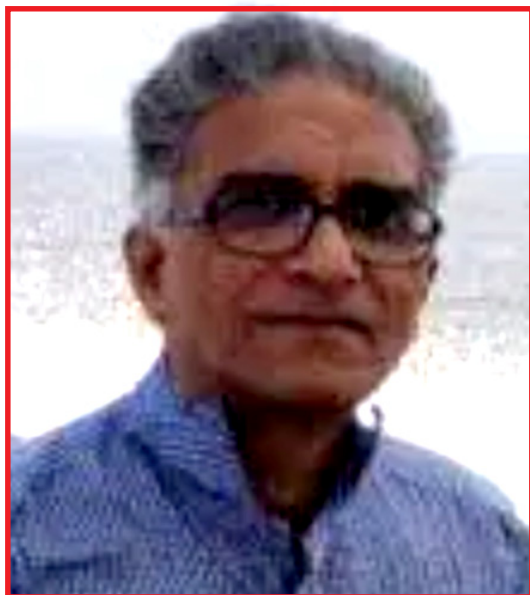


**Central Committee Member
Comrade Sridhar who Gave Leadership
by Standing Staunchly in the Ups and
Downs of the Revolutionary Movement
will Continue to Inspire Us!**



**Central Committee
Communist Party of India (Maoist)**

September 2015

Central Committee Member Comrade Sridhar who Gave Leadership by Standing Staunchly in the Ups and Downs of the Revolutionary Movement will Continue to Inspire Us!

Comrade Sridhar Srinivasan (Vishnu, Vijay), Central Committee Member of CPI(Maoist) and former Secretary of the party's Maharashtra State Committee, passed away at 9.45 am on 18 August 2015, minutes after undergoing a massive heart attack. He breathed his last among the party leadership comrades and cadres and PLGA guerrillas in one of the Maoist movement areas. He was only 57 years of age. His demise was quite sudden and unexpected as he was not suffering from any life-threatening illness and a recent check-up did not detect any serious problem with his health. But six and half years of harsh prison life following his arrest in 2007 took its toll. It is a testimony to his indomitable revolutionary spirit that no consideration of health could dissuade him from taking up the arduous journey to join his comrades in a movement area when the opportunity finally presented itself after waiting for it for one and a half years since his release in the end of 2013. It was in the midst of this journey that he passed away. Several leadership comrades, a large number of comrades from different committees and many PLGA units working in this movement area performed his last rites with party honours. It was a moving moment for all the comrades present there. They paid him revolutionary red homage with heavy hearts and

held memorial meetings. His lifelong contribution to India's new democratic revolutionary movement and his untiring service to the country's oppressed masses was fondly remembered. They recalled his proletarian qualities and took pledge to keep his communist ideals alive by advancing the protracted people's war.

The making of a revolutionary

As an inseparable part of the country's revolutionary objective situation, in addition to the existence of a revolutionary working class party a favourable social environment such as a democratic environment in the family with liberal-progressive ideas can play a significant role in moulding a person into a revolutionary. Comrade Sridhar grew up in such an atmosphere in a family which was quite unconventional in its outlook. He was the youngest of five siblings in this urban middle class family. His parents inculcated the habit of reading in all their children from early childhood. Encouraged by his parents, Sridhar developed an unquenchable thirst for knowledge from his childhood and became a voracious reader. Influenced by his elder brother, he also developed keen interest in mathematics and the sciences, particularly astrophysics. While his parents were very concerned about the children's education, they gave the children the freedom to pursue the lives of their choice. So treading a very different path from his siblings, when Sridhar dropped out of college to join the revolutionary movement as a professional revolutionary (PR) in the newly formed Marxist-Leninist (ML) party in the city of Bombay (Mumbai), his family did not stand on his way, even though they did not support his choice. In fact, they came forward to support him on several occasions during his long revolutionary life when he was in need of such support.

