### COMMON CAUSE

**A REGISTERED SOCIETY**

**AN ORGANISATION FOR VENTILATING COMMON PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE**

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The Governing Council of Common Cause is greatly shocked and anguished over the dastardly assault on its distinguished member, Shri Prashant Bhushan, by certain fascist elements yesterday afternoon. The attack is symptomatic of the growing intolerance and steady erosion of democratic values in our polity. The space for dissent is constantly shrinking and violence of all kinds is increasingly being employed to register protest. We all need to stand up and fight the regressive forces responsible for these ominous trends.

We are relieved to learn that Shri Prashant Bhushan has recovered from this ordeal and are proud of him for the composure and forbearance displayed in the face of grave physical danger. His conduct was in keeping with his unmatched record of courageous and selfless pursuit of public causes. He has for long spearheaded the campaigns for protection of human rights, judicial accountability and restoration of probity in public life, enduring in the process a great deal of verbal violence and attempts at character assassination orchestrated by vested interests.

The coverage of this shameful incident on certain TV channels has raised some disconcerting questions in our minds. Shouldn’t the channel gloating over its exclusive coverage have realized that the footage repeatedly shown by it may enable an obscure outfit with incipient political ambitions to encash the notoriety gained to promote its crazed ideology and inspire other fringe players and their sponsors to perpetrate similar outrages? Shouldn’t the other channels that have had to make do with borrowed footage pose the same question to themselves? How real is the danger that the no-holds-barred competition for TRPs may push some of the ethically challenged news channels and sections of the print media into manufacturing news of this kind?

Each one of us has to look within and find a way of addressing the questions thrown up by this dark and disturbing episode, which must not be allowed to recur.

Maj. Gen (Retd.) J.P Gupta Kamal Kant Jaswal

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14.10.11