



## **Red Salute Comrade Ashutosh Banerji**

*Proletarian  
Era*

*Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA  
Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH*

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# Last Journey

Listen, beloved people, to this saga of a life  
 For whom the red flag dips,  
 In silence tears roll by.  
 No media to sing its glory  
 No bugle, no beats of drum  
 Around in the chorus of din.  
 Arise, destitutes, from huddle in dark,

stupor, despondence

Your road lies through it —  
 This life, bright as truth and woven as the leader taught.

The red flag is at half mast today, May 15, at the party headquarters on Lenin Sarani, Kolkata. Silence has descended, the mid-day bustle of this busy city trading corner brought to a hush. The dead remains lie in state, draped in the red flag and bedecked with wreaths of white petals, head still raised high to evoke in full the overwhelming memory of the departed revolutionary life : Comrade Ashutosh Banerji. The valiant revolutionary breathed his last a week back on May 8 in 'Suraksha' Hospital in Calcutta after prolonged illness with multiple complications, when all attempts to save this precious life had failed. Members of the Central Committee and Central Staff waiting upon him and those present in the city, also other comrades present immediately gathered and paid respects to the departed, placing wreaths and standing in red salute. In view of the imminent panchayat elections in the

state, in which the party was engaged in a dour battle against the forces of pseudo-left and reaction, the Central Committee decided to defer the funeral till May 15 and preserve the body meanwhile.

At fifty past nine arrives General Secretary, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, surmounting his state of poor health, to pay tribute to his long time comrade-in-arms, placing a wreath and then standing in red salute. Now comes wreath from Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, senior member of the Central Committee and himself critically ill till a few days back. Sri Sudhirlal Banerjee, elder brother of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji pays tribute. One by one close in leaders of many different state committees to pay tribute : Comrade Pratap Shamal on behalf of the Delhi State Organising Committee, Comrade Satyawar from Haryana, Comrade Girijeshwar from Rajasthan, Comrade V. N. Singh from Uttar Pradesh,



Comrade Nihar Mukherjee paying Red Salute to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji at the Central Office

Comrade U. P. Biswas from Madhya Pradesh, Comrade Arun Bhowmik from Tripura, Comrade Biswajit Harare from Chhatisgarh, Comrade Bhupendra Nath Kakoti from Assam, Comrade Amriteshwar Chakraborty from Bihar, Comrade K. P. Singh from Jharkhand, Comrade C. K. Lukose from Kerala, Comrade K. Radhakrishna of Karnataka, Comrade Ramesh Pattanayak of Andhra Pradesh, Comrade Dwarika Nath Rath of Gujarat, Comrade Narayansami of Tamil Nadu, Comrades Binapani Das and Dhurjati Das of Orissa, Comrade Anil Tyagi of Mumbai, Comrade Madhab Bhonde of Nagpur and Comrade Malay Bose on behalf of the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts in Ghatsila. On behalf of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh

Comrade Mobinul Haider Choudhury pays tribute. Comrade Biman Bose, Polit Bureau member of the CPI(M) and Chairman, Left Front, in West Bengal, Comrade Manju Kumar Majumdar, Secretary, State Council of the CPI and Comrade Animesh Chakraborty on behalf of the CPI-ML (New Democracy) pay tribute. Comrade Pratiba Mukherjee and Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, respectively President and Secretary of the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangha pay tribute.

Comrades, supporters, sympathisers, acquaintances and members of the public are standing in a queue to file past the body, stopping awhile to place a wreath, a garland, a bunch and then pour out respect and love with fist clenched and arm folded in salute. On behalf of the district committees, local committees, party organs, namely, *Proletarian Era*, *Ganadabi*, *Sarbahara Dristikon*, legislature group, mass fronts, and so many other party led bodies' wreaths are being placed. In the end now pay tribute Comrade Anil Sen, senior member of the Central Committee, Comrade Ranjit Dhar and Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Central Staff, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty and Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, members, Central Committee, Comrade Provash Ghosh, member, Central Committee and secretary, West Bengal State Committee. At two on the clock, Central Committee members bear the pall of the departed leader to place it on the carriage for the last journey

to start. They stand on the carriage behind the body.

Do you hear the murmur on all lips here? Do you see the glisten on dripping tears? This deafening silence is so eloquent now with those words in a bass voice, pounding all hearts here : "Our task cannot suffer because of our grief. ... The agony, pain and sense of values of all society have struck the chord so deep in the hearts of revolutionaries they are steeled in resolve to translate the revolutionary task into reality..Even death of the most beloved, a profound loss, an event of deep emotional upsurge cannot make them oblivious of their task." Thus did adjure us our leader, teacher, guide, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, almost three decades back at the demise of Comrade Subodh Banerjee.

The journey commences on its last leg from in front of '48', that homely reference within party circle to the headquarters, at three in the afternoon. Far in advance slowly moves a pilot car, announcing the valiant revolutionary to whom the party bids farewell today: a shining existence in flesh and blood till the other day, who attained a high level in identifying himself with the class, revolution and the party through struggle to assimilate the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, overcoming pain of deadly ailments and obstacles of handicap, emerging in the course as Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, a front ranking leader of the party. The flame has gone

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Central Committee members and Central Staff stand behind the bier

## Central Committee's Homage To Comrade Ashutosh Banerji

*Adopted at the meeting of the Central Committee held under the conduction of  
General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee on the 9th May 2003 at the Salt Lake Commune, Calcutta*

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, one of the seniormost members of the Central Committee of the party who had been with it since its very inception is no more with us. All our efforts to save his precious life failed and Comrade Banerji breathed his last on the 8th May, 2003, at 5-45 p.m. at Suraksha Hospital, Calcutta, after a protracted illness. To the party it has come as a stunning blow. In his demise the party has lost a valiant revolutionary who, having joined the party at the very inception, in course of his long 55 years' struggle, totally dedicated himself for building up the party and revolutionary movements in different parts of the country. The arduous and painstaking struggle that he embarked upon in the process of assimilating the revolutionary thoughts of our beloved leader, teacher, guide and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of this era Comrade Shibdas Ghosh left behind such a profound impression and impact which can never be forgotten. Indeed, Comrade Banerji, who belonged to the first batch of revolutionary students whom Comrade Shibdas Ghosh developed with extreme care, associated himself with the historic mission undertaken by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh with a few compatriots to build up the SUCI as the only communist party on the Indian soil, spared no efforts to advance that historical task which in its course turned him into one of its frontranking leaders.

Quite naturally, as a result of the loss of such a powerful leader and organiser a void has been created which will not be very easy to fill up.

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji's shining existence within the party marked by his manifold activities stemming from his keen interest to know the truth spreading over long 55 years is not easy to depict. In the course of his struggle to grasp and assimilate the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Banerji came to possess many outstanding qualities which endeared him to all who came in contact with him. His unflinching character, revolutionary sense of purpose coupled with his strong sense of revolutionary discipline, firm adherence to principles, his readiness to face criticisms according to revolutionary norms, revolutionary determination, thirst for

knowledge resulting in attainment of high theoretical standard, his revolutionary determination to overcome all sorts of obstacles, his power of endurance, power to bear any pain and any suffering, his unwavering loyalty to revolution and to the party and above all his relentless struggle to identify himself with society and revolution — are but a few of the many noble qualities that he came to acquire in course of his struggle to mould himself into a steeled revolutionary.