Playing a vital role in the revolutionary movement of Maharashtra

Maharashtra and the city of Mumbai holds a special place in the Indian revolution. It is a crucial economic centre of the ruling classes and is considered to be the country's financial capital. It has a large concentration of the labouring classes. While the state has an illustrious history of militant working-class and peasant movements, it has also been a fortress of entrenched revisionism as well as Brahmanical Hindu-fascism. It also has a glorious legacy of militant Dalit movements and Adivasi revolutionary movement. With all its peculiarities, Maharashtra and Mumbai had always posed special challenges for communist revolutionaries. When the dark clouds of Emergency imposed by the fascist Indira Gandhi regime cleared up in March 1977, an upsurge of political mass movements including those led by various Marxist-Leninist streams erupted in the country. It is in this post-Emergency political situation that Marxism became a topic of hot debate within the student community. Inspired by the Naxalbari movement, many Marxist study circles sprouted in Bombay city. One such study circle took shape in Elphinstone Government College in south Bombay. Sridhar was a second year student of Arts in the college where he was pursuing his Bachelor's degree. He got drawn into this study circle. Soon he was deeply influenced by MLM and Marxist-Leninist politics and began not only to actively participate in it but started organising the students of different colleges as an activist. Students began rallying under the banner of Vidyarthi Pragati Sangathan (VPS). By 1980, VPS had grown rapidly with several full-timers and activists. VPS militantly fought back the goons of student organisations affiliated to the Congress and Shiv Sena parties in various colleges in the course of carrying out their programmes. Comrade Sridhar was one of the leaders of the historic takeover of

Bombay University by the college students against fee hike in 1979. At the peak of the state's revolutionary student movement VPS had units in most of the colleges in the city and its nearby suburbs. Influenced by the student movement led by VPS, a democratic students' organisation was also formed in Goa. This student organisation was guided by Sridhar. It was in 1979 that inspired by the Jagityal peasant movement under the leadership of the APPC of CPI(ML), Bombay City Committee of the newly formed ML party in Maharashtra came in contact with it. In May 1980, the Bombay City Committee-ML merged with the recently formed CPI(ML)(People's War).

The new crisis in which the world capitalist economy got embroiled in from the early 1970s grew more acute in the next few years. Monopoly corporate houses introduced greater modernisation throughout the world by adopting advanced machinery and capital-intensive techniques in order to cut down variable capital to come out of this crisis. The impact of this shift fell most of all on the workers of these countries and all backward countries who suffered job-loss, wage-cuts and harsher working conditions. Big industrial centres in India such as Bombay and its large textiles industry too were affected by these global economic changes. Some larger textile mills that underwent modernisation by collaborating more closely with the modern technology and capital of imperialists prospered, while a large number of them which were unable to make this transition became bankrupt and closed down. These closed-down factories became the sites of a thriving real-estate business. This rendered a large number of mill workers jobless and created havoc among all workers. They bitterly opposed the lock-outs, closures and retrenchment by getting organised under the banner of trade unions (TU), particularly the TU led by Datta Samant – the main militant TU leader in the city. In such a volatile period, revolutionary work in Bombay spread rapidly. Work

expanded to the slums and among the workers. Naujawan Bharat Sabha (NBS) was formed in 1981 which gained a name for itself due to its extensive propaganda and agitation work. As the work expanded among the workers, a trade union organisation named AMKU was formed in 1981. AMKU and NBS wholeheartedly supported and joined the historic textiles strike of Bombay in 1982 and participated in many militant mass protests of the textile workers and others. They became the rallying point for the most militant and forward-thinking section of the textile workers. Comrade Sridhar was one of their organisers who contributed to the advancement of the movement. He was involved in militant actions during the strike period. Upcoming dynamic cadres like him, however, faced the ire of a few rightist leadership elements of the party in Bombay who labelled these actions as “militant economism”. Nevertheless, facing several daunting adversities, the strike became one of the most militant struggles of the time in the country on which the state unleashed ruthless repression.

Besides Bombay, workers got organised under the banner of AMKU in Maharashtra’s Thane, Bhiwandi and some other industrial centres and peripheral areas. Gadchiroli Adivasi peasant movement too had begun in June 1980 under the leadership of the party, just before the outbreak of historic textile mill workers’ strike in Bombay. After Bombay City Committee merged with CPI(ML)(PW), the Maharashtra comrades with the guidance of the CC prepared a Vidarbha Perspective to expand revolutionary work in cities like Nagpur, Chandrapur, Balharshah and the rural areas adjacent to them with a strategic view to build the protracted people’s war in Maharashtra. Keeping this perspective in mind, Maharashtra State Committee started sending PRs to Vidarbha. To propagate agrarian revolutionary politics among the peasantry, particularly the landless and poor peasants of Vidarbha, VPS organised ‘Go to Village’

campaigns. During one such campaign in early 1980s, Sridhar along with ten to twelve other students were arrested in Sironcha of Gadchiroli district by the police. His mother travelled all the way from Bombay to bail out the arrested students. Sridhar was once again arrested with other students on their way to attend the 1st District Conference of the revolutionary peasant organisation (the present Dandakaranya Adivasi Kishan Mazdoor Sangh – DAKMS) in Kamlapur village of Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district in 1984.

