



"...it is clear that in judging the class character of a party not only the political theory of the party has to be tested on the anvil of Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism but in that light the methodological approach, outlook and culture that its leaders and members reflect in their day-to-day conduct, too, have got to be tested in order to come to a correct conclusion. Because, without acquiring the proletarian culture, which is much superior to and nobler than the bourgeois humanist culture, one can neither have the ability to grasp a revolutionary theory properly, nor apply it correctly."

— Shibdas Ghosh

Why SUCI is the only Genuine Communist Party in India

Founding of KOMSOMOL and

Some Aspects of Life Struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

Nihar Mukherjee

[At the request of the organisers of the KOMSOMOL of West Bengal, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee wrote a brief account of some aspects of the life struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh which appeared in the second issue of the journal *Komsomol* in December, 1996. The Board of editors of the *Proletarian Era* thought it fit to publish the English version, the original version being corrected and improved subsequently by Comrade Mukherjee himself, on the occasion of 5th August, the 21st Memorial Day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. The responsibility of any error and inadequacy lies with us. — Editor, *Proletarian Era*]

The KOMSOMOL organisation, as the detachment of socialist revolutionary youth was founded in 1918 in the socialist state of Soviet Russia, under the direct and active supervision of the great revolutionary leader Comrade Lenin.

As the vanguard detachment of young boys and girls in the proletarian revolutionary movement of India, the KOMSOMOL saw its light in 1950, under the direct guidance of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat and the founder General Secretary of the SUCI. It came into being to fulfil a specific and concrete task. This was to establish a new socialist social order free

from exploitation, by uprooting the existing social system based on injustice, exploitation, oppression and deprivation of man by man, through a social revolution guided and conducted by the ideology of revolutionary socialism, KOMSOMOL is engaged in a variety of activities to fulfill this aim. But to each member of the KOMSOMOL the most important of all these activities is to engage oneself, right from the young formative stage, in the struggle to acquire and develop the lofty, revolutionary character necessary for and conducive to performing this noble revolutionary task.

A revolutionary character is not formed in a

day. One develops this gradually, only through conducting continuous and relentless uncompromising struggle sincerely performing all duties and responsibilities of life, from trifle to great, from simple to onerous. In this struggle, one must never look down upon or belittle any duty or responsibility as nothing serious. Rather it is only through meticulously and properly discharging many smaller duties that one acquires gradually the capacity to fulfill greater and more serious responsibilities perfectly and properly and develops, at the same time, the strength of character. This becomes evident if we look at many such small events and aspects in the life of all great characters of history. There we find what significant role these events and incidents of their life played in framing their great personalities and

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50 Years of Independence How Golden is this Golden Jubilee ?

Half a century has rolled by since independence. On the mid-night of 14th August, 1947, the Constituent Assembly met and declared that India was free. The Britishers left the Indian shores for ever, leaving behind, among other things, a band of native leaders who were newly converted into rulers. Though the hour of freedom witnessed a bloody partition, communal violence, horrors and massacre of hundreds and thousands of people, it could still evoke a sense of deep joy among the masses. On 15th August morning they assembled in millions all over the country to celebrate the newly achieved independence, defying the scorching heat of that August noon. Most of them had no idea about what might happen in the coming years; they were happy to have independence, they celebrated and rejoiced.

Another class of people was also happy. They were the rulers, the real masters of Independent India. These people were in the throne not by a protracted, uncompromising mass struggle, not by a revolutionary war, but through compromise and negotiations with British imperialism. They saw in it immense possibilities to exploit the huge natural wealth and labour power of this land. Now, they would be the sovereign master. From now on, planners would chalk out plans, the paid intelligentsia would fabricate cock and bull stories to befool the masses, the media would project their interest to make it look like the interest of the common people. In a word, in Independent India they have been the sovereign.

With completion of fifty years, the rulers are going to observe the Golden Jubilee on 15th August, 1997, inviting the Queen of England and other distinguished guests from the imperialist countries. A special Joint Parliamentary Session will be held on 14th August midnight. The media will arrange its live telecast. Seminars, symposia, public meetings, processions, whole night functions with the matinee idols will be held. In a word, the rulers will arrange with all their might an orchestrated propaganda in praise of their democracy and to hail their success. They will say, India can no longer be ignored. It ranks eighth in industrial development in the

world, ranks fourth in military might and moreover it is the 'largest democracy' in the world and has its own glorious tributes to its people. With these talks and claims they will create hullabalos to divert the mass mind from the real issues of life, namely, poverty, food, health, education and employment.

Let the exploiters do and say what they like. Allow them to blow their own trumpet. But the toiling masses of our country should not allow themselves to be cheated. They should realise what is what. They should ask the rulers and the ruling parties: For whom is this

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Protest against Kerala High Court judgement

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, protesting against the Kerala High Court judgement said on 29th July, 1997 in course of a statement that:

"The judgement of the division bench of Kerala High Court on Bandh is so stunning that we find no word strong enough to protest against it.

"Even the committed judiciary of the British rule dared not impose such a ban. But on the eve of 50 years of independence, the 'independent', 'sacrosanct' Indian judiciary is out to trample down the fundamental rights embodied in the Constitution of free expression and opinions and to declare as illegal even the legitimate democratic movements of the people."

**Proletarian
Era**

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

Volume 30 No. 19
August 1, 1997

Rs. 2.00
Air surcharge: 5 P.

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independence? For whom did hundreds of youths of this land court death and die a martyr's death? Why had they sacrificed their all, their lives on the gallows? Was it to create some Tatas and Birlas? Was it to make some people ministers? Or is it not the reality that they had sacrificed their lives to make the lives of the people prosperous and worthy living? Their dream was to provide food to the hungry, education to the illiterate, health to the sick, employment to the unemployed. They dreamed a free India where ethical, moral, cultural development of the common people would take place unhindered. Are these dreams realized? Are the poor getting food? Is there any arrangement even now to provide health to the sick, education to the illiterate? Why is this all pervading crisis of ethics, culture and moral values in our country? What is the condition of the democratic institutions today? How and why is this moral degradation in the political arena taking place? Why are the poor getting poorer and in the process poorer still? Protagonists of this largest democracy(!) do not say a single word on all these. To them independence means freedom to loot and oppress. But let us ourselves answer these questions. Let us see and examine what the toiling people have got during the fifty years of rule by the Indian capital. It is not the tall talk of the exploiters, but it is the experience in daily life of the common people what makes the evergreen test of reality.

