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LAW & ORDER

Whose and for Whom?

by S. A. DANGE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THIS IS THE full text of the speech in Parliament of S. A. Dange, leader of the Communist Group, on 4 July 1967.

The speech deals with many important questions facing the country — Peking Radio broadcasts, Naxalbari problem, privy purses of princes, anti-working-class and pro-monopoly attitude of government, centre-state relations in the context of many non-congress ministries, and 'law and order' as enforced by the Home Ministry.

The speech aroused great interest in Parliament and outside. The newspapers of the country splashed it under bold headlines and emphasised its hard-hitting nature and many new formulations on current problems.

To meet numerous enquiries for the full text, the speech is being printed in a handy form as a booklet.

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ALL-ROUND CRISIS

Coming after a good debate on the extension of the emergency, and coming after the events of Tihar Jail yesterday, and the food questions, very little now remains to be added to the indictment that can be placed against the Home Ministry. Therefore, without going into too many details, I want to point out for the consideration of the ruling party, and the Home Minister who is one of the leading lights of that party, to take a view of the overall situation in the country, and try to find out if he with his programme, i.e., if the ruling party with its programme, can really find a way out of the crisis without putting the country into conditions of anarchy that seem to be developing here and there, and without taking recourse to that one single instrument over which he presides, i.e. the use of police force, the apparatus of violence in the country, to suppress the demands of the people. That is what I want them to consider, and therefore he would excuse me, or his party would excuse me, if I draw his attention to certain general features.

After getting power from the hands of the British, though not many things were corrected immediately, still they did try to do certain economic development, try to settle certain problems, and take the country forward according to their own lights. In those very days prices were rising, profits were rising—in 1949 the profit rate of the textile industry was 600 per cent—but it was all excused at that time because it was immediately after independence, and so they had to be given time. Agreed. Even at that time we told them: Gentlemen, you are following the road of capitalist development, and it will have its own logic, if you are not, from the very beginning, careful about it. Their answer to us was: We are developing

a welfare state. What is the welfare state? To hold the scales even between the exploiter and the exploited, between the landlord and the peasant, the worker and the capitalist, and so on, so that all the classes would go forward on the path of development as proposed by them. Certain development took place. They got the credit; we do not deny that credit. In the five year plans, they established the steel plant and engineering plants and they tried to develop the heavy industries. The programme for the abolition of landlordism was there; some compensation was given to them and some rights were taken away and some lands were given to the peasants and some tenancy rights were given. At the same time things were not developing as we intended and it did not bring benefits to the lowest classes of people.

But then another development was taking place with their of holding the scales even. Ultimately in this process, the power of the entrenched classes came to assert itself and the law of the capitalist development, of which we had told them, did overwhelm them. But they asked us: Do you not trust our bona fides? Do you not know that we fought the British and intend to do good to the country? We said: All right; we give you the trust but we should point out to you that the workers are being exploited and wealth is concentrating and this is going to behead democracy in this country. Then they replied: You are exaggerating; certain profits should be there. Well, profits should be there, six per cent or nine per cent or ten per cent. But what about one thousand per cent? Then they say that it was an exceptional case; the others are all normal. After all these developments, the third plan more or less crashed. The fourth plan is nowhere and the whole country is in the grip of a crisis and the crisis is now breaking out in several forms in all directions. They are losing their sense of direction and think of utilising the only arm left with them, the arm of the police, state violence against the people who want to protest. That seems to be the main function of the Home Ministry.

TALK OF VIOLENCE TO SIDETRACK ISSUES

They have developed the bourgeoisie to such an extent that now the workers and the normal people are not prepared to stand it. When they protest they point out this bari and that bari and somebody's statement somewhere or some violence somewhere else. Please do not sidetrack the country. I do not want to describe all its details. All the Members know them well enough. They were decrying our statement when we said that property was concentrating. They say that property is developing on the principle of trust as Mahatma Gandhi said. But the biggest trustee according to Hazari report, happened to be the Birla House. The biggest trustee of the people's wealth started with Birla House and there are 75 monopoly houses. They are the source of all corruption in this country. That has resulted in misery to the people. What could we do now except protest and lead strike struggles? All the tripartite conventions are violated. Even the joint consultative which functions under him is not allowed to discuss the Gajendragadkar report. All the conventions that developed, all the legislations are violated. Under such conditions, please tell us what we should do? Just suffer, be patient and die? We refuse to do that. In order to avoid certain strikes and struggles, people took to the lesser method, simple method of gherao. They made such a hullabaloo about it as if gherao is so injurious to the whole country. Gherao has an advantage.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya: Gherao involves personal violence. You should not suppress facts.