Since his early days, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji got afflicted with several complicated ailments which became more intense and acute with the passage of time, to the extent of making him severely handicapped. But, with an indomitable spirit and carrying within the revolutionary thoughts and ideas of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, he refused to be subdued by the deadly diseases. On the contrary, with tremendous strength of mind and revolutionary spirit, aided by medical science, he boldly came out of this ordeal. His struggle in this sphere is an example before all of us.

The Central Committee acclaims that the life of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji is a beautiful exemplification of certain noble revolutionary qualities, which he developed on the basis of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Having lost such a tempered revolutionary, the whole party is today overwhelmed with a deep sense of loss. In this hour of grief, the Central Committee calls upon all comrades to bear the pain and pathos keeping alive in their minds the momentous call of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that we must transform our grief into revolutionary determination, that grief must give birth to higher sense of duty and responsibility. If death has taken away beloved Comrade Ashutosh Banerji from our midst, let us keep alive his revolutionary spirit, the cherished goal of his life — a life of seeking total integration with revolution and party as taught by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

With red salute, the Central Committee bids farewell to outstanding lifelong revolutionary Comrade Ashutosh Banerji.

**Long Live Comrade Ashutosh Banerji !  
Long Live Revolution !  
Long Live SUCI !**

## Contemplation and concern about organization and comrades made up his whole life

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, a senior member of the party Central Committee and a lifelong revolutionary breathed his last at 5.45 p.m. on 8th May at the 'Suraksha' hospital in Calcutta, while under treatment for various complicated ailments including pneumonia and jaundice. From the very first day of his party life, braving illness and extreme adversity with indomitable spirit, he engaged himself in intense, relentless struggle

to imbibe and adopt the teachings of the great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in every sphere of life.

In the preparatory stage of formation of the party, even before the party was founded in 1948, at a time when Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, along with a handful of comrades-in-arms, was engaged in strenuous efforts to build up a correct communist party on the Indian soil through the struggle to grasp Marxism not only in the political

sphere but covering all aspects of life including morality, ethics and culture, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, then a student, engaged himself in that struggle to establish the party. Without deep attraction for truth and indomitable revolutionary spirit, it was not easy for anyone to attach himself to the party in the then situation. Because of his deep attachment to correct ideology, Comrade Banerji did not hesitate at all that day to take up the dignified

but different course of a revolutionary life. Coming into direct contact with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, his concept about life underwent a radical change. He engaged himself in the painstaking struggle to attain true communist character.

Shortly after he became associated with the party, he was attacked by a severe affliction. For the rest of his life, severe diseases would be his constant companion. Because of illness, he could

not participate in the party founding convention at the Basanti Natyamancha, Joynagar, West Bengal in 1948. During adolescence, while he was a student, hard-to-cure tuberculosis was detected in the bones of his spinal chord, for which his body had to be plastered up from the ankle to the chest on two occasions and he had to be bed-ridden for a total period of seven years. Such confinement to bed, plastered up, for years on end, seriously weakened both his legs. He could not walk properly after this. Later on, because his right side hip-joint got worn out, it had to be operated on and discarded. For this, he had to undergo major and painful surgery thrice, twice

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# Comrade Ashutosh Banerji — Worthy Disciple of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

— Nihar Mukherjee

Existence is bereft of meaning unless it shapes up in the mode of revolution, in taking upon the self the task of emancipating the oppressed, humiliated humanity from the bondage of capital. History adjures all of us to uphold the dignity of life in pursuing truth, in the revolutionary audacity that creates history, in the indefatigable revolutionary spirit that defies all odds and adversities, all privations and hunger, all rigours, tremors, shock and pain, in the courage of conviction that dares to carry through to the end with resolute firmness.

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji belonged to that genre who grasped the essence of the noble ideology of Marxism-Leninism, as taught by the great Marxist leader and one of the outstanding Marxist thinkers of this era, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, and wholeheartedly dedicated himself to the fierce struggle to develop revolutionary movement of the working class. His was a life

resplendent with higher proletarian ethics and values flowing from the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, a character synonymous with the conscious and conscientious struggle to assimilate the intricacies of the noble ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts.

To offer their respect and revolutionary homage to the departed leader, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, the veteran member of the Central Committee of SUCI, to the glowing traits of his revolutionary character and to renew the pledge to carry on the unfinished task of accomplishing proletarian revolution he stood for, party leaders, workers, supporters and sympathizers from all states of India and from all over West Bengal congregated at Mahajati Sadan Hall, Calcutta, the venue of the memorial meeting on 16th May, 2003. Not only were all the seats filled up long before the meeting started, but the passages and aisles too were

totally occupied. The congregation spilled over to the foyer and lobby outside the auditorium and even the courtyard was jam-packed.

In a disciplined emotion-laden atmosphere, the meeting started with garlanding of the portrait of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji. Comrade Shyamal Chakraborty, Central Committee member of the CPI(M), Comrade Jayanta Roy, Forward Bloc leader and Comrade Shankar Mitra, leader, CPI(ML)-Liberation offered floral tribute to Comrade Banerji, followed by AIKKMS All India Vice-President Comrade Yakub Pailan, AIMSS All India President Comrade Pratiba Mukherjee, Comrade Sanat Dutta, President, UTUC-LS, West Bengal State Committee, Comrade Debasis Roy, General Secretary, AIDS0, Comrade Ashok Samanta, on behalf of the medical unit of the party, Comrade Amar Roy, on behalf of the party's central organ *Proletarian Era*, Comrade Amitava Chatterjee, on behalf of the party's Bengali organ *Ganadabi* and Comrade Giribar Singh, on behalf of the party's Hindi organ *Sarbahara Dristikone*.

Garlanding Comrade Banerji's portrait as a mark of revolutionary respect on behalf of different state committees, state organizing committees and units of the party paid respects

Comrades Pratap Samal (Delhi), V. N. Singh (UP), U. P. Biswas (MP), Satyawar (Haryana), Girijeswar Singh (Rajasthan), Amriteswar Chakraborty (Bihar), Kiratpreet Singh (Punjab), Binapani Das (Orissa), Arun Bhowmik (Tripura), Chandralekha Das (Assam), Dwarika Ratha (Gujarat), K. Radhakrishna (Karnataka), C. K. Lukose (Kerala), P. V. Nandkumar (Tamil Nadu), Ramesh Pattanayak (Andhra Pradesh), Anil Tyagi (Mumbai unit, Maharashtra), Madhab Bhonde (Nagpur, Maharashtra), Hem Chakraborty (Jharkhand) and Biswajit Harade (Chattisgarh).

In the beginning, Comrade Provash Ghosh, member, Central Committee and Secretary, West Bengal State Committee said: We have all come with a heavy heart laden with sorrow. Today, we should all remember the invaluable teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh embodied in his speech at the memorial meeting of our respected leader Comrade Subodh Banerjee, a member of the then Central Committee after his demise in 1974. We know that teaching of our great leader — how true revolutionaries, even at the moment of deepest grief, show real respect to their respected departed leader through remaining steadfast in discharging their duties. We have already lost many

of our front-ranking valued leaders. Many of our leaders and workers have courted the death of martyrs. We bear the pain of their loss on the basis of this teaching of our great leader. We pay respect at the memorial meetings in order to take lessons from the qualities, character and life-struggle of the departed comrades.

Continuing, Comrade Provash Ghosh said: Today, at the memorial meeting of a leader like Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, we have to grasp what revolutionary qualities he acquired through life-long struggle, armed with the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. So long as the great leader was alive, Comrade Banerji carried on the struggle under his direct guidance and later on, our present General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee helped him to advance further. We await to listen about that from Comrade Nihar Mukherjee.