Economic Policy : Outcome for the Common People

The welfare economy of Nehru or the New economic policy of Narasimha Rao government was not and is not in favour of the poor. These policies only consolidated the strength of capital and the national bourgeoisie. The tall promises of Nehru to build up the 'socialistic pattern of society', the slogan 'garibi hatao' of Indira Gandhi — all this was calculated to hide the actual class design of these policies from the masses.

- Poverty growing apace, people dropped below poverty line more and more as shown below :

Year	Rural area	Urban area
1989-90	37.94	32.41
1990-91	36.55	32.43
1991	42.06	32.02
1992	48.77	33.87

(EPW, 10.6.93)

These data provided by Govt of India are not the reflection of the reality. Reality is far more worse than this. It grows clearer when we look at:

- A recent study by Chandra Shekhar and Sen also reveals that population below the poverty line in the rural area is growing in big strides. According to their estimation the total number of people below the poverty line was 216.5 million in 1990-91. In 1992 it rose to 279.00 million. So increase is by 62.5 million in two years.
- India is home of 40% of the world's absolute poor. (Alternative Economic Survey, 1996-97)
- Population below poverty line in India is now 394 million. (UN Development Report, 1990)

People eating less, per capita consumption is decreasing rapidly :

Year	Per capita Consumption (in gram)
1991	510.1
1992	469.9
1993	465.6
1994	474.2

(Economic Survey, Govt. of India 1994-95)

- Per capita availability of cereals other than rice and wheat declined significantly during 1971 to 1989, from 44 kg in 1971 to 30 kg in 1989 or even less in some years. (Ministry of Agriculture, Govt of India, 1990)

After 50 years of Independence Hunger, Poverty and Death

- NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation)—48th Round stated: "Within a year of initiation of Reforms per capita consumption of cereals had come down for rural and urban areas from 14.1 kg and 10.8 kg respectively in 1990-91 to 13.5 kg and 10.7 kg respectively in 1992."

Though unwilling, still government cannot but confess the reality, when we see

- "16 percent of the rural population had access to less than Rs.3 per day and another 18 percent scrape together no more than Rs.5. Thus one-third of the Indians merely exists at a sub-human level." (N.C.A.E.R., 1994)

To make these poor people the poorest, prices of the essential commodities are rocketing year by year. As a result,

- The Consumer Price Index of the Urban Industrial Workers increased by 273 per cent during 1980 to 1995.
- During the period from 1988 to 1994 the consumer price index for agricultural labourers increased by 434 points. (Report from the National Commission of Labour, 1995) But these data have their own shortcomings. The Consumer Price Index is calculated on the basis of WPI (Wholesale Price Index). If it be calculated on the basis of retail prices, then the Consumer Price Index would go up much higher.

Central and State governments, including the Left Front government in West Bengal, have given up the policy to subsidize food items by introducing the new economic policy. So, PDS price of foodgrains increased sharply and as a result off-take from the PDS dwindled.

Year	Off take (Rice + Wheat in million tonnes)
1991-92	18.74
1993-94	14.67
1994-95	12.83

(Govt. of India, Economic Survey, 95-96)

What a unique gift from the largest democracy (!) to its toiling millions !

India Among the Poorest of Poor Nations

The World Bank, in its latest survey, records 8 African countries and 3 Asian countries as the poorest in the world.

But in Asia, "the poorest of the poor include Bangladesh and India". (*The Statesman*, 1,1,95)

Employment and Unemployment in Indian Economy

Condition of employment is also grave and alarming.

- The number of registered unemployed in 1991 was 34 million. After 47 years of independence, in 1995, it rose up to 45 million, i.e. on increase by 11 millions in only 4 years.
- Apart from these, there are a huge number of unregistered unemployed, totalling about 160 million. (Expert Committee Report, 7th Five year Plan).

The real picture is much more grim.

Far from taking any steps to provide jobs to the unemployed, the Central and State Governments run by different political parties like the Congress, BJP, Janata Dal, CPI(M) and others, through their reform policies, practically sabotaged workers' interest and curtailed job opportunity. Moreover, far from establishing labour-intensive industries to provide jobs to the unemployed, the insignificant number of industries they have established in this period is mostly capital-intensive. As a result, job opportunity growth declined. The picture below shows it.

Opportunity of employment is declining rapidly

Year	Growth rate of employment
72-73 to 77-78	2.82%
77-78 to 82-83	2.22%
83-84 to 87-88	1.55%
88-89 to 90-91	1.4%
91-92 to 95-96	0.8%

It is clear that job opportunity growth in terms of percentage in last 5 years is practically half that of the preceding two years.

Side by side, the number of sick industries is growing. It has increased from 2,41,614 in 1988 to 4,00,000 in 1995. As a result, until 1994, after the introduction of 'Reform' policy in July 1991, 6.6 million workers have been retrenched.

- N.C.A.E.R had estimated that about 12 million working people would become jobless during 1992 to 1994 as a result of ongoing reform. This is happening in different sectors of industry.
- In the public sector textile industry as many as 23,358 workers have been retrenched till June, 1993. (*India Towards Slavery*, p.67)
- Similarly, in the central public sector undertakings, out of the workforce of 22,190,000, 4,72,000 workers will lose their jobs under these policies of 'Reforms'. (ibid)
- The railways have fixed a target of getting rid of 4,00,000 workers out of their 16,00,000 workforce. (ibid)
- No job is provided by the government to the unemployed. Rather, 'employment in the government sector declined in 1995'. (EPW, 27.7.96)

Though the CPI(M) seemingly opposes the new economic policy, in reality, it has introduced the 'Reform' policy in West Bengal. In this state, the capitalists with the help of the Left Front government are attacking the working class people in an unprecedented manner. In this state :

- During the period 1988 to 1992, 4,174 workers were retrenched through lay-offs, 26.15 million mandays were lost due to lock-outs. This is 90% of the total mandays lost in the state. (*Nagarik Mancha*, 1993)
- In West Bengal, 75 workers committed suicide and 1560 workers died during the periods of closure and lock-outs. (Ibid)

