future in some neglected college in lower middle- class colonies or in far-flung small towns, or doing some petty work trying to get better employment, or are in the flanks of contract workers and daily wage workers waiting outside factory gates.

Therefore, possibilities of campus centric student movement have objectively decreased today. Today conditions for organising a

unified student-youth movement are much favourable than in the past and possibilities of these being directly linked to anti-capital struggles of extensive working population are more pregnant. The structural changes that have occurred in society and extended to campus, it is important to completely change the model and mould of old, inert, orthodox character of revolutionary student movement and keeping in mind the above changes have to make a new beginning according to a new programme.

Students and youth have to be brought out of the campus from its excitement of political agitation and propaganda on to the streets and into working peoples' and lower middle class residential settlements. There they will have to organise student-youth on issues of education and employment and have to take up various creative programmes, participate in their movements and organise activities of revolutionary propaganda among them.

The greater the extent that youth power is organised and agitated outside campus and aligned to the struggles of common people, greater the help we are going to get in organising common students on daily issues of campus, on issues of democratic rights and on the larger question of education and employment. From the viewpoint of organising student movement, it would be more appropriate to concentrate on the campuses of backward areas because students from common families are in majority, although due to their backward cultural-political consciousness the job of their political education- training would be more challenging. In the prestigious metropolitan campus of higher education, the ground for student movement would be weak, but the possibility of recruitment of advanced elements for revolutionary flanks is greater, numerically they would be definitely small, but if they are able to assimilate themselves with working people then they can prove immensely valuable.

Our proposal is that on this assessment of changed circumstances and on the path of building anew a revolutionary student-youth movement, its form, agenda priorities, all students- youth who desire change should think seriously on our opinion, debate, discuss it, and form consensus by experimentation.

The road might be a thousand mile long, a beginning is made by taking the first step, and we will have to make a new beginning.

The task of moulding the vision for future envisaged by **Bhagat**

Singh into a project of liberation and to devise a plan for its implementation is still a cardinal question faced by us. The 75th anniversary of the martyrdom of this great revolutionary young thinker is about to be completed. Would we continue to ignore his call? The future is beckoning the hearts of liberty loving youth to weigh their wings to take a flight in the revolutionary storms. Proud eagles and stormy petrels can never ignore this call.

(Ahwan Campus Times, January-March 2005)