Comrade Provash Ghosh concluded by saying: Today, at this moment of profound grief, we, along with all the party comrades, have to take the pledge that keeping Comrade Ashutosh Banerji's character and life-struggle in mind, we will strive, so long as we live, to advance ourselves continually to become more steadfast and more efficient in shouldering the task of revolution.

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee paying Red Salute after placing wreath at the portrait at the Memorial Meeting



Comrade Nihar Mukherjee addressing the memorial meeting. Other central leaders on the dais

# A Life-long Revolutionary

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Then Comrade Provash Ghosh proposed the name of Comrade Anil Sen, member of the Central Committee, as President of the meeting. The proposal was seconded by Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Central Staff of the party. Comrade Anil Sen took the chair and called upon the music squad of the party to render the song on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. After the song was over floral wreaths were placed at the portrait of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji by Comrades Sukomal Dasgupta, Provash Ghosh, Krishna Chakraborty, Asit Bhattacharya, Anil Sen, all members of the Central Committee and Comrades Ranjit Dhar and Manik Mukherjee, Central Staff of the party. As two other members of the Central Committee, Comrade Tapas Dutta and Comrade Sitiesh Dasgupta could not be present because of illness, Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, acting Office Secretary of the Central Committee offered floral tribute on their behalf. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of the party then paid his revolutionary respect to the departed leader by placing a wreath of red roses.

In his reminiscence, Comrade Anil Sen recollected his association of over fifty five years with Comrade Banerji. He said that Comrade Banerji in his teens, came in contact with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and from then commenced his onerous struggle. At that time, he was bed-ridden, suffering from bone TB and was plastered upto the neck. But one could observe in him the firm determination and thirst for knowledge. Never had the excruciating pain of disease mentally weakened him. Even while lying in bed, he assiduously studied Marxist classics and the theory of knowledge. This grit and determination was ingrained in his character till the end. His power to quietly endure pain deeply impressed the attending doctors. Comrade Sen also mentioned that

even he and many of his compatriots used to go to Comrade Banerji to have penetrating discourse with him on crucial issues. Struggle had not only built up his remarkable character but enabled him to become an organizer who always helped other comrades with tender care and intellectual guidance in their struggle and had a focussed eye on their development. Comrade Sen concluded by saying that filling the void created by his demise depends squarely on how we derive the necessary education from his life-struggle and conduct struggle to elevate our own standard.

Thereafter, Comrade Anil Sen read out the Homage of the Central Committee to the revolutionary memory of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji in English followed by Comrade Krishna Chakraborty presenting its Hindi translation.

Comrade Asit Bhattacharya read out the various condolence messages received at the Party's Central office. Those who sent messages paying tribute to the revolutionary life of Comrade Banerji included Bangladesh Socialist Party, Comrade A.B. Bardhan, General Secretary, Communist Party of India, Comrade Swadesh Bhattacharjee, Polit Bureau and Central Committee member of CPI(ML)-Liberation, Comrade Paltu Sen, State Secretary of CPI(ML)-New Democracy, Comrades Aritra Chatterjee and Anuj Kumar Basu of All India Forward Bloc, Comrade M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, Comrade Alexander Zharikov, General Secretary, WFTU and Comrade Deb Kumar Ganguly, Deputy General Secretary, Asia Pacific Bureau of WFTU.

Paying rich tribute to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, CPI(ML)-Liberation leader Comrade Shankar Mitra described his life-struggle as an example of unwavering adherence to the cause of revolution. He said that the entire life of Comrade Banerji was that of a

struggle for a noble ideology. He would remain ever alive in his immense contributions. The life of such a comrade itself is a message. He also contributed in the realm of intellect and theory. Alongside, he participated in the movement of the working class at both national as well as international levels. Comrade Mitra continued to mention that, today, particularly the state of West Bengal is plagued with the politics of pelf and power. As against this Comrade Banerji set a noble example of how one could serve the people, the cause of revolution disdaining dreadful attack of diseases, innumerable impediments and privileges of various kinds. On behalf of our party, we offer our deepest respect to him.

Comrade Mobinul Haider Choudhury, member, Central Committee of Socialist Party of Bangladesh, who was present there as a fraternal delegate said : We are engaged in the struggle for developing Socialist Party of Bangladesh on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts. On behalf of our party and the trade union front of our party, I offer my respectful tribute to the departed leader. I was initiated to SUCI through Comrade Monoranjan Banerjee way back in 1951 when I was in India. At that time, I had first seen Comrade Shibdas Ghosh conducting a study circle at the house of 5, Siddeswari Road. Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, then a bone TB patient, was lying in a bed at a corner with a completely plastered body. That very room was the venue of the study circle. Since then, I was astounded at his strength of endurance. He had the capability to beautifully analyze the various experiences gathered by us from the perspective of interest and purpose of the party. He always provided leadership to us. His life was always a

glittering source of inspiration, a living example to emulate. Though he was physically disabled, yet he showed what a tremendous strength one could amass if imbued with revolutionary ideal and scientific rationality. I have not come across any better illustration of that. I am awfully grief-stricken at this great loss to the party as well as at my personal loss caused by his death. On behalf of my party and on my personal behalf, I pay my respect to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji from the innermost recess of my heart.

After this, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of SUCI and the main speaker of the meeting addressed the gathering.

Comrade Mukherjee began by saying : We have assembled in this memorial meeting to pay our deepest respect to the long revolutionary life of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, one of the seniormost members of the Central Committee of our party and a life-long revolutionary. Those of you who, as member, supporter and sympathizer of the party had had the opportunity to see him, to come into his direct contact, have an impression of his ever shining character. Comrade Banerji was one of those handful of front-ranking comrades who had come forward during the inception of the party and were reared by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh with all care.

One of the teachings of Comrade Ghosh — not only to the party members but to all people of the country and of the world as well — is that one accepts Marxism-Leninism and Dialectical Materialism just not because one likes it or has a knack for it. Those seeking truth, aspire to tread in the direction of truth have no other alternative than to accept Marxism-Leninism, Dialectical and Historical Materialism as the guiding ideology. Marxism is both a philosophy and a science, in fact science of all sciences. In the light of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's thoughts, right from his early days, Comrade Banerji could grasp the truth of social

evolution, the historic course of social development from the primitive stage to present-day capitalism, to be followed by socialism and then communism. It is not possible to cover at this meeting the entire history of his arduous and painstaking life-struggle, grasping and applying in life the thoughts and teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. What we need to understand at the outset, however, is that it is his quest for truth which spurred him on to building himself, bit by bit, as a front ranking revolutionary. His search for truth got him attracted towards the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. His very inquisitive mind, urge for knowing the truth had marked the initiation of his struggle to develop himself into a revolutionary. All who have rallied round the party do have this mind searching for truth and this is why you are attracted towards Marxism-Leninism and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee then said : Comrade Banerji, as you are aware, was afflicted by many a severe painful ailments several times in his life since childhood. But whatever excruciating be the pain of the diseases he had a tremendous power of endurance. The more he became close to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts, one more quality blossomed in his character. When he was confined to bed, unable to walk on foot and take part in field activities, he engaged himself in a thorough study of the theoretical foundations of the revolutionary science and in the process developed himself. He was not a theoretician per se, but had a profundity in theoretical knowledge and epistemology. He could effortlessly move into different disciplines of knowledge. Thus, when he had to desist from field works, he, in accordance with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts turned disadvantage into advantage.