HEALTH

With the same attitude the governments, both at the Centre and in the states, are treating the sector of public health without any public commitment and obligation, and are on the one hand transforming the hitherto available opportunities of free medical services for the poor sections in the governments hospitals into paying services and at the same time they are opening wide the sphere of public health to private investors. That is why, we see :

- India is at the top in child malnutrition. In India, 63% of children below 5 suffer malnutrition. (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 22.6.94)
- "During the year 1992, 2.40 million children would have died before they reached their first birth day. In fact, mortality rate was still close to or exceeded 100 per thousand live births in the rural sector of Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and UP. (Registrar General, June 1991)
- 25% of all maternal deaths occur in India (Draft Statement on National Population Policy, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 1996)
- The maternal mortality death remains high at 570 per one lakh live births. (Children and Women in India, UNICEF, 1996)

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looming large

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To save people from this disastrous state of affairs what are the governments doing? They are reducing government expenditure on health. This is clear from the facts given below :

- Medical and public health expenditure declined from 2% in Sixth Five Year Plan to 1.75% in the Eighth Five Year Plan. (AES, 1996)
- Health expenditure as percentage of GDP is only 0.5 (UN Development Report, 1990)
- Health spending grants from central government declined drastically from 19.9% in 1974 to 1982, and to 3.3% in 1992-1993. The share of central grants for public health declined from 27.92% in 1984-85 to 17.7% in 1992-93 and for diseases programme from 41.47% in 1984-85 to 18.50% in 1992-93. (NIPFP-1993)
- Due to this meagre allocation of funds for the health sector, infrastructural arrangement is very poor. It is like this:
 - In rural areas, for 1,00,000 people — 0.57 hospitals ; for 1,00,000 people — 20.3 beds, (Health Statistics of India)
 - There is —
 - One hospital per 406 villages
 - One dispensary per 64 villages (The ET: 22.7.89)
 - Only 33% births are attended by trained personnel. (HDR: 1996)
 - In 1995, 49.97% of sub-centres and 37.18% of PHCs have no buildings of their own. Further, 5.21% of PHCs had no doctors and 22.58% of sub-centres were working without health workers. (EPW:30.11.96). And due to this poor infrastructural arrangements :
 - Kala azar which had virtually disappeared by the mid-1960s was back in an epidemic form in 1977-78. In 1991, 77100 cases were reported with an estimated 5000 - 7000 deaths. Death due to tuberculosis has remained steady at 3,00,000-5,00,000 per year. (EPW,30,11,96)
 - Every year 75 million people are attacked with malaria (The ET: 22.7.89)
 - Death due to malaria is also increasing. In 1991, number of deaths due to malaria was 3674. It rose to 5527 in 1993. (EPW:27.1.96). It is merely the tip of the iceberg of reality.

In 1986, 1992 and finally in 1994, the Congress(I) government at the Centre reversed the Drug Price Control Order, 1979 (DPCO, 1979). In this new policy government granted major concessions to the monopolists in terms of price and production controls. They included slashing down of a number of drugs under Price Control and increase in returns allowed to bulk drug manufacture. The new policy has reduced the number of drugs reserved for the public sector to only 5. As a result, prices of essential drugs are soaring without limit and the production of hazardous drugs has increased and that of life saving drugs decreased. Thus performed the ruling class its social obligation !

- Price rise of drugs during the last fifteen years

Item	Price	% rise	
		1980	1995
Anti diarrhoeals	55.80	321.28	475.77
Enzymes	95.72	415.30	333.87
Anti Coagulants	5.15	80.25	1458.25
Vaccines	45.35	193.11	325.82

(MIMS India, Vol. 1, No. 1, and MIMS India, Vol 15, No. 4)

- A recent study conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) reveals that out of 80 thousand brand 60,000 brand of medicines are either

unnecessary or hazardous. And these unnecessary or hazardous medicines earned Rs.286.63 crore of profit last year.(ORG, January, 1993)

In tune with the new economic policy, earlier the Congress(I) government and now the CPI(M) supported United Front (UF) government at the Centre and in different state governments including the Left Front government in West Bengal are collecting user fees from the public hospital. And their target is to collect 20 per cent of expenditure in these hospitals from the user fees. The report of 42nd Round of NSSO confirms this contention. It says: "In most states people are paying for treatment even in public hospitals."

Moreover, the governments, both at the Centre and in the states, commercialized the health sector. Private investors all over the country including West Bengal are investing huge amount of capital in this sector and earning huge profits. Rulers of diverse hues practically converted the health sector in our country to a pay-and-use system. This is how the rulers are fulfilling their social obligations !

Supply of Drinking Water

Even drinking water is acutely scarce in Independent India.

- There are 579148 villages in the country. Among these 1,40,000 villages have no drinking water facilities. That is 24.17% villages in India are without drinking water facilities. (Survey conducted by Govt of India, 1997)
- In UP, .02 per cent of habitation had been provided with safe drinking water supply. (EPW, 7.12.96)
- About 400 villages in India, mainly in West Bengal, are taking arsenic contaminated water. As a result, many people died and thousands are suffering from various types of fatal diseases.(Survey conducted by Govt of India, 1997)
- In the case of Goa, sanitary facilities are better only in rural areas. In all other states more than 90% of the households in rural areas do not have any sanitary facilities. (EPW, 31.5.97)
- In the case of West Bengal, Orissa and UP, the availability of electricity in the rural areas is extremely low.

State	% of rural houses electrified
West Bengal	5.86
Orissa	10.90
UP	9.27

(NSS, 44th Round)

EDUCATION

Once Tolstoy said: "The strength of the Government lies in the people's ignorance." Learning this lesson of history, the rulers, both at the Centre and in the states, allocated meagre budgetary funds for education. Now they are trying their utmost to privatise and commercialise education. To them education is a commodity and a place for unique investment from where capitalists can earn fabulous profits. As a result :

- 47.9 per cent people of our country are still illiterate. (Census of India, Series 1, Paper 1 of 1991)
- In the beginning of 21st century, 50 percent of total illiterate people of this globe will be Indian citizens. (Ananda Bazar Patrika, 16.9.93)
- In this alarming condition of mass illiteracy, the enrolment in primary and higher education is decreasing day by day.
 - UP to class VIII — the enrolment is only 43.45 per cent of the relevant age group. (Challenge of Education, A Policy Perspective, para 2.12)
 - According to 5th all India survey on education, the enrolment of students of the age group between 6 to 14 is only 38 per cent.