Internal struggle broke out in the party in early 1985 about certain ideological-political questions and organisational issues, as a result of which CC functioning got paralysed. In this backdrop to resolve this serious problem, as a part of holding plenums of all state units of the party, Maharashtra state plenum was organised in 1986. In the plenum, serious differences came to the fore between the comrades in the Regional Committees and the State Coordinator of Maharashtra (CCM) who was in the CC majority group. At about this time in early 1987, Maharashtra state unit got separated from CPI(ML)(PW). The second state conference was held in this backdrop in September 1987. The conference rejected the documents presented by the State Coordinator and adopted alternative documents prepared by Sridhar and some other comrades. A new State Committee (SC) was elected for the first time and Sridhar became its Secretary. The main call of this conference was to strengthen and expand the party by building mass organisations, widening the class struggle and recruiting the advanced elements who came forward in the process into the party. The conference resolved that though the decision to dissolve the CC was incorrect, it should not rush for unity with CPI(ML)(PW) by deciding the issue on the basis of a majority but should maintain fraternal relations with all the state units of the party. It also decided that the state units of revolutionary mass organisations

which were constituents of the all-India mass organisations like AIRSF and AILRC should make every effort to work actively and strengthen these organisations in the state.

But this internal crisis of the party had badly impacted the comrades of Maharashtra who joined the movement during the rapidly growing influence of Naxalbari revolutionary politics and militant struggles of the early 1980s and demoralised a lot of them. Some of them moved away from the movement disillusioned, while several others who remained lowered their level of activity. Owing to this the mass organisations especially in Bombay became weakened. As a result, most of the plans for growth and expansion prepared after the state conference became non-implementable. In spite of this, Sridhar along with some comrades did not get demoralised, stood firmly by the party line and fought all the wrong tendencies. He stood in the forefront of the comrades who remained steadfast even amidst such a difficult period. The comrades who continued in the party decided to safeguard it by courageously swimming against the tide and strove hard to build the movement in the state.

Fresh attempts at building the movement

Maharashtra State Committee found itself in a new situation in the late 1980s when subjective forces became weak, state terror on the Gadchiroli revolutionary Adivasi movement intensified and there was no CC to provide guidance. In this situation they were compelled to abandon the rural work in the Vidarbha Perspective area. The SC and the comrades who continued after the party internal crisis prepared the western Maharashtra rural perspective with the aim of building base area by building the rural movement. The perspective laid down the outlines of a plan to initiate work by keeping Nasik district as the centre. This region had a strategic importance

and provided many favourable conditions. The political, organisational work was started in the late 1980s and continued for about four-five years. Even though serious efforts were put, mass base was developed in preliminary form and experience was acquired to some extent, the movement could not be continued amidst growing state repression due to the arrests of some comrades who were responsible for mass work, the backing out of two state leadership cadres from the area and due to the scarcity of forces to allot for this work.

Comrade Sridhar shifted the main area of his activity to the Vidarbha region in 1992 to guide the coalmine workers' movement and other movements. He led two action teams to punish police informers in urban areas of Vidarbha. A Special Plenum of the Maharashtra State was held in September 1992 to take some crucial political and organisational decisions and resolve some important questions raised at the Plenum of 1986. In this plenum, the delegates adopted the documents presented by the SC after rejecting the alternative documents presented by some leading comrades.

For the first time after the dissolution of the CC and the separation of the Maharashtra unit from CPI(ML)(PW) in early 1987, APSC delegation and Maharashtra delegation re-established relations in late 1988. Since then a cordial relation was maintained between the two state units. In September 1990, a central plenum was conducted with the delegates from the AP, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu State units and a COC of the CPI(ML)(PW) was elected. The COC continued the relations that were established with Maharashtra State Committee. During this period of cordial relations between the two which lasted for three years, reports on developments in the revolutionary movement were exchanged, the CC crisis along with the principled struggle waged by the Maharashtra comrades against the opportunist CC majority group and the mistakes made by the CC minority group in dealing with the internal struggle and

the unification of genuine communist revolutionaries was thoroughly discussed. This commonality of understanding resulted in the Maharashtra State Committee joining CPI(ML)(PW) in 1994. Comrade Sridhar was part of this entire process and played a very crucial role in it along with Maharashtra State Committee.