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# Boundless love for the comrades

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in Calcutta and once in Madras. His right leg got considerably shortened and his capacity to walk got seriously impaired. From then on, he had to walk on crutches with great difficulty. Besides, a big stone (stag horn stone) had to be operated out from his kidney once. He suffered from high blood pressure. He was attacked with deep vein thrombosis. Over and above these, he was once attacked with the killer disease malignant malaria. Such successive serious afflictions are enough to weaken a man seriously, to make him despondent and inactive. But the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, deep feeling and concern for the exploited and oppressed people and the intense desire to put an end to injustice, oppression and exploitation in the society were so deeply implanted in his heart that none of these could sap his vitality, deviate him from the sense of commitment to revolution. He defeated the pains and hardships caused by diseases through even harder struggles. Sufferings from ailments could never dim the resplendent smile that used to light up his face. In his life, he proved to be true the saying that the word "impossible" is not to be found in the dictionary of revolutionaries. Even while he was totally bed-ridden with severe affliction, he remained ever active. Even in such condition, he used to collect detailed information about the organization, give his opinion and direct the organizational activities. For

long years, he discharged responsibility as the Calcutta District Secretary of the party. During the turbulent days in West Bengal vibrant with mass movements in the 1950s and 1960s, he directed the activities of the Calcutta district organization with rare ability. He was ever tireless in moving about on his weak legs from one end of Calcutta to the other to build up party organization. In 1964, during Congress rule in the state, he was under detention without trial for a considerable length of time. In 1975, he became a member of the West Bengal State Secretariat of the party. However serious and painful might be the disease he was suffering from, he never raised the issue of his ailment and shouldered all responsibility entrusted to him by the party. In 1987, he moved over to Delhi at the instruction of the party, entrusted with the responsibility of the party organization in North India. He used to move about on his crutches in Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh, Rajasthan and different places of UP, directing the organizational activities, deputing comrades on a regular basis to Punjab and Chandigarh to explore the possibilities of building party organization and explored every possibility of spreading party activities to Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. Along with these, he used to oversee the functioning of the various mass organizations of the party in Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan.

He has left the imprint of rare capability of leadership in channelizing the working class movement along the revolutionary

class, and particularly against globalization, privatization and liberalization. He represented the UTUC-LS

various seminars and conferences organized by WFTU, he fought tooth and nail against the anti-working class moves and tendencies. Also, at the invitation of All China Federation of Trade



course as well. As Secretary of the Fire Brigade Employees' Union in Calcutta, he became associated with the working class movement in the 1950s. Subsequently, he was elected to the all-India Working Committee of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani, the labour front of the party. Later on, he became a Vice-President of the UTUC-LS, and discharged responsibility as its All-India Treasurer. After the demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda, President of the UTUC-LS and a member of the party's Central Committee and Polit Bureau, in 1998, Comrade Banerji was elected the President of the UTUC-LS. He was also a member of the Apex Committee of the National Platform of Mass Organizations, a platform for movement by 56-mass organizations at the all-India level. He had been conducting intense struggle on both ideological and organizational planes against the capitalist onslaughts on the working

at the Indian Labour Conference and in the Standing Labour Committee formed by the Labour Directorate of the Central Government and also attended the pre-budget meetings of central trade unions organized by the Union Finance Directorate Department. Attending such conferences and meetings, Comrade Banerji, as a representative of the working class, always exposed the anti-working class character of the government policies in forceful language and with compelling logic and reasoning with facts and figures, creating an impact. In the Sponsoring Committee formed of various central trade unions and federations too, Comrade Banerji, as representative of UTUC-LS discharged his duty with rare ability. Also, he represented UTUC-LS at WFTU, the international organization of the workers. As delegate of UTUC-LS at the WFTU-Congress in Delhi in 2000 as also at

Unions he had been to China in 1987 and created deep impact with his theoretical analyses and sharp logic. He used to be in continuous touch with the embassies of Cuba and North Korea in Delhi and through them made efforts to spread the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh to those countries.

One of the characteristics of Comrade Banerji was that he used to study Marxist literature, books and journals critically and in detail even amidst his busy work schedule. This habit of studying he had from his early years, but it became more profound during his long confinements to bed.

Even when on hospital bed, he continued studying for as long as possible. He had a definite method in this studying. Just as he studied the economic, social and political news minutely day by day, he observed the events, the changes and developments, national and international, analysed those

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# Last Journey

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out, the being has ceased. Whence this grief, this profound pain, this immensity of void. Yet, think, through his burning example of life he has come to be one with the posterity, for the cause of revolution and onward progress for all time to come. A single flesh he was born, through sublation in the course of lifelong revolutionary struggle he has transformed himself into spiritual many — he lives amidst us, not in tears alone, in our struggle to fulfil his mission to attain the cherished goal of emancipation of all humanity.

A red banner is spread across the street of the new eastbound journey. On it is inscribed: Red Salute to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji. A 74-member squad of Komsomol follows in five-deep ranks, each carrying a red flag dipped in the front in remembrance of a revolutionary life. Then follows the red banner of the Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India. Volunteers, clasping each other's hands, have formed a chain around the wheels which carry the body of the departed. State Secretaries and important state-level leaders walk behind, guarding the rear.

The journey stops in front of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani Central Office. Comrade Banerji was the President of its All India Committee, guiding the workers' movements to free them from mere struggles to win some economic

demands, turn them to class conscious revolutionary battles of the proletariat, instilling proletarian class outlook and culture into it, as Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught. Comrade Sanat Datta, President of the State Committee, Comrade Shankar Saha, Secretary, Comrade Achintya Sinha, on behalf of the All India Committee, pay tribute. Comrade Ashok Ghosh, UTUC (Bowbazar) garlands the body in tribute. Comrades on behalf of many different trade unions affiliated to UTUC-Lenin Sarani and many mass organizations pay respects here.

Ranks of women of all ages follow. Where through stretches the road to women's emancipation? From economic, political, social exploitation? From outrage, atrocity, exploitation and humiliation perpetrated against them? Through the struggle of the masses of all exploited people organised on the burning problems of their life, and for the ensured right to live with honour, which struggle Comrade Banerji embodied in his life.

Pedestrians, shopkeepers, hawkers, porters, students, housemaids, and passengers waiting to catch a bus or pacing towards the railway station have thronged the Moulali crossroads to catch a glimpse of the flow of the journey. "I could say from the look of it, this is the SUCI sure," a man mutters, perhaps to himself. What is it which makes so



*Central leaders and comrades stand in red salute before mortal remains consigned to flames*

sure the recognition of the SUCI? Manifest in the moving steps is oneness in approach; moulded into discipline is the singleness of purpose; and writ on the faces is uniformity of thinking — these combining into steeled determination, temperate approach, ever responsive concern for the people's cause. These are the marks of the SUCI cadres.

The journey turns south from Moulali, then westward along S. N. Banerjee road, reaching Esplanade and then taking Jawaharlal Nehru Road towards south again. Solid ranks of cadres from many different states, many different districts of West Bengal, many of the mass fronts and organizations move in a steady flow. From either side watch pavement walkers; from shop windows, office balconies, doorways of commercial centres people have come down to watch this journey. The silence of motion is perceived so deeply in the

strains of the *Internationale* wafting through the air. "This party is going to grow very big very soon", one watcher tells another standing by him.