In 1950 the directive principles of Indian Constitution promised to provide free and compulsory education to all children (6-14 age-group) by 1960. How

is this promise kept ? Let us have a look at it.

- 1,91,000 villages are without any primary schools. (4th All India Survey on education)
- 33,771 primary schools run under the tree. (5th All India Education Survey)
- In our country 44.59 percent primary schools have no blackboard, 16.79 per cent have no chalk and 28.89 per cent have no duster. (ibid)
- 1,52,848 primary school have only one teacher, 1,68,423 primary schools have only two teachers, and most interestingly 2250 primary schools have no teacher at all. Still these are schools ! (ibid)

And what about free education at the primary level ?

Ideally, free education means hundred per cent financing of education by the state. But nowadays, to the ruling class free education means tuition fee free education. Various other kinds of fees are charged. And this is what is happening in our country.

- % of students wholly exempted from payment of fees in primary education in India :

States	% of Student	
	Rural	Urban
Assam	0.09	1.6
Bihar	1.8	0.5
Kerala	0.3	0
Karnataka	0.5	0.1
Tamil Nadu	0.3	0.2
West Bengal	0.3	1.6

(National Sample Survey Organisation)

What a pathetic condition of free (!) Primary education !

Cost of education is increasing rapidly.

- In 1988-89 tuition fees per student in Government Primary Schools was :
 - Karnataka - Rs.6.39
 - Maharashtra - Rs.20.75
 - Rajasthan - Rs.31.81 (EPW, 10.2.96)

- Per student annual average expenditure at the primary level ranges between Rs.290 in Bihar and Rs.773 in Kerala. Delhi is more expensive. It was Rs.1029 in 1992-93. (EPW, 10.2.96)

So, the government shifted the burden on to the shoulder of the Indians and denied its own responsibility. It is clear when we see:

- Allocation for education has come down from 7.6 per cent in the First Five Year Plan to 1.3 per cent in the Seventh Five Year Plan.

At the same time it is not true that the government is giving stress on higher education.

- "Many of the 150 Universities and 5000 colleges have not been provided with a minimal level of infrastructure for the maintenance of quality and standards. (P.A., para 5.4)

Recently, after the introduction of the New Economic Policy, more and more of the educational sector in India has come under private ownership and management. To these entrepreneurs education has nothing to do with its social objective. It is simply a commodity by which large amounts of profit can be earned. So, in Karnataka we see:

- A student from Karnataka joining a private medical college would pay Rs.1.5 lakh, a non-Karnataka over Rs.3.00 lakh. (EPW, 6.4.96)
- A seat in a private engineering college would cost Rs.25,000 to 40,000 for a Karnataka student and Rs.60,000 for a non-Karnataka student. (ibid)
- A two member division bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Kuldip Singh, in a judgment handed down in July 1992, observed, among others things : "Capitation fee is nothing but a price for selling education. A poor student with merit cannot get admission because he has no money whereas the rich can purchase the admission. Such a treatment is patently unreasonable, unfair and unjust." (The Hindu, April 11, 1993)

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This unreasonable, unfair and unjust practice is the order of the day. This is the gift of the ruling class to the common people. And this is how the rulers are fulfilling their constitutional obligations and promises.

Plight of Women

Plight of women is a general rule in all the capitalist-imperialist countries. But the condition of Indian women is worst.

- The percentage of illiterate women in India will go on increasing into the next century. By the year 2000, there will be 2 illiterate women for every illiterate man. At present, illiteracy among women in India is the second highest in East-Asia, next only to Kampuchea. (UNESCO Report)
- The report also says: India is among those countries where women and girls are regular victims of terrible discrimination. Mortality rate of girls is higher than those of the boys. Infant mortality at birth is also higher for the female child.
- Here in India, 88 per cent of pregnant women have anaemia. Under the age of 5, mortality is high at 119 to every one thousand births, the bulk of these being girl children. (The HDR)
- Over the past 5 years, sex oppression of women, bride killing and physical and mental torture have increased on an alarming scale in India. Only in Delhi dowry deaths increased from 107 in 1993 to 158 in 1995. Similarly, the number of rapes, including those of girl children, has risen over the year. (The Times of India, 8.3.97)
- Under the CPI(M)-led government West Bengal has come to occupy the 4th position in the whole country in the case of oppression of women. The number of rape was 612 in 1992, 712 in 1993, 787 in 1995 and 855 in 1996. (Anandabazar Patrika, 11.6.97)
- Between 1982 and 1992 at least 42 women were raped or molested in police custody in West Bengal. If all these are as per official sources, it is anybody's guess as to what is the reality!

Condition of Marginal Peasants and Agricultural Workers

Their sorrows and sufferings under the yoke of capital know no bounds:

- Here in India out of core workforce, "41.45 percent were cultivators in 1981. By 1991, their proportion has declined to 38.43 per cent." (Census of India, 1991, series 1, paper-3, p-31)
- Decreasing percentage of marginal peasants increased the number of agricultural labourers.
- According to the Indian Census Report, 1991, the total number of agricultural workers was 74.6 million; now it stands at round about 95 million — a 20 million increase in 6 years.
- During 1981 to 1991 the rate of growth of agricultural workers per annum was 1.40 percent. Now it stands at 1.55 percent per annum. Ironically, the rate of growth of agricultural workers is highest in West Bengal. It is 2.17 percent per annum.
- Agricultural workers grew in number but their actual wage fell.
- "During the period between 1988 and 1994, Consumer Price Index for agricultural workers increased by 434 points, whereas wage rate increased only by Rs.8 to Rs.12, i.e., by 50 percent. (Report from the National Commission of Labour)

Thus we see that 50 years of independence under capitalist rule in India offered the toiling masses of our country nothing but poverty, hunger, misery and death. But at the same time, it offered the monopolists endless support and help to consolidate their position. This is clear from the facts below.

