

March 23, martyrdom day of Bhagat Singh

SALUTING BHAGAT SINGH Pledge to uphold His Ideals

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“The proletariat will win. Capitalism will be defeated. Death to Imperialism” read Shaheed Bhagat Singh, wearing a red scarf, from a telegram message that was to be sent to the Third International on the occasion of Lenin’s death anniversary in 1930. This gesture made by Bhagat Singh not only underlined the international unity of the communist movement but also highlighted the core of his ideology, around which he wanted to build a free India and a prosperous world. In his Last Petition to the Governor of Punjab, Bhagat Singh further declared that a “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” and that these exploiters “may be purely British Capitalist or mixed British and Indian or even purely Indian”, they must be fought against and defeated. In the context of Bhagat Singh’s understanding of society, we must take a look at the reality of our times and draw some lessons from his supreme sacrifice.

Inequality and concentration of wealth with a select few have reached unprecedented proportions in recent times and Bhagat Singh, in his own times called them out. Owners of capital are being celebrated as wealth-creators today while the toiling, hardworking masses struggle for two square meals and a roof above their heads. At the same time, these capitalists themselves are creating insecurity in the country at all fronts by engaging in illegal, reckless and immoral profiteering by damaging nature, resources and livelihoods.

The Adani Group’s unethical business practices are out in the open now and the Government, by showering all benefits and projects to this group has contributed in jeopardizing critical infrastructure, including national defense. Government’s stout support and backing to the Adani Group makes it clear that the decline in the living standard of our population and concentration of massive wealth with a few is a corollary to the BJP’s adherence to neo-liberal capitalism. We must recall what Lenin said of this dastardly system, “as long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will be utilized not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists.”

When we are reaching the culmination of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, concerns about the compatibility of capitalism with a sustainable future for humanity are being raised all across the globe. Crises of finance capital is visible in the Adani Group losing its market value and a more than 150 years old investment bank Credit Suisse reaching near bankruptcy. Serious concerns about the survival of life as we know it need redressal in the wake of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise. The inhumane system of exploitation is using all its evil tools to ensure its survival, including capturing governments, dividing people, creating conflicts and wars. Innocent lives are being lost so that the prevailing order, where only a chosen few are eating away the collective labors of the society. This is what Bhagat Singh rose in opposition to and gave his life to uphold the cherished ideals of socialism, equality, prosperity and peace. He wanted to “organize the reconstruction of the whole society on the socialist basis.” He was absolutely right and we can say without a shred of doubt that if humanity is to survive, the system based on greed and divisions has to be replaced by a system based on cooperation and harmony.

In our national life, Shaheed Bhagat Singh has come to occupy a unique position as a symbol of patriotism and sacrifice. He is a martyr for the cause of the workers, peasants, youth and students of the country. Forces of reaction, divide and strife are trying very hard to appropriate the legacy of Bhagat Singh by distorting his image. Bhagat Singh was a revolutionary thinker and secularism was in his blood. By taking the words of Bhagat Singh to the people, we must ensure that every India should know what his martyrdom meant and for what ideals he sacrificed his life. In Bhagat Singh’s own words, “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.”

It is our task to make sense of the world around us through Bhagat Singh’s work and take his legacy to its fruition that is by achieving a true rule of the people in our country by a “life of constant struggle, suffering and sacrifice”. Evils of inequality, caste system, communalism, patriarchy and conflict around us are growing, we need to fight and defeat them and claim victory for the people. Struggling for that cherished aim is the true homage to Shaheed Bhagat Singh.