Leaders of the State Committees of many different states follow, and after that those leaders of UTUC-Lenin Sarani in the rear and mixing in elsewhere follow the vast multitude from West Bengal. Think, you all who watch this and you, million others removed from here, this muted eloquence is a message for you. The quicker you will realize the necessity of revolution, the closer you will be to your cherished goal. The deeper you will come to realize which the

correct base political line for you is the faster you will move to the goal. The more certain you will grow that the SUCI is the organization capable to lead the struggles through to the revolutionary culmination, the stronger you will be to carry out your tasks.

The journey comes to stop at six in the evening at the electric crematorium ground of Keoratala in south Calcutta. The thousands who have congregated have been singing the Great Leader of the Proletariat, the composition on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Komsomol members present the last guard of honour. Central Committee

*Contd. on page 9*



*Volunteers of Komsomol march in honour*



# Memorial Meeting

*Contd. from page 6*

Every one of us hails from a particular class or sub-class in this class-divided society. Comrade Banerji also came from a middle-class family. In line with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts if, irrespective of the class one comes from, one desires to become a true communist revolutionary, and wants to acquire the qualities, the cultural and ethical standard to attain the character of a good communist today, one has to totally remould oneself through a process of intensive struggle for radical transformation. We must be declassified to identify ourselves with the interests of the working class. In this era of imperialism, war and proletarian revolution, capitalism has become moribund, out-and-out reactionary and wholly corrupt. The humanist values which capitalism had brought in its wake in the days of its emergence were to some extent adequate to develop one's own self to meet the revolutionary needs during the days of the Soviet and the Chinese revolutions. But in the present stage of decadence of capitalism one cannot attain the character of a good communist by moving with the humanist values. Individualism is thoroughly vulgarized today. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us that to achieve the minimum standard of communist character today one has to surrender one's personal interest to the party, submit one's individual interest to the cause of the working class and proletarian revolution. At the time of the Soviet and the Chinese revolutions, this standard was considered to be hallmark of a good communist. But no more so it is today. At present, the standard of a good communist, the height Comrade Ashutosh Banerji scaled in the course of a prolonged arduous struggle, is total identification with the cause of revolution and the party through happy and voluntary merger of personal

interest with that of society and revolution. Comrade Ashutosh Banerji was a staff member of our party, indicative of that desired standard. He could reach that standard through a tortuous and unrelenting struggle, carving out his way through varied cross currents and working among various sections of labouring masses. In the process, he did achieve the standard of a front-ranking communist and also trained up a host of party workers on the basis of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. This struggle is two-fold. In the one hand, I am developing myself and on the other through training and developing newer comrades expanding the realm of my own development, taking it on to higher and higher level. I exhort all of you present here to offer respectful homage to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji by correctly reflecting on this aspect which is interwoven in all activities of Comrade Banerji at various phases of his long revolutionary life.

As Secretary to the Calcutta District Committee, mentioned Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, he untiringly made efforts to recruit new cadres from different localities, giving them association and helping them in their development. Whatever the section of the society they came from, he used to discuss with and explain to them even the finer aspects of Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism in a manner that would be comprehensible to them. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh used to elucidate in the appropriate mode and with proper examples intricate aspects of the Marxist philosophy to different sections of the society, from poor peasants, factory workers to students, youths,

university scholars so that they could, according to their level of understanding, grasp the essence of the teachings and implement the same in their lives. Comrade Ashutosh Banerji meticulously followed this method of Comrade Ghosh. That is why, the Calcutta District Committee in those days was called Moscow Committee, because of the importance with which the Moscow Committee stood at the time of Stalin. Following the footsteps of Lenin, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh took initiative to form Komsomol, the wing of young communists, on this soil. During when Comrade Ashutosh Banerji was the district secretary, the Komsomol under the

works. Raipur and Sonarpur of South 24 Parganas district were then attached to Calcutta district. While overseeing the party activities there, he also worked among the poor peasants. At one time Comrade Banerji was entrusted with the responsibility of developing the party and mass organizations in Purulia and Bankura districts. Veteran comrades are well aware with what dexterity desperately he discharged that responsibility. He could recruit and develop revolutionary cadres from among the poor peasants, landless tillers and agricultural labourers of those two districts.

Comrade Mukherjee mentioned: In the initiative taken by Comrade Shibdas

shouldering greater responsibilities and subsequently he became its President. All these are the outcome of a protracted struggle. What you saw of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji of late, the height he ascended, was the result of his relentless effort to mould and remould himself to reach yet higher rank of a revolutionary character. He was afflicted with various diseases at different times. He betrayed exceptional stamina and strength of will in fighting with death during last two months of life. This has been mentioned in the homage of the Central Committee. Even the attending doctors acknowledged that they had never seen a patient of such mettle. Such attack of multiple complex diseases



*A section of the gathering at memorial meeting*

Calcutta District was organized by him on the same line.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh personally looked after and guided the Komsomol. There is a role of every individual in History. The role played by Comrade Banerji in organizing the Komsomol, in my opinion, does deserve a very special recognition and is educative to all of us. At that time, in Calcutta, Comrade Banerji had made a significant contribution to the development of, besides Komsomol, all mass organizations, the wings of students, youths and workers through which the party

Ghosh in building up a militant trade union movement, freeing it from economism, reformism and the tentacles of legalism, all the members of our first Central Committee had played a major role. In continuity with that Comrade Ashutosh Banerji played a notable role. He did not stop at building workers' movements on economic demands. He tried right from the beginning to convert the trade union, in accordance with the teachings of Marx, into the school of communism. Later he was inducted in the working committee of the All India UTUC-Lenin Sarani for

cripple a person, make him restless, groan and yell. But there was nothing of the sort with Comrade Banerji. As his power of endurance was immense in the face of illness, so was indomitable his fighting spirit in confronting all sorts of impediments to the discharge of organizational responsibilities. This particular trait of his character, I feel, is worth emulating. These qualities of Comrade Banerji will have to reach out to all of you present in the meeting as well as to the millions of workers and supporters of the party spread across the length and

*Contd. on page 10*



# He lives among myriad of comrades

*Contd. from page 6*

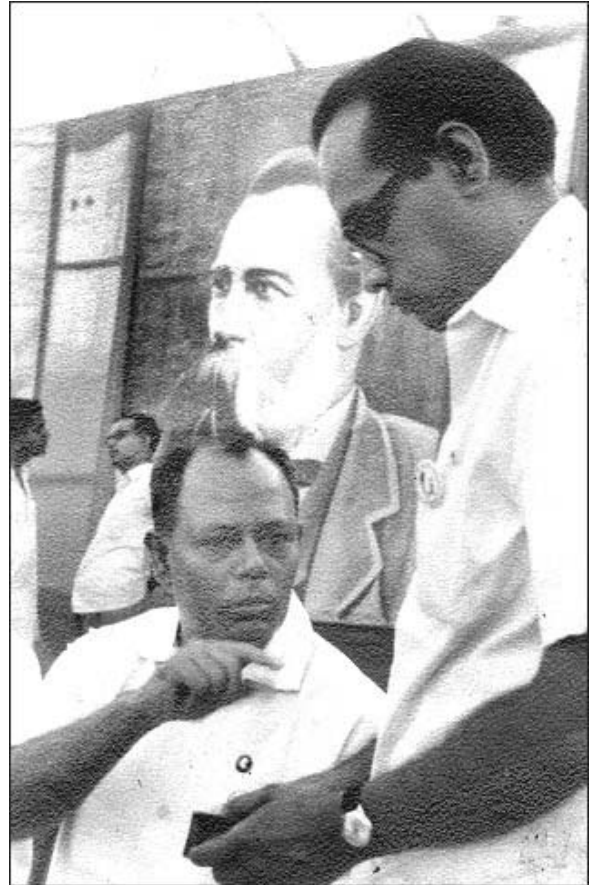
with Marxist outlook and always kept the party leadership well informed and up to date on those. Through this, he had been playing a very important role in enriching the treasure-house of the party's collective knowledge. He had made deep studies in different branches of knowledge like history, philosophy and political economy, but these were never divorced from revolutionary purposiveness. This knowledge culled and the analytical capacity and power of reasoning developed and sharpened by him to meet the necessity of revolutionary movement and the party organization, together with his firmness of character, endowed him with a magnetic personality. The attraction of his personality was irresistible to all, from the poor people