After 50 years of Independence Cultural and Ethical Degradation in all

Direct and Indirect tax

Direct tax decreased, indirect tax increased, resulting in additional burden on the common people and relief to the monopoly houses.

- %of direct and indirect tax collected by the Union Government:

Year	% of	
	Direct Tax	Indirect Tax
1970-71 to 74-75	27.2	72.8
1975-76 to 79-80	26.6	73.4
1980-81 to 84-85	22.6	77.4

(Govt. of India, Long Term Fiscal Policy, December, 1985)

- A recent study was made on 979 companies by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) in 1990. It revealed that effective corporate tax rate decreased by 7.7 per cent during 1989-90 to 1993-94.
- But the tax charged on the monopoly houses is not fully realised. The companies have paid only 25 percent of their due corporate taxes, 33 per cent of due excise duties, 33 per cent of due import-export duties and 35 per cent of overdue duties.

Bonanza for Big Business

- Total money value of assets of the fore-ranking 20 industrial houses was 70,803 crore rupees in 1992-93. After two years, it increased to 1,19,059 crore rupees. The Hindal Group increased its assets by 298.8 percent, ESSAR Group by 165.4 percent and ISPAT Group by 144.3 percent. (Business Standard, 16.1.96)
- 13 monopoly houses of the country, Birlas and Tatas heading them, increased profit two times between 1985-90 and 12 times during the last 5 years.
- Sree Ram Group increased their profit by 290 per cent during 1992-93 to 1994-95. In the same period Mahindra And Mahindra Group increased their profit from 21 crore rupees to 231 crore rupees. (Business Standard, 16.1.96)

Not only the industrialists but also the kulaks in the agricultural sector fattened a lot in this period.

- At present 24.33 per cent of the total land holdings are either large or medium sized. These holdings belong to the owners of 71 per cent of cultivable land of our country. They use 61.15 percent of total irrigation, 66.06 per cent fertilisers, 57.35 per cent of short term loans and 64.70 per cent pumpsets run on electricity. (All India Report on Agricultural Census, 1985-86, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi)
- Capital formation by the rural capitalists in the year 1990-91 was 9214 crores of rupees. It rose to 10,861 crore rupees in the year 1991-92. (National Accounts Statistics)

Why this Situation

Thus we see, during the fifty years of rule of Indian capital, capitalism in India developed on an unprecedented scale and at the same time the condition of the working class people worsened to the extreme. But it is natural. On 15th August, 1947, our country got the political freedom but the emancipation of the toiling masses was far from being achieved. It was the capitalist class which usurped the fruits which blood, toil and sufferings of thousands of martyrs brought, and it consolidated its class rule. As a consequence, all that has been mentioned earlier happened. But it is not something *fait accompli*. It is the result of an unending process, which we must understand properly.

It is a fact of history that Indian capitalism had been

under the arms of British finance capital and it did not have enough room to expand. Since independence in 1947, it got that freedom for its speedy development, but got it at a time when world capitalism was already moribund and crisis ridden. Its internal crisis was glaring and self-evident when world capitalism faced the depression of the thirties. Even the centre of world capitalism, American finance capital, was not free from this worldwide crisis. So, to save itself it had to change its old tactics and policies. Economist J.M. Keynes rushed with his prescription of state expenditure in the field of economic theory. In a word, the old theory of non-intervention of the state in the field of economy had gone out, giving birth to a new idea of 'People's Capitalism', 'Welfare Capitalism' and affluent society, etc.

Indian capitalism, being part of world capitalism, cannot remain immune and isolate itself from these changes. Even during the Second World War period the Indian bourgeoisie had brought out a Plan of Economic Development for India (1944), popularly known as Bombay Plan, or Tata-Birla Plan. This plan did not also minimise the importance of the role of the state, rather it stressed and put on the mask of social service. From 1950's when India Government embarked on its Five Year Plans, the Government under the leadership of Nehru only enlarged and expanded these ideas of Tata-Birla Plan which was slowly epitomized in the ideal of the so-called 'Socialist Pattern of Society'.

And this ideal of a 'Socialist Pattern of Society' helped whom? From the point of view of concentration of the total economy, R. K. Hazari, in his study 'Ownership and Control', has shown: "The Five Groups of the Tatas, Birlas, Mafatlals, Walchands and Mahindras have under their control companies whose total assets come to Rs.567 crore and 40 lakhs. The total assets for the entire corporate sector of the Indian economy for the year were Rs.3650 crore." (The Economic Weekly, 57-58) At that time the Mahalanobis Committee also revealed that 18 Indian families control 78 percent of the total wealth and property in India. So, after the first Five Year PPlan Indian capitalism accumulated tremendous wealth and at the same time millions of people were converted into paupers. During the first Five Year Plan period 'more peasants have been evicted from land than in the preceding 100 years'. So, in fine, the salient features of the Indian economy at the end of the first Five Year Plan period was the concentration of the economy in the hands of a few, enormous profiteering, exploitation of the workers and their growing reserve army, unemployment, inequality of income, misery and hunger of the people in a developed form. This process was followed up to the last days of Nehru's life, resulting in further concentration of Indian capital.

But this pro-monopoly, anti-people policies of Nehru seemed progressive to the leaders of the then CPI. They hailed Nehru as progressive and extended their whole-hearted support to his economic policies, and thus helped the Indian capital to consolidate its position and to create confusion among the people on the role and heinous class design of the national bourgeoisie. They went even further to praise Nehru as the champion of peace and democracy and failed to appreciate the dual role of Indian capitalism of playing between imperialism and socialism. At that period it was only Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader, teacher and guide and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, who exposed correctly the real face of Nehru's socialist pattern of society and said: "The 'Socialist Pattern of Society' is a positive plan of the Indian bourgeoisie to strengthen the economic base of capitalism by setting up heavy and basic industries under the Public Sector, give the existing productive power,

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sphere of society

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however weak, a monopolistic shape, bring about a fusion of private monopoly capital and state capital, minimize the contradictions between the individual capitalists as far as possible, and thereby set a strong and united face of the Indian capitalist class against the dissatisfied people struggling against it inside the country and the competing powerful capitalists abroad. It is thus a replica of Hitler's national socialism, though much weaker than the latter." (Selected Works, Shibdas Ghosh, Vol.II, p.73) At the same time, we exposed the real face of Nehru's peace manoeuvre, saying: "Nehru's gesture for peace should not be confused with genuine attempts for preserving peace. It is motivated to conceal his real colour and win the peace loving people of India over to his fold by creating illusion in the mass mind. The high tribute of the CPI leaders to the Indian Prime Minister will enhance the illusion and help Nehru in his attempts to weaken the peace movement." (Socialist Unity, Vol.I, No.8, June 15, 1951) But in spite of all these efforts of ours, the then CPI continued its support to Nehru and helped Indian capitalism to strengthen its foothold.