After Maharashtra State Committee became the state unit of CPI(ML)(PW) in 1994, all state units conducted their state conferences in a run up to the All India Special Conference (AISC) held in 1995. AISC played a crucial role in synthesising the past practice of the party and the movement and setting new tasks before it. In this conference the delegates from Maharashtra played an active role. In particular, they forcefully kept their consistent position about the wrong process of the dissolution of the CC in 1987 and convinced the entire party. In this aspect Comrade Sridhar's role was very important.

The Ninth Congress of CPI(ML)[PW] was held in 2001. This Congress has a very important place in the history of the Indian revolutionary/ML movement. It was a significant step in advancing the movement as it correctly reviewed the entire history of the party, enriched its strategy and tactics of PPW and developed some policies and formulated new tactics. Comrade Sridhar actively participated in the deliberations of the Congress. He played a positive role in defeating the left-adventurist line that came up in the Congress and in enriching the party line as a part of this struggle. Sridhar was elected to the CC in this Congress. He also became a member of the newly constituted South Western Regional Bureau (SWRB) of the party comprising of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala soon after the Congress.

In the state conference of 2001, enriching and immediately implementing the Vidarbha Perspective was adopted as the one of main

tasks of the party in the state in the new conditions. To facilitate the implementation of this perspective the CC handed over the responsibility of Balaghat-Gondia division to Maharashtra unit. Till that time DKSZC was guiding the work in this area as a part of the DK guerrilla zone. Sridhar as the State Committee Secretary (SCS) and a CCM took charge of guiding this rural movement. The movement in that division was facing severe state repression and some serious internal problems at that time. Sridhar strove to boost up the morale of the cadres and consolidate the movement. While working in this division, he never asked for any special concessions and facilities as a leader in spite of his ill health. He tried to participate in and share responsibilities in all activities with the cadres which won their hearts and endeared him to them. He put efforts to the extent possible to sustain and steadily advance the movement.

The historic merger of CPI(ML)[PW] and MCCI took place in September 2004 and the unified CPI(Maoist) was born. A Central Committee (Provisional) of the new party was constituted to lead the revolution and Sridhar was elected as one of its members. Even though the movement in Maharashtra was weak at that time, the growing unrest against the disastrous neo-liberal country-selling policies of the Vajpayee-led NDA government, the threat of rising Brahmanical Hindu-fascism, etc., generated much opposition and brought some social movements closer to the party in the state. The emergence of CPI(Maoist) and the successful Mumbai Resistance (MR-2004) galvanised the revolutionary movement in the country and particularly in Maharashtra. When almost all political parties betrayed the Dalits after the ghastly killing of a Dalit family in Khairlanji by the casteist forces led by the landlords in September 2006, our party supported the Dalits completely and placed the correct policy and path for liberation from caste oppression and discrimination. Due to this the Maoist movement emerged as a ray of hope for the Dalits of

Maharashtra. In this political situation they rallied under the banner of the militant anti-caste organisation which expanded rapidly in the state. Units of the organisation were formed in several districts and Dalit students and youth started to associate with the movement in considerable numbers. All these factors contributed to the creation of a favourable condition for the development of the revolutionary movement in Maharashtra in the first few years of the new millennium.

The ruling classes intensified the use of fascist methods including the enactment of draconian laws such as POTA to crush the growing tide of people's movements, persecute the religious minorities and suppress the revolutionary movement throughout the country. The Maoist party and its leadership were targeted, revolutionary mass organisations were banned and fascist campaigns like Salwa Judum and Sendra were initiated in the movement areas in different forms. Amidst this severe countrywide state repression, the Unity Congress-9th Congress of CPI(Maoist) was successfully held in early 2007. Sridhar put forward his difference of opinion clearly for discussion and actively participated in the polemical debates in the Congress, criticised the left-adventurist line that emerged in it and contributed to the defeat of the wrong line. The Congress elected him to the Central Committee of the party. He subsequently became a member of its SWRB. Alarmed by the success of the Congress and the advancement of the revolutionary movement in the country, with the guidance of the imperialists particularly US imperialists the state cracked-down on the Maoist movement even more ferociously. Many leadership comrades at different levels were killed or arrested by the enemy all over the country. Maharashtra too faced the brunt of this counter-revolutionary attack and resulted in the heavy loss of subjective forces. It pained Sridhar to see the movement getting weakened. His own arrest in mid-2007 came as a big loss to the movement of the state.