in dialogue as per teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh which is one of the pre-conditions of keeping democratic centralism living in the party. He conducted the weekly study circles in Calcutta too with this aim. Later on, he conducted study circles and schools of politics in various states of North India. For long did he discharge the responsibility as editor of the Bengali organ, *Ganadabi* and editor-in-chief of the Hindi organ *Sarbahara Dristikone* of the party. Very creatively did he conduct this struggle to initiate the new comrades into the politics and culture of the party, develop them as writers and get the new comrades to participate in discussions in the study circles by helping them with tender care. He was very receptive to all sorts of criticism, not only from the higher leadership but even

of problems, personal or organizational, he not only showed how to solve the problem, but always kept an eye open to ensure that the problem-stricken comrades could develop into worthy revolutionaries through adequate struggle to overcome the problems in accordance with the party's teachings. Contemplation and concern about the organization and the comrades made up his whole life. Just as the comrades respected him as a leader, so also did they love him deeply. And his

love and affection for the party comrades was boundless. Comrades who were finding it difficult to move ahead, got his affection even more. His face would light up when he came to know that a young, junior comrade had shown particular ability or competence. He had a great capacity of remembering the particulars of each comrade, his weal and woe. Even on his death bed, in the midst of agony, he did not forget to enquire about even an old comrade who had not been participating in party activities for many years. His emotion for the comrades was impersonal, while his care for developing each comrade was personal. The expression of this under current of love and affection for the comrades beneath his serious and imposing appearance was restrained and dignified.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us that revolutionary politics is not something which is solely concerned with intelligence and thinking, but is equally linked to the higher mental



*Comrade Ashutosh Banerji with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh*

faculty, very much related to heart. By applying this teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in life, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji attained an advanced level in the very arduous struggle to grasp communist culture covering all aspects of life and to achieve identification with the class, revolution and the party. That is why, he was elected a staff member and a member of

the Central Committee at the First Party Congress in 1988.

The inexorable law of nature has taken away Comrade Ashutosh Banerji from our midst, but he lives on and will continue to live among the myriad of comrades he moulded as per the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and in the party he strengthened with tireless efforts.



deprived of education to the highest university degree holders. It is for building up revolutionary organization that he attained proficiency in the three languages Bengali, English and Hindi.

His tireless efforts were directed towards ideological studies and deliberations, continually raising the level of ideological consciousness of party workers, developing the party workers into worthy revolutionary cadres and creating among the comrades the capacity to conduct discussion-criticism

from the junior comrades. Even if he was hurt by some one's behaviour, he never made it a point of discussion here and there. He was totally averse to any kind of self propaganda, any discussion about his own achievements. Disciplined as he was in his own life, his all-out endeavour was to make the party comrades disciplined.

The doors were always open for all comrades to approach Comrade Ashutosh Banerji. As comrades went to him seeking solutions to all kinds

*Contd. from page 7*

members, bear the body of the comrade-in-arms on their shoulders and then, accompanied by all comrades present, they stand in red salute to pay respects. *The Internationale* is sung. Now the mortal remains are consigned to the flames of the electric furnace. If this moment torments you now beyond your endurance, remember the words of the leader, teacher, guide, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh: "Merely expressing grief, outpouring emotions from the heart are little worth for

the revolutionaries, unless they realize what this pain they suffer enjoins them to carry out in life."

It behoves us, beloved people, to waste not any more time. Come ahead fast, and take to this road of class and mass struggles on the correct base political line which Comrade Shibdas Ghosh laid down. Pursuing it we shall wrest victory for emancipation which so long has remained a far cry. Paying our respects to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji will culminate that day, not before that.

## Last Journey

## Comrade Banerji had profound theoretical knowledge

*Contd. from page 8*

breadth of the country.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee said : in the present stage of setback of the international communist movement, there is no one but the SUCI to uphold the banner of Marxism-Leninism as the genuine communist party on this soil. All the leaders, cadres and organizers should take prime lesson from the life struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh as leader, teacher, thinker and guide. He too fought diseases with exemplary courage and determination. His example, in my opinion, inspired Comrade Ashutosh Banerji who learnt from him and applied the learning in life. I know, all of you are in this party to raise your standard from the stage of an applicant member to a good communist character. So you need to be acquainted with the history of the struggling life of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, his illumining thoughts. As we have to take the first and prime lesson from Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, we should also take every care to learn from the specific qualities of the life struggle of other leaders and apply that learning in life.

From outside, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji appeared a highly reserved person. But all who had come in contact with him did soon find this impression totally unfounded. Apart from his cult of knowledge, he was equally adept in treating comrades with his lively discourses on music and aesthetics. Comrade Ashutosh Banerji had profound knowledge and he was thorough in Marxist classics. Particularly he minutely studied the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and tried to apply the same in his life through relentless struggles. So long as he did not understand a particular issue he would not cease to carry on a healthy debate with leaders irrespective of levels. This way he learnt from Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

The relation between the leader and the cadre is dialectical. We have joined the party which is based on Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts. As there is a unity among us so also a struggle. This struggle is essential to raise the level of our consciousness based. This struggle is not possible without the dialectical process.

I would draw your attention to one more point. Mere pious wish or urge would not enable us to reach the goal. What is needed is to follow the correct methodology. We might be in the midst of a democratic movement or class struggle, or the struggle for development within the party; the cardinal point is whether the struggle is conducted in the correct process or not. We are all products of a process. If the process is correct, we can achieve what we yearn for.

To emphasize the importance and imperative-ness of keeping this dialectical process alive in the party, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee reminded of the caution sounded by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh when he observed a mechanical thinking creeping into the intern-ational communist movement despite its glorious success, the progress of communist movement in various countries and presence of a towering personality like Stalin. This weakness ultimately caused the debacle of socialism. The absence of the dialectical process and neglect of the essential task of continuously raising the level of consciousness within the party led to such a disaster. Even at the period of unhindered growth of world communist movement Comrade Shibdas Ghosh repeatedly drew our attention to this flaw of fundamental nature and pointed out that protecting the party from all kinds of deviation depends on keeping alive in the party the

dialectical thought process, dialectical relationship and a socialist struggle covering all aspects in the lives of leaders and cadres. Since this cannot be done without continuously uplifting the level of consciousness of the leaders and party workers, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh made relentless effort throughout his life to improve the standard of the leaders and cadres. The way Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, in the course of his struggle to build up the party, developed the first batch, second batch and subsequent other batches of comrades, the same task is enjoined on those in leadership today.