The same line continued. The pseudo-lefts, CPI and CPI (M) supported Indira Gandhi in the contradiction between Indicate and Syndicate, branded 'Indicate' as progressive and Syndicate as reactionary. They failed completely to realise that it was not at all a contradiction between progress and reaction, rather it was a contradiction between the bourgeoisie representing individual interest and those who represented the aggregate interest of Indian capitalism, and that Indira Gandhi spearheaded the latter section which actually was capable to bring fascism in our country.

So when Indira Gandhi took the measure of bank nationalisation to lay the rock bottom foundation of fascism in the aggregate interest of capitalism by bringing about a 'coalescence of monopolists with the State' and thereby virtually subjugating the State to the interest of the monopolies, the CPI(M) welcomed it as a 'big event', as 'a step in the right direction', as 'something good', as 'a forward measure to meet the situation' and 'in tune with the anti-monopoly democratic aspirations of the people'. And what was the stand of our party on bank nationalisation? We quote from the statement of the Central Committee of the SUCI: "... It is one thing to support the demand for nationalisation of key and large-scale industries by the toiling millions engaged in a fierce revolutionary struggle for emancipation from the yoke of capitalist exploitation while it is quite a different thing to support and eulogize an act of the bourgeoisie nationalising them. For, in a capitalist state when the bourgeoisie takes recourse to nationalisation it does so in the aggregate interest of capitalism precisely to bring about a coalescence of monopolies with the State and thereby virtually subjugating the State to the interest of the monopolists. In this way the rock bottom foundation of fascism is laid. Hence it cannot be the business of any progressive party or individual, let alone the revolutionaries, to extend support to or praise the act of bank nationalisation of the Indian bourgeoisie." (Proletarian Era, dated October 3, 1969) Then it is clear that only our party exposed the heinous class design of Indira Gandhi and her party, the Congress, whereas the CPI and the CPI(M) extended their jubilant support to develop Indian capital to its highest stage.

Not only this. When, through introducing internal emergency, Indira Gandhi and her party wanted to establish administrative fascism in the country, the CPI openly and directly supported the measure. But the CPI(M) leadership, with a bit trick, supported the contention of Indira Gandhi in introducing the internal emergency in our country, saying: "The emergency requires us to be all the more watchful against anti-

national imperialist conspiracies and safeguard the fight for democratic rights from being exploited by such elements who specifically direct their fire against the Indo-Soviet Treaty to explain the emergency and the steps taken by the Government." (People's Democracy, 23.11.75) Thus the CPI and the CPI(M) went so far as to support the heinous measure of Indira Gandhi to gag the voice of democracy in this country. We opposed the standpoint of the CPI and the CPI(M) and exposed the class design behind the emergency.

From the days of Nehru to Indira, the Congress followed the path of capitalist development and in every step the CPI and the CPI(M) extended their helping hand to them. And in this process of development the Indian bourgeoisie acquired imperialist features, became the regional super-power, always searching for the market abroad and became the junior partner of world imperialist powers. Naturally, their position and desire have been changed in the face of severe economic crises, accordingly they changed their economic policy. The days of so-called 'welfare economy', 'socialist pattern of society' are gone. A new policy has been taken up, the policy of reform, only to plunge into a deeper crisis. The reform process started in 1986 under the initiative of Rajiv Gandhi and took its developed shape in July 1991, when new economic policy was adopted in the period of Narsimha Rao government. The then finance minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, declared this policy as something new and radical. He even declared that through this policy Indian economy could free itself from the problems it was facing and this policy is the only prescription of the disease. How far this policy solved the problem of people's life we saw earlier. We can cite innumerable examples which prove the hollowness of the claims of Dr Manmohan Singh. But why were they so eager to take these steps? Anybody who has some knowledge of political economy can easily understand that new economic policy and the signing of the GATT in 1994 and joining the WTO after a while are nothing but a manifestation of the necessity of the Indian finance capital in the changed national and international situation.

And what are the main features of this policy? This policy sought to cut government spending and subsidies in social sectors, reduce direct taxes, liberalise trade by reducing tariff rates and providing other incentives for foreign investment, increase administered prices, privatise the public enterprise, deregulate labour market, etc. This policy directs the state to withdraw from the social and welfare sectors like health, education, PDS, etc. It propagates free market philosophy as the guiding principle. It divides the people into two groups. One is economic or consumer public having the capability to purchase the consumer durable to provide the monopolists their desired super profits, and the other is uneconomic public having no purchasing capacity at all. The former is allured to the trap by all possible means.

The Congress introduced this policy. So it is needless to say that this party will stand by this policy enthusiastically. What about the BJP? Even in its 13-day rule the BJP government at the Centre had declared that it would continue with the new economic policy and quickly gave the Enron Company its desired counter-guarantee. The BJP governments in different states are introducing this policy with all their might. The same is true with the JD governments both at the Centre and at the states. The state governments run by different regional bourgeois parties are following the same path. But the role of the pseudo-Lefts is especially noteworthy. They are paying lip service in opposing the new economic policy but in actuality they are supporting and introducing the policy. The CPI and the CPI(M) opposed only to support the policy. The industrial policy of the Left Front Government in West Bengal, their continuous effort to invite foreign multinationals, pro-capitalist approach and other measures reveal this. So, all the protagonists of parliamentary democracy including the pseudo-Lefts are in the same boat, serving the same class rule to

consolidate. From this point the politics of consensus has begun. The attitude of these parties towards Manmohan and Chidambaram budgets and the recent presidential election is a glaring example of this consensus politics.