Sir, I have in my statement always said that the majority of gheraos have been without violence. In one or two places, if there was any violence, I am prepared to call it off in that place and censure the people concerned. I have said that. But they launched a sort of crusade against the gheraos. Well, Sir, I say that if gheraos are curtailed, general strikes will start. Why? Because you are not giving us any solution; not that we are enamoured of it. They are inevitable in the field of

industrial relations; the concentration of wealth is forcing the worker to act in order to exercise and defend his own rights and when he defends that, the Home Ministry steps in and says, "We know nothing except law and order."

LAW & ORDER TO BUTTRESS MONOPOLIES

If law and order is to buttress the development of monopoly, then the violation of that law and order is the sacred duty of the working class and the people. Law and order, if it stands on the side of the power of the exploiting class, then the other class has the sacred duty and right to violate that law and order, and establish their own law and justice, the law of the right to live, the right to work and the right to have a decent order in the country. You have violated this simple law written in the directive principles of the state policy: that you will have an adequate right to living; this is the fundamental policy of the Government, the right given in the Constitution. Give us the right to work.

But all those directive principles are violated. When they are violated, the workers protest. Has not a worker the right to protest? You guarantee the directive principles. Give the worker the tripartite convention which guaranteed a minimum living wage in 1957. But until 1967, every Wage Board has violated it. What is the Home Ministry going to do? Will they arrest the Birlas for violating this "law and order" as recommended in the Constitution, the rights and the directive principles of state policy? Will you carry out this state policy? Will these millowners be permitted to violate this? When the workers protest, then alone the law and order comes in.

Therefore, in the field of industrial relations, there is no other way for the working class to protect its right to live, adequate living, minimum living standards—the contractor beating the workers and raping the women of the working

class—all this cannot be stopped except by gheraoing, a great revolutionary concept of the working class, and that revolt is springing up. Instead of meeting the demands of the working class, you are trying to set in motion bigger forces of violence. That is my submission. Please do not do that. Already the protest has come in the form of defeat of the Congress in certain states. In certain states, the defeat is leading to the assertion of the rights of the masses by the governments that have come to power as in West Bengal or Kerala or Bihar.

Just consider the attitude of these gentlemen: their programme is for a classless society but in which the Birlas will rule; it is still there in the Congress programme—a classless society, a society based on love and non-violence. But the highest violence is practised privately in the industrial field, and in the agrarian field by the jotedars and landlords. Don't you know by your own experience? You have got the peasants down below. You do not dare to protect them; when they take the lathi in hand, as against the landlord's lathi, the Home Minister sends a gun; and if they take the gun, then as against that, you send a whole battalion; if the battalion fails, you send the army; if the army is not effective, then call in the Americans!

The police revolted in Delhi the other day. What was the remedy? You sent in the armed police. If the armed police revolted, you call in the army. If the army is not enough, then you call in the Americans! Is that your logic? It should not be the logic. I request you that it should not be the logic, because that logic will not lead to a solution of the problems; it will not lead to the retention of your power in this country. It would ultimately lead to the destruction of such monopoly power which is leaning on the big monopolists and the landlords.

DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION GROWING

Therefore, a grand democratic revolution is bound to come through an upsurge in this country, unless the ruling party decides to resolve the crisis by democratic methods and by not using superior violence. That is my general proposition which I am putting before you. Therefore, the solution is not either a change of this rule or that rule, or a change of this Minister or that Minister. That is not the required change. Even if you overthrow the West Bengal Government which is there today, you will not succeed in solving the problem. Even if you have a Congress ministry there, it will not solve the problem. There is a Congress ministry in Madhya Pradesh, which cannot even solve the tribal problem in Bastar, where there is no Pakistan border, no Nepal border, no Chinese agent functioning. The Maharaja was shot, because the tribals and the Maharaja, at least, in one exceptional case, agreed together, unlike in other places. You are talking of Naxalbari. But what is the explanation for Bastar?