Arrest and jail life

Comrade Sridhar was arrested from outside his den in a joint operation by the Mossad-type APSIB and the notorious Anti-Naxal Team of Mumbai Police late in the night of 18 August 2007. He faced days of intensive and continuous interrogation and mental torture by APSIB, Anti-Naxal Team and various intelligence agencies of the centre and several states. A few months later when he got the opportunity, Sridhar wrote an analysis of the interrogation sessions, arrest and interrogation methods, latest techniques and devices used in interrogation, methods of spying and tracking down targets employed by the enemy, etc., and sent it to the party. It helped the party understand the enemy tactics better. More than 60 false cases were foisted on him by the police of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, etc. who are adept at cooking up false cases. With such a large number of cases, the state tried its best to prolong his incarceration. It even managed to convict Sridhar in a trumped-up case based on false evidence and hand down a sentence of six years. He often expressed the anguish of confinement and vividly described jail life in the letters he wrote to his sister. In one of these letters he wrote,

The most horrible thing in this damn confinement is the loss of freedom and liberty. I always valued these things but now having lost it its value to me has increased at least a thousand-fold. But I am not moping or letting myself get depressed. I am looking at it as a learning experience (though given a choice I will willingly have forsaken it). The jail has lot of interesting people especially the kind that my life naturally bring me into contact with –drug peddlers and dealers, rapists, petty thieves and cheats, international smugglers and gangland bosses. And also a lot of poor, helpless and mostly innocent people whose only crime was poverty. Life in jail is almost a replica of society and life outside – only in a closed contained and may be more

concentrated form. The haves the have-nots, the oppressor and the oppressed, the violence, the perversions as well as the good and the noble – all reproduced in all its details. In that sense I cannot imagine that jails can ever play the reformatory role which is advertised in huge wall-written slogans within the jail walls. How can a criminal reform if the conditions which took him to criminal life are reproduced with great intensity day in and day out within the jails?

While waiting for his freedom, Sridhar continued to educate and inspire young cadres who were in jail with him. Never to rest, he utilised his time in reading books and studying the domestic and international situation. He interacted with different Islamic activists and tried to understand their movement. Early morning hours were spent in writing long letters and political notes to comrades in different jails. He and other comrades carefully studied the charge-sheets, made notes, and helped their lawyers in preparing the defence. While in jail, they helped prisoners in getting bail and small relieves. He also strove hard to keep himself healthy through regular physical exercise.

Sridhar and other comrades of Maharashtra conducted class struggle in the jail for their just rights as political prisoners as well as of other prisoners. For this he participated in many jail struggles and undertook several hunger strikes along with other jailed comrades. In the process he and a few other comrades studied jurisprudence and the legal system, the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), etc., and deepened their learning. His long jail life provided an opportunity to closely understand the judicial and penal system peculiar to a semi-colonial semi-feudal country like India – something which very few in confinement seriously undertake. In this way he tried to make the best use of his time in prison. Yet, he yearned to get back. He was in a hurry to join his comrades in the main areas of class struggle. In one of his notes to his lawyer, he wrote, “It is really frustrating to sit in jail and watch the battle like the blind Dhritarashtra

– anxiously depending for the news of the battle on secondary sources. Hope one gets out with sufficient time to be capable of contributing one’s poor worth to the cause of the people. The war clouds are thick on the horizon and it has already begun to pour there. It is only a matter of time before the clouds come and let lose their acid rains on us here in urban areas, at least so it seem sitting in the confines of this cell.”

Comrade Sridhar was released from prison in 2013, after six and a half years of incarceration. It was his wish to go into the main class struggle areas at the earliest. But he had to wait for another one and a half years to undertake this journey due to the high-level of state surveillance, the danger of his re-arrest and the severe repression in these areas. While waiting, he utilised this time in acquainting himself with the developments in the domestic and international situation. Particularly, he tried to clearly understand the changes in the conditions of the revolutionary movement and that of the enemy and to get updated about the current thinking of the country’s intellectuals, writers and different oppressed sections. He also studied the growth of Brahmanical Hindu-fascism in the recent past. Moreover, he busied himself in preparing jail reports and formulating concrete proposals to place before the CC. It is with such painstaking preparations and high hopes for the future of the movement that he undertook the difficult journey to one of the main struggle areas in 2015. He breathed his last in the course of this journey on 18 August 2015.