Whenever I had a talk with Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, he informed me that he was trying hard to enhance the process of improving the level of consciousness of the comrades in the party. He used to say ours being a cadre-based party he was giving maximum attention to rearing up cadres. Whenever we say cadre, we mean acquiring the qualities of a communist or in other word, total submission of individual interest to the class, party and revolution.

To pay proper respect to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, we have to know more the various aspects of his revolutionary life. The struggle conducted by Comrade Ashutosh Banerji till the last breath as an ardent follower of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh demonstrates to us the imperative need of unleashing within the party an all out socialist struggle covering all aspects of life in the light of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and of continuously elevating this struggle to newer heights.

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji was courageous, a shining leader, a character resplendent with revolutionary dignity and, above all, a worthy disciple of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Red Salute Comrade Ashutosh Banerji.

## A brief account of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji's ailments and course of treatment

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, Central Committee member had been suffering from chronic bronchial asthma for the last 15 years along with hypertension and ischaemic heart disease. Comrade Banerji had also been attacked by bone TB in 1945, undergone replacement of right hip-joint in 1984, had been afflicted with kidney stone and other diseases for which he had to suffer years of immobilization. He was diagnosed to have deep vein thrombosis in the right lower limb in December 2002, for which he was under treatment.

He was admitted on 18th March, 2003, to the same Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital, with fever, cough, respiratory distress and mild jaundice. Subsequently, he developed plural effusion on both sides and had respiratory failure for which he was put on Bipap, a form of non-invasive respiratory support. His ailment was diagnosed as complicated pneumonia with bilateral plural effusion. Comrade Banerji partially recovered, but again he had a setback from 30th March, 2003. His condition continued to deteriorate and on 1st April, 2003, he suffered from massive bleeding in plural cavity and had a cardiac arrest. Aggressive and timely management by a team of attending doctors at the Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital succeeded to resuscitate him and he was shifted to Suraksha Hospital ICCU. Throughout this period he was treated by a team of eminent medical specialists, namely, Prof. N. K. Majumder, Prof. S. C. Dey, Dr. Sushrut Bandopadhyay, Dr. Parthasarathi Bhattacharyay, Dr. Sanjoy Ghosh, Dr. Sunanda Adhikari, and several others.

At Suraksha, Comrade Banerji was treated under Dr. Sushrut Bandopadhyay and his critical care team. In spite of all efforts, his condition deteriorated day by day. Following plural drainage from both sides by medical intervention, plural bleeding stopped. But he suddenly developed, on the 22nd April, 2003, massive stomach bleeding for which he had to be operated on. A number of eminent specialists namely, Dr. K. B. Bakshi, cardiologist, Prof. D. Sen, former Head of the Dept. of Chest Medicine, SSKM Hospital, Prof. Sukumar Mukherjee, former Head of the Department of General Medicine, Calcutta Medical College, Dr. F. E. Udwardia, Chief, Critical Care, Breach Candy Hospital, Mumbai, were consulted on Comrade Banerji's ailments.

His condition, however, continued to deteriorate and he developed jaundice and sepsis, the most dreaded complication. At this time, his abdominal wound gave way and he had to be operated on. Throughout this period, Comrade Banerji, though he had a few better moments, could not be taken out of ventilatory support. Finally, on 5th May, 2003, he suffered acute renal failure with no formation of urine. Though this crisis was combated with continued dialysis, his haemodynamic status deteriorated. Comrade Banerji breathed his last on 8th May, 2003, at about 5-45 P.M. The cause of death was ascertained to be cardio-respiratory failure, the prime cause being complicated pneumonia, bronchial asthma, bilateral haemorrhagic plural effusion and sepsis with multi-organ failure.



Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, the beloved President of our organization, the United Trade Union Centre-Lenin Sarani, after prolonged illness, breathed his last on 8th May, 2003 at Suraksha Hospital, Calcutta. Physically he is no more with us, but surely he will be with us for his untiring, ceaseless and systematic endeavour to carry to the labouring masses of our country the invaluable teachings of the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh as well as for his relentless struggle to build up trade union movements as component of anti-capitalist socialist revolution.

## Homage of UTUC-Lenin Sarani

Soon after becoming the President of the United Trade Union Centre-Lenin Sarani, Comrade Banerji took special measures to strengthen the organization. For this he concentrated his efforts in three principal areas of the organization : (a) to organize special training camps with the TU activists for developing a band of efficient organizers, imbued with revolutionary ideology, ethics, morality and culture — as taught by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh ; (b) to take objective and achievable steps to expand the organization, both among the organized and unorganized sectors, strictly on the organizational principle of consolidation and expansion and (c) to improve collective and democratic functioning of the organization at all levels.

The All India Committee recalls with reverence the relentless efforts, that Comrade Banerjee made during his short tenure to expose the real face of the policy of globalization, liberalization and privatization as well as their most dangerous effects on all sections of the working people. He showed that the first casualty of these policies would be the jobs of the employed, job opportunities of the unemployed and the hard-won rights of the working class. He strongly felt that in the present context, the trade union movement should be concentrated on these burning issues and in order to help develop the movement in right direction and involve all sections of the workers, organized and unorganized, of public and private sectors, he utilized every forum and opportunity.

The All India Committee also recalls the distinct role that Comrade Banerji played in the co-ordination committee of the trade unions and the efforts he made to build up countrywide powerful movements against different anti-labour and anti-people policies of both the Central and state governments — through the National

Platform of Mass Organization — popularly known as NPMO. His distinguished role, strongly defending the interest of the working class in the forums like Indian Labour Conference, and the Standing Labour Committee made him a distinguished and beloved leader of the working class.

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji most consistently and uncompromisingly tried to protect the interest of the working class and all sections of the working people in the ILO, and he tried his best after the fall of the socialist camp to retain the glorious tradition of the WFTU — in organizing and supporting international working class movement with revolutionary outlook and fighting spirit.

The All India Committee of the UTUC-LS recalls Comrade Banerji's immense contributions in advancing trade union movement and also acknowledges with deep reverence his role in strengthening UTUC-LS since his direct association with the organization from its 7th All India Conference held at Jharia in 1969 when he was elected a member of the All India Committee, of which he later on became the Treasurer in 1979 and Vice-President in 1992. The All India Committee recalls with deep respect the manner in which Comrade Banerji conducted relentless struggle to free the trade union movement from the vile influence of legalism, opportunism and economism — and transform it into a school of communism and thus make the workers class conscious as taught by Lenin. While paying tribute to this great fighter, Comrade Banerji, the All India Committee, at this grave hour of his loss, takes pledge to carry forward the struggle, which he conducted till the last breath of his life, through the end.

Tapas Dutta

*General Secretary*

United Trade Union Centre-Lenin Sarani

## Condolence Message

### Communist Party of India

Dear Comrade,

We received the news of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji's sad demise with great sorrow.

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji was very well known to the central leadership of our party and also the leadership of the All India Trade Union Congress.

His contribution in discussions

on issues confronting the country and its working class was always of a high order. He had deep commitment to Marxism-Leninism and could formulate the practical side of the movement and struggles from a theoretical angle as well. We always listened to him with great attention.

His death is a loss to the working class movement.

Allow me to convey our

condolence to your party and to the members of his family.

With regards,

Yours,

A. B. Bardhan,  
General Secretary

### Socialist Party of Bangladesh

May 8, 2003

It's sad and shocking news that Comrade ASHUTOSH BANERJI passed away at 5.45 PM today 8th of May 2003. We share our condolence with you.