For many years we were together in prison. Now we are on the opposite side and we want to overthrow your rule. True. But we cannot forget that we have been together for some time. I am wondering how you can be beguiled by all these machinations of Birlas and other monopolists into taking a course which is not able to solve the crisis at all. Naxalbari is not the main problem. It is merely a manifestation, partly correct, partly incorrect. Naxalbari is an agrarian revolt. It is not my reading; I have got proof of sane people to show that this is purely an economic problem. It is in many areas an agrarian problem not being resolved, tenants thrown out of the land, workers deprived of their dues, rent not reduced from 75 per cent to 25 per cent or 16 per cent as Maharashtra and some other states have done. All this crying evil is finding expression in peasant unrest and revolt and they are saying, "If the jotedar throws me out, I will go back and sit." A clash is inevitable. In such a clash, should you be on the side of the

jotedar? My friend talked about one Sampath, who is a TB patient. He did not say about his profession. TB patient is not a profession.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya: He is a young man, who has been a social worker all through his life.

Some jotedars are being armed secretly by handing over to them police guns to shoot the peasants rising in revolt. Taking advantage of some differences in the opposition parties, I am told some jotedars are clothing themselves with the name of SSP and coming forward as "heroic" defenders against violence and what not!

Does not the Home Minister know that throughout history, in America, England and everywhere, mine-owners have always kept armed gangs to suppress the miners from resorting to strikes, agitations and so on? It is a law of history. It is happening in Bihar, UP and Bengal and other places. I make this assertion on behalf of my party. So long as you permit the mine-owners to keep gangs, armed with weapons, to suppress the miners, the miners will exercise their right to resist that with the same weapons everywhere, whatever the cost. We cannot help it, because the law does not help us; the law helps the mine-owners, the law helps the land-owners, the factory-owners; but the law never goes to the aid of the workers and peasants. This is the position.

There is only one solitary case in the history of the Congress when law was sought to be used in favour of the workers, and the circumstances then were peculiar. When Messrs. Harvey and Company wanted to use blacklegs—Shri Rajagopalachari was the Chief Minister and Shri V. V. Giri was the Labour Minister—Shri V. V. Giri said: "I will not allow the blacklegs to be used by Harvey and Company; if they try to do so, I shall apply Section 144 and shall send police to the gates of the mills to throw away the blacklegs." Shri Rajagopalachari agreed to it. So, for the first time in the history law was used in favour of the workers, and that was the last time.

The Home Ministry is the key Ministry. Finance is the expropriator of my money and Home is an instrument for terrorising me if I protest against my expropriation. These are the two great pillars of this raj of the monopolists and the landlords. What are they going to do to change the picture? If they cannot do it and if the people revolt, what is to be done?

QUESTION OF PRIVY PURSES

There is such a hullabaloo about the princes. There is a talk of their privy purses being curtailed and some Congressmen are said to be repentant of that resolution.

An hon. Member: Really?

I do not know. Perhaps, they are going to be cut but some of them are repentant. Now, what is this question of privy purse? The big maharajas have got millions of pounds invested in England and America, like Jaipur, and others. Do they require to be given free electricity and water when a poor peasant in Rajasthan cannot get water and electricity, and to be given Rs. 67 lakhs, not Rs. 67 thousand but lakhs. And now the "revolutionary" proposal brought in is that this free supply of water and electricity will be stopped. It is revolutionary. Then? Then the princes will be reimbursed the sum paid by them henceforth. That means, the water and electricity will cease to be free; they will be paid for. But the cost of it will also be paid to them by Government! What is revolutionary in it?

Why are you trembling before the princes? It is an order which is anachronistic, which should have been extinct and which ought to be extinct. It is said it will be violation of a solemn covenant. We have another covenant, a solemn promise written in the Constitution, that the state will secure adequate means of living to every citizen. This is being violated completely. But the other solemn promise—of the parasitic gang

being paid crores of rupees out of the people's money—is solemnly kept. For what? So that they should not go on the side of the British. They were bought by the British once and now they were bought by the Congress Government. They are out to join whichever party or government that pays them.

There may be certain exceptions here and there. I do not say that all of them are bad. I know, for instance, that there was a maharaja who befriended the terrorists and met the expenses of that woman revolutionary who stayed in France. I know that one maharaja of Baroda did it, not the present one. There are certain maharajas who gave shelter to the rebellious peasant leaders in Maharashtra when they had taken to armed revolt against the British. There are certain small princes who did it; I know that. If you say that they should be given some compensation, yes, I am for it. If you say that for their anti-British service they should be given Rs. 5,000 a month, please do it; I agree with you.

But these fellows who say “no” unless you pay them, who will go to any side which pays, who were bought as traitors by the British, why should those traitors be paid? Let them go wherever they want. Instead of that, you bring in solemn promises! You have violated the solemn promises given to the workers, solemn promises given to the students, solemn promises given to the peasants, solemn promises given to the tenants, solemn promises about right to work, to live, to housing and so on. Now, this gentry which wanted to sell India or jeopardise the interests and independence of India—you bought them and you paid them very well; you rightly bought them—are they of use any more? Are we not historically developing an independent Indian society? My hon. friend there was quoting some Sanskrit proverb. Is it not true—does he not know—that in Indian history land was never private property? That the Jaimini Sutras said that the king cannot give a grant of land to anybody, न भूमिः स्यात् सर्वस्वाम्यन्तारात् —that *bhumi* shall not be an object of gift by the king because land is not private property and is commonly held.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya: दशोस वृत्तंरपि धर्म एषः

That is later on. Jaimini Sutra was written before that.

दशोस वृत्तंरपि धर्म एषः became law when Dushyanta came in and wanted to run away with Shakuntala. He is quoting wrong things. Jaimini Sutra is one thousand years older than that.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Shri Dange is a pandit; give up Marxism.

Now, what can I do? This pandit does not know that Marx was the greatest pandit and that in the second volume of *Capital* on circulation he quoted Manusmriti—how villages were organised by groups of tens and how revenue was distributed. Please, Mr. Professor, read Marx again. Let me enlighten him. Excuse me, I do not call him ignorant, but let me enlighten him. When he died poor Marx was studying Sanskrit and Arabic in order to know the true history of the Asiatic continent.

So, what I was saying was that Indian society is historically developing. Once land was not private property. Then it became private property. Then came the landlords. Then came the princes. Now we are in a capitalist society wherein landlordism has no place. A capitalist at least establishes a factory, supervises something, produces something. What is the prince doing except producing scandals by the score? The highest productivity of scandals in that sphere is well known right from the case of a maharaja, Mr. X, who had to pay £5 lakhs in England to hush up a scandal, up to the present times. Are they any more necessary for the developing of Indian society? The 592 covenants are a black spot on the democratic Constitution of this country which guarantees fundamental rights and adequate living rights but which are never translated into practice. Are these covenants consonant with our line of development and the perspective of the India we want to have?

Therefore my submission to the Home Minister again is, please carry out the resolution even if it was a “snap” resolu-

tion. Carry it out in a snap without giving them time to think how to overthrow you; otherwise, they will conspire and overthrow you by joining the others. Therefore, what I would suggest to the Home Minister is, please take this question seriously and do not pursue this conspiracy of overthrowing the West Bengal Government, shouting about gheraos and Naxalbaris. That is not going to solve the crisis; maybe, you may be able to overthrow the West Bengal Government but that is not going to solve the problem of Naxalbari.

PEKING RADIO BROADCASTS

As to utilising the Peking Radio, one knows very well that Mao Tse-tung is a senile gentleman. One knows very well that the philosophy he is preaching is no philosophy. He has converted himself into a prophet and produced a red book. With sword in one hand and The Book in the other he is trying to imitate some prophet and thereby trying to unite his own people whom he could not unite on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and Communism. He could not translate those theories into practice. The whole economic line there has gone wrong. Bonus is cut, wages of workers have gone down, there is a terrible crisis and the whole thing is covered up by putting ten million young good little boys who do not know history or economics, who are very revolutionary, who are told that Mao Tse-tung is a great name because it was he alone who gave the correct line for the revolution in China. Now he has become a prophet and has produced a book.

And what is the line? It is: China for Chinese, he for himself and let the world go to hell. A disruption of revolutions in every country where the fight is winning is the result of China's policy, of Mao Tse-tung's thought. This is the result. They disrupted Indonesian and many other revolutions by calling for "revolutions". If you call for a revolution at the wrong moment it helps the counter-revolution.