An ideal communist revolutionary

From the late 1970s till 2006, starting as a student activist and taking various party responsibilities at different levels – as a PR, State Committee member, Maharashtra State Committee Secretary and CC member – Comrade Sridhar tried to effectively lead the party for over two and a half decades. He stood steadfast in every critical juncture and in all the ups and downs of the movement and firmly defended the

party line and strove to creatively apply it. He upheld MLM as the only scientific ideology of the world proletariat to successfully accomplish the World Socialist Revolution. When wrong ideological and political trends raised their head in the party at the central and state level, he fought against them and contributed to advancing the movement by overcoming them. He stood firm even when the movement faced adverse conditions, particularly in Maharashtra. In CC meetings, lower committee meetings and discussions with fellow comrades, he clearly kept his opinion and did not waste time in unnecessary debates or discussions. He set an example before us with his personal qualities such as extensive reading, adherence to proletarian discipline, firmness, commitment, simplicity, an ever-smiling disposition and warmth in relating to his comrades. He did not hesitate to take up and fulfil whatever responsibility the party entrusted him with a spirit of learning by doing in spite of his health problems. Most of his time and efforts during his long revolutionary life was directed towards developing the party and the working-class, student, youth and anti-caste organisations in urban Maharashtra. Therefore his role in developing revolutionary urban movement will remain particularly significant for the party. In this way, he acquired maturity and emerged as a tried and tested revolutionary leader through decades of continuous political-organisational work.

Though the enemy could prevent Comrade Sridhar from directly participating in the revolutionary movement by keeping him behind bars for several years at a crucial period, as a true member of the apex body of our party he continued to be preoccupied with the development of the movement outside. He thought seriously how best to contribute to it from within the jail and after getting released. Not surprisingly, by the time he came out of jail, he already had in mind the outlines of a good plan for the present juncture regarding his role in the movement. Just at the time when he had won his freedom from the clutches of the enemy and got into a position to contribute to the Indian revolution at a higher level, death cruelly snatched him away from our midst.

All the people in the world live for themselves, but only some live and die for the vast majority of the society, the oppressed multitudes and the whole humanity without thinking about themselves or their narrow self-interest. Though it had been the case in every class society, this applies even more to the present era. At a time when imperialist culture and values promoting self-centredness, selfishness and individualism hold sway, we do not find people like Comrade Sridhar in large numbers who dedicate their lives to the oppressed masses and the struggle for their liberation. It is not so important in what class, caste, nationality or gender one is born. What is more important is the cause for which one lives and dies; whether one fights for this cause for a short period of one's life or persists in it till the last breath. Comrade Sridhar exemplified this with his life. For over three and a half decades he led the life of a committed revolutionary, worked untiringly for the development of the new democratic revolution in Maharashtra and India, willingly went through all hardships that came in the way and gave the highest sacrifice by laying down his life. Though he is no longer with us, Comrade Sridhar has left unforgettable memories with all of us – be it his comrades, family or friends. Everyone who knew him will cherish and value these memories. His work and his memories will continue to serve the oppressed and their struggle for liberation. The CC on behalf of the entire party, PLGA and the revolutionary mass organisations pays Comrade Sridhar its red homage on his martyrdom and takes pledge to hold high the banner of socialism and communism by learning from his proletarian values, his lifelong commitment to MLM and his steadfastness in facing all trying circumstances on the protracted path of revolutionary struggle.



Capitalism will not transform by itself into socialism; capitalism will not like a caterpillar eats its way to transforming into a butterfly. Quantitative changes will not by themselves eventually result in qualitative transformations. There is the problem of leap from one stage to another qualitative stage which must be effected by a special force. In this case this force is the proletariat and socialist society can come about only by the conscious action of the class - by this class destroying the old and constructing the new.

Marxism has so far been the best and most perfect critique of capitalism and past societies. There is nothing in capitalism (however new and novel it may seem) which cannot be explained or is inconsistent with the Marxist critique of capital. May be one may have to extend some concepts from first principles, but the framework exists to understand this phenomena. However, Marxist science has a lot to develop in its theory and understanding of post-revolutionary society - developing the new relations of production and also creating the material conditions and consciousness to sustain these socialist relations. There is a need to draw the right lessons from the experience of the last century in attempting to build socialism.

- Comrade Sridhar

(Excerpts from a letter written from Nagpur Central Prison on 30-04-2012)