But to serve their master ably and in the best ways they are engaged in frantic competition with each other. To win the electoral battle each of these parties is in the midst of heinous political game. The Congress earlier encashed in terms of votes the minority fear complex of the Muslim community and later tried to play the Hindutva card in the period of Rajiv Gandhi. The BJP snatched this Hindutva card from the hands of the Congress and played it masterly to become the single largest party in parliamentary politics in our country. To counteract this Hindutva card of the BJP, the Janata Dal under the leadership of V. P. Singh played the Mandal card to become messiah of the backward class. Similarly, regional parties are hailing the so-called interests of the regions. Thus, all these political parties, engaging themselves in a frantic attempt to capture governmental power, practically destroying the solidarity of the people and thus serving the interest of capitalism also. And the pseudo-Lefts, the CPI and the CPI(M), leaving the path of class and mass struggle, are shuttling between these bourgeois parties. In 1990, they were beside the BJP in supporting the V. P. Singh Government. Now, they are beside the Congress in supporting the United Front Government at the Centre. Thus, the social democrats are playing their historic (!) role.

This greed to attain government power is not only manifested in the struggle between these parties but is also manifested in the in-fighting of these parties. Newer and newer parties are forming by breaking the old ones and are uniting again only to break again. Newer and newer alliances are being formed among these parties. No question of public interest, only one question is there: how to retain governmental power, how to serve the master? They are introducing newer and newer black acts, rules and laws to gag the voice of the Opposition.

And in this frantic attempt of the bourgeois parties and the pseudo-Lefts to grab governmental power democratic institutions are becoming more and more meaningless. Election results do not represent people's verdict. It is controlled by money power, muscle power and media power. Criminalisation of politics knows no limit. Prime Minister, ex-Prime Ministers, other ministers, MPs, MLAs of all ruling political parties are known to have connection with the anti-socials. A whole nexus has been built up in which political leaders and their parties, business tycoons, stock exchange barons, underworld dons, smugglers, self-styled godmen, bureaucrats, top level police officials, bankers and foreign houses are striking deals to rob this country of enormous money and wealth. The Congress(I) comes foremost, and on its heels are the BJP, the Janata Dal and the CPI(M), none is averse to corrupt practices.

Corruption is a word that got a new dimension in Indira Gandhi's regime. In the last one decade or half, the country has been rocked by one scandal after another. For instance:

- Bofors Scandal of 1987 — the needle of suspicion pointed at Rajiv Gandhi, said to have accepted a cut money of Rs.65 crore.
- Security Scam of Rs.10,000 crore in 1992 — ex-Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and his son Pravakar Rao have been charged.
- Hawala Scandal of 1995 — for involvement in this 65 crore scandal, the CBI has already charged 10 central Congress ministers and several leaders of the Congress, BJP and the Janata Dal.
- Telecom Scandal of 1995 — Rules were trampled to favour a few industrial houses which is said to cost Rs.20,000 crore.
- The Gawala Scam of Laloo Prasad Yadav. It is said that the scam involved 960 crore rupees.
- And the latest PLA scam in West Bengal by the

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Early Life of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

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characters. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh used to say : If you neglect a work taking it as a petty affair, it is not only that you do not do that work properly, its effect comes on your, or for that matter on anybody's thought process, too, and ultimately as a result of this, the character cannot become as sharp as it could have been. And so, with a view to attaining the real revolutionary character, one has to acquire right from the young age, the attitude and habit of doing every work sincerely, perfectly and properly. In this regard, a few incidents of the childhood of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh are worth mentioning.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was born on 5th August of 1923. At that time the national independence struggle against British imperialism had gained sufficient strength throughout India. Comrade Ghosh was born in the village of Paschimdih, that stood on the bank of the Buriganga river, which flowed by the city of Dhaka on the other bank, in the then East Bengal and now Bangladesh. Sri Harendranarayan Ghosh was his father and Srimati Suhasini Debi, his mother. His father was a broad hearted, selfless kind of man. Through his deeds, he could imbue truthfulness, love for truth right from even his childhood. He had told his son that he would be rather happy and wouldn't take him to task if his son admitted unhesitatingly any wrong or mischief, he might have done. Once a valuable gold watch of his father was broken, dropped from the careless hands of Shibdas. He, himself, realized what a serious damage it brought about. But when his father, on his coming back home, asked about it, Shibdas admitted unhesitatingly that it was he who had broken the watch. Enraged his father was about to beat him. The perplexed child asked his father - why then had he assured that he would not punish for a misdeed, if the truth was admitted. Back to his sense, the father embraced his child lovingly, instead of rebuking him. This incident left a deep mark in the child's mind.

As customary in those days, Shibdas's education started in a 'pathshala', the village school. After that he took admission in Tegharia High School. He got through his Matric Examination from this school. All his teachers loved him much, as he was a bright, brilliant student. He was particularly keen in mathematics and used to score high in it. But he was not a studious type, glued to books all the day through. He was highly interested in all kinds of local games, kabadi, ha-do-do, dariyabandha and so on. Besides, he could swim very well and play football equally. He even earned some fame in inter-district football tournaments.

He had a striking quality : he could make friends very easily, with anybody of his own age, or junior, or even with elders. He had no few friends and even from his childhood he could become their natural leader. Wherever he went he had his friends with him, and at this nothing could stop him, no bar of caste-creed-religion-race. The then Bengali Hindu society was torn with casteism; it was no easy task to maintain friendship above that, cutting across barriers of casteism and communalism. Once he brought a Namasudra (considered lower caste) class-mate to his home and asked food from his mother. His mother arranged for Shibdas to sit on the front-verandah and asked his friend to sit on the yard below. After all, the boy belonged to the untouchables! But instantaneously, Shibdas got down from his seat to sit by his friend. His mother

scolded him, but he was not to move. At last his father came out to intervene and dissuade his mother.

Not very long after as he grew up in his teens, he founded a local exercise club, an *akhra*, in his village. He was then around thirteen or fourteen years in age. At that time there were tides of *Swadeshi* movement in the country. At the impact of these, people started setting up gymnasias, libraries or such others at many places, here and there. Shibdas Ghosh, too, founded an *akhra* in his village, at their very instance. In it, youngmen practised physical exercises — free hand or with simple instruments like wooden club etc. Suffering from ailments of spleen, common in those days in villages, Shibdas Ghosh was rather thin and weak in his childhood; but later he improved his health a lot through regular games and swimming etc. With the *akhra* founded and regular exercises performed there he developed a very strong and well-built frame of body. However, till then, he did not have any touch with the independence movement of the country. But it came very soon.