Comrade Banerji was a

relentless fighter for revolution. His premature demise is a loss indeed for the revolutionary struggle in India.

Central Committee  
Socialist Party of Bangladesh  
(SPB)

Workers of all countries, unite !  
Socialist Labour Front (SLF)  
Bangladesh

Date: May 9, 2003

We pay respect to

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji

A condolence meeting at the  
demise of Comrade Ashutosh  
Contd. on page 12



# Condolence Messages

Contd. from page 11

Banerji, the president of UTUC-Lenin Sarani organized by Socialist Labour Front was held today the 9th May, 2003 at 10 AM at 23/2 Topkhana Road, Dhaka, the central office. The meeting presided over by Comrade Abdullah Sarker, was addressed by SPB (Socialist Party of Bangladesh) central convener Comrade Khalaqzaman, central committee members, Comrade Mabinul Hayder Chowdhury and Comrade Shubrangshu Chakraborty.

Speakers paid their respect for the great work done by Comrade Ashutosh Banerji in the struggle for emancipation of the working class of India. Speakers added that Comrade Ashutosh Banerji would be a source of great inspiration for the revolutionary workers all over the world irrespective of nation and country. Physical handicap and bone TB could not stop or even restrict a bit his revolutionary zeal and work. He physically participated to develop resistance of working people and left a great deal of contribution by his thoughts. He has had such a radiant character that turned a great many people into a real revolutionary who came in close contact with him. At his demise the working class of India lost a reliable leader of their party and struggle.

The meeting shows respect to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji by standing one minute in silence.

Central Committee  
Socialist Labour Front (SLF)  
**Communist Party of India**  
**(Marxist-Leninist)(Liberation)**  
Date: 10.5.2003

Dear Comrade,

We are shocked after having the news of the passing away of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji.

On behalf of the entire membership of the CPI(ML), I join you and all your comrades in paying our homage to the departed leader.

We will miss Comrade Ashutosh-Da and his tremendous warmth and vibrant spirit. But the communist values he stood for and the tireless dedication to the cause of secularism and people's democracy that he cherished will continue to inspire us. We will remember him as a veteran leader who always pursued for principled Left Unity in the country.

Red Salute to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji.

Yours comradely,  
Swadesh Bhattacharya  
Member, Polit Bureau,  
CPI(ML)

## WFTU-FSM PRAGUE

14 May 2003

The General Secretary, UTUC-LS  
Dear Comrade,

The Secretariat of the WFTU is deeply grieved to hear the sad news about the demise of Comrade ASHUTOSH BANERJI, President of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani. This is a great loss for the Indian trade union movement as well as for the WFTU and the world trade union movement. We recall his active participation in the WFTU Congress in Delhi and pay homage to his devoted service to advance the cause of the working class and to spread the message of international solidarity and united action in the struggle for peace, security and social progress.

Kindly accept our profound condolence and convey the same to the bereaved family.

Yours fraternally,  
Alexander Zharikov,  
General Secretary, WFTU

## WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

Asia Pacific Regional Office  
New Delhi

May 10, 2003

## LONG LIVE COMRADE ASHUTOSH BANERJI

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), its Asian Pacific Bureau and myself was shocked to learn the sudden and sad demise of the President of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, one of the most militant and outspoken trade union leaders to fight for the working class in India.

After the death of his predecessor Comrade Prithish Chanda, Comrade Banerji was maintaining regularly his liaison and participation in all the activities of the WFTU — seminars, conferences and World Congress very appreciatedly. Comrade Banerji participated in the most successful WFTU Congress held in Delhi in March, 2000.

Since he was staying and working for the UTUC-LS from Delhi he was in constant liaison and assistance to our activities in the Asian-Pacific Regional Bureau of the WFTU in Delhi. His behaviour was very polite but firm. Even when we disagreed on some matters our relation remain very cordial.

Comrade Banerji's death is a great loss for the Indian Trade Union movement, UTUC-LS and of course

for our WFTU. We express our deep and heartfelt condolence to the UTUC-LS leadership, its members and to his bereaved family.

COMRADE ASHUTOSH  
BANERJI AMAR RAHE !

Yours fraternally,  
Deb Kumar Ganguli,  
Deputy General Secretary, WFTU

## M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU

"Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, a veteran T.U. leader of India was a source of strength to united trade union movement. He played an important role in preparing for a nation under struggle of working class. In his sudden passing away, T.U. movement in India has lost a stalwart. The CITU expressed its heartfelt condolence at the passing away at a crucial time and conveys its deep sense of sorrow to all activists of UTUC(LS).

Red Salute to Comrade Ashutosh-Da."

(Comrade Pandhe of CITU and Comrades Chatterjee and Basu of Forward Bloc went to our Delhi office and offered their condolence messages in writing in the Visitors' Book placed for the purpose.)

## Comrade Aritra Chatterjee and Comrade Anuj Kr Basu, All India Forward Bloc, New Delhi

"His death a great loss not only for SUCI but also for total united left movement. He was an Icon of workers' struggle and movement."

## CPI(M-L) New Democracy State Committee, Date: 15/5/03 Condolence Resolution

We are deeply shocked at the demise of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, member, Central Committee, SUCI, and a veteran struggling comrade.

We convey our heart-felt condolence to the SUCI and his bereaved family.

Red Salute to Comrade Ashutosh Banerji.

Paltu Sen,  
State Secretary, W. Bengal.

## Saheb Singh Verma Union Labour Minister

To pay respect to the memory of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, all-India President of UTUC-LS, Shri Saheb Singh Verma, Union Labour Minister, came to the Central Office of UTUC-LS in Calcutta on 18th May, 2003 at 2 PM. He garlanded the portrait of Comrade Banerji and offered his condolence to the leaders and cadres of the organization.

## Hind Mazdoor Sabha

dated May 16, 2003

I was shocked to learn the demise of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, whom I had known for the past several years. I have had many an occasion to interact with him in a number of trade union and tripartite meets, which brought us closer to each other.

Comrade Banerji was strongly wedded to the socialist philosophy. He was a gentleman to the core. He was a labour leader with a positive and constructive approach to all issues, but was a man of steel in championing the cause of the working class. In his death, the socialist movement and the trade union movement in the country have suffered an irreparable loss.

Though I am unable to be present at the memorial meeting on May 23, I convey my heart felt condolence to the UTUC-LS and pay my silent homage to the departed leader.

Yours sincerely,  
Umraomal Purohit  
General Secretary

## Dr P. D. Shenoy Secretary to Govt of India Ministry of Labour, New Delhi

9th May, 2003

Dear Shri Dutta,

I was saddened to hear about the passing away of respected Shri Ashutosh Banerji, President, UTUC-LS at Kolkata on 8th May, 2003. With his passing away we have lost a doyen of the trade union movement and we in the Ministry of Labour join millions of others all over the country to convey our condolences to the bereaved family as well as to his fellow comrades in the UTUC-LS.

With regards

Dr P. D. Shenoy

I send my deepest and most respectful condolence on the passing away of Comrade Ashutosh Banerji. I had the privilege of meeting him many times and shared panel discussion with him. He struck me as a rare political leader who combined authentic Marxism with determination to carry forward people's struggle against imperialism, feudalism, capitalism and specific anti-people policies of the Indian state. I do hope we shall all unite and carry on his legacies with equal determination and creativity. I will be in Patna on the 23rd due to a prior commitment. Please forgive my absence in the memorial meeting.

Manoranjan Mohanty

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE