

Diabolic incident of rape and murder at R G Kar Hospital in Kolkata

Revolutionary greetings to all who burst forth in historic protest rising above all differences



Intellectuals and persons of eminence in protest in Kolkata

A single spark has indeed caused a prairie fire! The whole of West Bengal as well as the entire country is vibrant in protest. The protest has transgressed the boundary of the country and spread in neighboring Bangladesh, Pakistan as also in Europe, USA, Australia and other countries. There is only one demand—"We want justice". Justice for the second year PGT doctor who has been diabolically raped and murdered inside the hospital premises while on duty. The guilty must be meted out stringent punishment. The perpetrators of this fiendish crime should not be shielded by quarters of vested interest. In the name of investigation, evidences should not be destroyed or hushed up. Not only the doctors, nurses and health workers, thousands of students of almost all academic institutions, teachers, lawyers, intellectuals, artistes, all other professionals, workers and peasants and front-ranking football players and other sports personalities and sports-lovers have joined the movement. This united voice seeking justice gives hope and is font of inspiration. After a long long time, the state of West Bengal seems to be back on its erstwhile fervour of fighting against injustice.

Most remarkable had been the night of 14 August. An unprecedented gathering at around midnight of lakhs of protesting women, from early teenager to octogenarian, came out in the streets of cities and villages with the slogan, "Reclaim the night". This was a fervent protestation of the subjugated, persecuted and assaulted womenfolk against the patriarchal society where females are viewed as subordinate to males and mere objects of consumption. Such a dazzling display of valour and determination of the aggrieved mothers, sisters and housewives has not been witnessed hereinbefore even during freedom movement. It was splendiferous a spectacle that will be enshrined in the pages of history of women's movement. Actually it bore a living demonstration of the lines of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the revolutionary poet, "Rise O Women, the Flame of Fire". Notwithstanding chill having been rolled down the spines of the rulers, whether in Delhi, West Bengal or other states, they might still feign to have not taken any cognizance of this. But this unflinching resolve to take on injustice will invigorate democratic movements that would surge forth in the days to come. Our revolutionary greetings to all who have participated in the movement.

What have the state government, its police-administration and the hospital authorities not done to suppress the truth? The Hospital authorities first called it a case of suicide and conspired to abolish all evidences. On 14 August night when the streets were flooded with protesting women and men, a group of miscreants vandalized R G Kar hospital, particularly the emergency ward. Shattered glass, damaged medical equipment including life-saving devices, broken beds, and destroyed medicines lay scattered across rooms on the ground floor. While doctors and nurses could be seen trying to erect their protest tents again. Earlier, they ransacked the protest tents erected in front of the hospital, physically assaulted the protesters and warned them of dire consequence if they continued their movement. They even intimidated the visibly

afraid nurses on duty, made indecent postures to them and said they would come back to outrage their modesty. During the whole operation, a large contingent of police along with RAF personnel stood as mute spectators.

Now let the common people decide who could have been behind such threat, intimidation and vandalism? Who other than the ruling TMC had been benefitted by this? In protest of such hooliganism, our Party decided at midnight to give a call of 12-hour general strike on 16 August. Just by campaigning on a single day, 15 August, the strike was made a running success. We congratulate the people for having responded so quickly and overwhelmingly to our call. The state Chief Minister had cautioned that strikes would not be tolerated in this state. Let her know that our Party along with other left parties had given call of many general strikes on people's issues during the Congress regime. During the CPI(M) rule also, our Party gave call for general strikes on eleven occasions in protest against various anti-people policies and atrocities. This time also disdaining the red eyes of the government, we gave call of General Strike because this is a democratic right achieved from the very days of freedom movement.

The horrific incident of R G Kar hospital is not the first one. Earlier also similar bestial attacks were brought down on innocent victims in Kamduni and other places but the guilty have remained unpunished till date. During the CPI (M) rule, similar incident occurred in Bantala and other places including Singur and Nandigram. Every day, news of brutal rape, gang-rape and murder of women including minor girls are reported from the states ruled by the BJP or the Congress.