There is no necessity for an armed revolution in West Bengal today at all. To describe the ordinary peasant revolt as a sort of an uprising to establish liberated areas on the Peking Radio is just to help Shri Chavan, the Home Minister, and the Congress to suppress that thing with greater violence. Therefore he is very glad about that broadcast on the Peking Radio; in fact, they want more such broadcasts so that they can create a hullabaloo in the country that it is not an agrarian problem, that it is not a problem of tenants, that this is a problem of China coming and starting trouble in Naxalbari. This is all because Peking Radio has said so. Should we take it so seriously and convert a simple agrarian dispute into a sort of rebellion and try to send the army and all that?

We certainly stand for the defence of the peasants' interests in West Bengal. Our party has passed a resolution that we are going to defend the peasants against the jotedars' offensive. We certainly do not agree with all those Peking broadcasts because they are disruptive of the democratic revolution. We know it. The number of compliments that Peking Radio gives to our party is well known. We certainly will not be supporting anything which they are proposing. But we do support the struggle of Naxalbari peasants. It is not because of Peking Radio; it is not because they are taking to arms. The arms cannot be taken up by anybody or by everybody at any time or at every time. If at all they are necessary, there are conditions for it and there are times for it. There is no such situation in India. Therefore, we are proposing a democratic method of a democratic revolution being carried out in the interests of the workers and the peasants.

We certainly admit our desire to overthrow your misrule. There is no doubt about that. But that does not mean that they should take advantage of Peking Radio broadcasts and let loose the soldiery and let loose a whole battalion of gangsters and of jotedars. They should not think that the solution is to send armed forces and start shooting.

You send food there. It is already admitted, that though 15,000 tonnes were promised, you sent only 10,000 tonnes. There is a shortage of 5,000 tonnes. How will the stomachs of those who are short of these 5,000 tonnes be filled? Those who do not get food, what will they do? Will they not get angry? Will they not pick up a stone or a lathi? Will they not beat somebody who starts preaching them non-violence, peace and truth and that the Government is doing everything for them. Can't you see that they are going to lose their temper? Therefore, I plead with you that if we do not get out of this crisis that is enveloping the whole country and its economy, we are going to land ourselves in the hands of Americans.

They are already dictating their terms. The fertiliser plant they supplied is broken junk; they gave you second-hand machinery. They have already laid a wrong line between Haldia and Barauni. Shri Asoka Mehta has been pleading for them and these people have run away saying, "We have done our job; we have taken our money. That is all." This is what is happening. Why is it happening? It is because there is no vigilance. Why is there no vigilance; it is because you are blinded by the big monopolists. When the big rich come to the Ministry, even the big Minister gets up from his seat. But when a worker comes to the Ministry, he asks his chaprasi as to what is his name and why he has come. There is this class differentiation. Maybe, Shri Chavan may be more polite and he is polite. Yesterday, he gave a suave speech. But I can tell him that he cannot solve the crisis of 75 monopolies by his suave manner of speech. They will hear him and say, "Gentleman, we are not going to give you our black money unless and until we get our terms, unless and until you suppress the workers by whatever means you can.

My submission, therefore, is this. The Home Ministry is on the side of the monopolists. Will it give up that? The Home Ministry is on the side of the landlords who after the abolition of landlordism are surviving in a very strong and good way.

The Home Ministry says that it is on the side of the workers but behaves as if it is on the side of the capitalists. That is quite clear. I can give you a thousand instances, in coal mines, in oil, in textile industry, everywhere, to show that it is with them. He knows it; he belongs to Bombay and he goes there and sees it. See the fraud of the United Mills where a man ran away with Rs. 96 lakhs and you could not touch his hair. You can only catch a sub-inspector for selling a railway ticket of Rs. 5 for Rs. 7—and say, corruption caught!—and put more security force, public sector security force, Central Secretariat security force, everywhere security force, and finally a security force against security force! This is the contradiction in which you will be drowned.

What I submit is that unless he changes his class character, unless he comes definitely on the side of the workers and the peasants and gives up tolerating those who are working against that policy, unless he agrees to help the people to fulfil their ambitions and unless he ceases utilising this fantastic Peking Radio, which is disruptive of revolutionary movement, we cannot support the grants being given to the Home Ministry to continue its career any more.