The BJP-ruled UP tops the list in this regard while women-trafficking is highest in West Bengal. Even in the CPI(M)-rule Kerala, such incidents of sexual assault and rape are taking place. Why are the BJP, Congress or CPI(M) not developing any protest movements in the states ruled by them? May be that this time, under pressure of movement, those involved in the R G Kar hospital incidents might be hauled up. It might not be so also. Uniting with all others, we demand exemplary punishment to the guilty. At the same time, we would like to point out that throughout the country, eve-teasing, kidnapping, rape, gang-rape and killings are going on and increasing unabated with every passing day.

Why there is such alarming incidents of crime against women? No one is born as a rapist nor is one born with human values. Human values are acquired from the society through struggle. Likewise, one is afflicted with vices bred by this rotten society. Once the youths of this country gallantly fought against the British imperialist rulers braving bullets and batons, embraced gallows smilingly. But in independent India, why such perverse proclivities and criminal mind are noticed among a section of the youths? The answer was provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary of the SUCI(C) and an outstanding Marxist thinker of the era way back in 1974.

He said: *"...however acute a form oppression and penury may assume, the people of a country, a nation can still stand up firm and erect raising its head high even amidst severest of torture if its moral strength is not decimated....The Indian bourgeoisie too knows it, they have taken this lesson from history that just through state oppression, through coercion by the state machine and brutal repression by the police and the military—ultimately they may not be able to keep the people subdued. So the bourgeoisie conspires to break the backbone of the nation; cleverly destroy the moral backbone! Foster base instincts and vile traits-greed, propensity for cowardly attacks, indecency, inferiority complex, sycophancy, flattery to satisfy personal need...They want to break the backbone of the nation, they want to make man self-centred, develop antipathy to political movement among the people, and trample in the mud and destroy all sense of values."*

This warning has become a pathetic reality today. During British rule, in a society encumbered with age-old creeds of feudal orthodoxy, superstitious beliefs and obscurantism, eminent personalities like Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Jotiba Phule, Saratchandra, Premchand, Nazrul, Subramaniya Bharati, Netaji Subhas, Bhagat Singh, Jyotiprosad Agarwal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat, Masterda Surya Sen, Chandrasekhar Azad and others had tried to infuse new higher morality and ethics among the students and youths. Today, the ruling monopolists and their servitors have orchestrated a heinous design to consign these great men and their teachings to oblivion with a view to emasculating the youths from within. All efforts are made to plunge the youths in the dungeon of cultural degradation and sex-perversion by being lured towards liquor, drug, gambling, pornography, and such other toxins. A group of such conscienceless youths stripped of human essence are becoming pawns in the hands of reactionary the ruling dispensations. They are used to kill people, create terror during elections and acts of vandalism in exchange for money with the police remaining as indulgent onlookers. They are creations as well as protectors of oppressive capitalism. So long as capitalism would exist, like all other crises, there will be no abatement of murder and rape.

But then, should the suffering people remain passive? Surely not. Like the ongoing movement for justice for R G Kar hospital victim, there ought to be waves of one after another powerful mass movements. Side by side, it is imperative to inspire the adolescents and youths with the life and teachings of the aforesaid luminaries of both rural and urban areas. On Sundays and holidays, sports events, dramas, recitations, debates and discussions on the life and struggle of men of eminence need to be organized to give correct direction of life to these blooming and budding new generation. Also is necessary to build up committees and volunteer corps against atrocities on women with honest courageous men and women who will jump into action to save any endangered woman and will spearhead protest and resistance movements against all injustice.

We fervently appeal to all citizens as well as workers of other political parties to come forward and shoulder this responsibility in right earnest. Otherwise, whether you are associated with any party or not, there will be no guarantee to safety of women of our families nor will there be any guarantee of our male children being not spoiled.

At the end, let us recall the words of Rabindranath—

"He who does injustice and
he who tolerates it,
May thy divine wrath
strike them both as a straw
is burnt by fire!"

Also let us be reminded of Netaji Subhas's call: *"In schools, colleges, at home, in the streets, wherever you will see injustice, prevent that by jumping like a hero. Then you will instantaneously be hailed as a hero....whatever little I have achieved in my small life is by following this process"*. Our great leader and teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had said: *"If you do not voice protest against injustice, you are not worthy of being called a human being."* Let our task be decided based on these invaluable teachings.