One lady, a resident of Kapadianagar area of Dhaka city, accepted Shibdas Ghosh's mother as her *Dharma-Ma**. By way of this relationship, she often visited this lady's family, coming down to Dhaka from Paschimdih. There also came regularly, Rajen Das, a member of the revolutionary group of Anushilan Samity. That made the link. Through Rajen Das, Shibdas Ghosh was introduced to Chitta Guha, a whole-timer activist of the Anushilan Samity. It was Sri Guha who, in turn, introduced Shibdas Ghosh to Charu Roy and Durgesh Bhattacharyya, two foreranking leader of Chhatra Sangha, the powerful student group of the Anusilan Samity in Dacca. So that

* Woman who has ceremoniously entered into a social relation with a man or a woman not of blood relation as his or her mother and has claims of affection over him or her.

was the initiation of his link with the uncompromising revolutionary trend of the independence movement of the country, as well as of his active participation in this movement itself. This was around 1936-37.

His joining the Anushilan Samity changed his outlook and this change left its mark in all activities of his life, — studies, games and others. In the *akhra* at Paschimdih, he now started wrestling, duel fight with wooden poles (lathi) or daggers (chhora). At the call of Anushilan, he ran from one district to another of the then East Bengal as a volunteer in the relief work for flood-affected people, sometimes for supplying drinking water to them or to maintain order and discipline in crowded village fairs, whenever and wherever it was necessary. He also took with him, many of his friends of the *akhra* on a number of these occasions. During that period, the activities of the Anushilan Samity were twofold : one included service and relief work for the downtrodden people, including those affected by natural calamities or other disasters. The Samity used to engage its new members in such activities to help them develop patriotism, fellow feeling for the people of the country, discipline, orderliness and a mental make-up to come forward to any daring act. This stage itself was divided into three parts : start, middle and end. Only when a member could go successfully through all these three parts that he was considered fit for participating in the underground revolutionary activities of the Samity. Right from his becoming a member of the Anushilan Samity, the sincerity and determination with which Shibdas Ghosh started bearing any and all responsibility the Samity reposed on him, making them prior to all other activities — earned him the qualification to become a member of the underground unit, passing through the three stages, start, middle and end, in no time.

He was strongly attracted to the works of Saratchandra from when he joined the revolutionary movement. At that time,

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Build up Alternative Political power

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CPI(M)-led government said to involve thousands of crores of rupees. The CPI(M)-led Left Front government converted corruption into an art from top to bottom. From ministerial level to panchayat level, it is enmeshed in corruption.

And anybody can cite so many examples of corruption like this.

The crisis in the capitalist base has brought about an all pervasive crisis in the superstructure — in the political, cultural, social, moral, ethical and every other sphere of social life. Capitalism today is not only reactionary but also corrupt and anti-people to the bone. It is delivering, together with the general decline of moral and cultural standard, the sense of all-out apathy, demoralisation and cynicism in the society. This process of all-pervading degeneration is gaining momentum by the introduction of the consumerist culture in our country. As the process of globalization goes on, the decadent western imperialist culture is infiltrating day by day in our social life. TV channels controlled by different MNCs are continuously propagating perverted life-style full of sex and violence to emasculate the toiling people of our country.

So, fifty years of independence offered the toiling masses hunger and death, misery and poverty. Cultural, moral and ethical degradation has reached abyss. It is not the reality that the toiling people did not fight this anti-people system. They did, but their struggle was not guided

on the correct base political line. And what is that line ? It is anti-capitalist socialist revolution, as enunciated by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. He showed that people must organise class and mass struggles conducive to the revolutionary struggle in order to overthrow the capitalist rule, being free from the illusion of social democracy, and under the leadership of a genuine revolutionary party. On our soil, the SUCI is that party founded by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. And fifty years of agonizing experience provide us with the teaching to strengthen it with all our efforts and might so that it can lead the mass struggle to its desired goal.

Fifty years before, this country had stood at a crossroads when the emergent Indian capitalist class could successfully usurp the state power in the absence of a genuine working class revolutionary party to lead the masses to emancipation. These five decades have been a history of betrayal by both the rulers and their social democrat servitors, and class antagonism has sharpened manifold. The turn of a half century has brought the country to crossroads again, when the air is thick with the stench of rot of the bourgeois order and the turn of events have exposed the left masqueraders. For the people, it is the hour to renew their pledge with new vigour to step up the mass and class struggles on the correct base political line under the correct leadership and build their own alternative political power to advance their cause to the goal of emancipation which eluded them half a century.

Early Life of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

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Saratchandra was very dear and respected to the revolutionaries of Bengal. His novel '*Pather Dabi*', proscribed by the British, was to be found with every revolutionary and his works found place in the house of every literate Bengalee. Shibdas Ghosh went through the entire works of Saratchandra, borrowing the books one by one from his school library. In his later active life, he did not get that much time and scope to go through and relish Sarat literature so penetratingly and meticulously.

But even at that young age he took the lofty values portrayed in the Sarat literature so deeply in his heart, that he reflected them later in his habits, behaviour, conduct and culture increasingly in brighter and deeper shades.

During this period, he was also attracted to books on science. Even when he could not find time to cover his classroom lessons, he used to borrow popular editions on different branches of science and read them with full attention.

This way was increased his craving for the broader sphere of knowledge of the greater world around. But as he found himself constantly engaged in the revolutionary activities, he could not attend classroom lessons; he went on faring not well in his examinations too. An incident of this period stands out as a bright example of his emerging sense of self-esteem and developing oneness with the revolutionary struggle.

Once, as he scored very poor in his English examination, his teacher bitterly scolded him openly in the classroom. Of course, this was only because he was very affectionate to Shibdas just as other teachers, too, were. Reprimanded, Shibdas Ghosh prepared his English lessons so well before the next examination that he made unexpectedly good result. On announcing the result in the class, the English teacher overwhelmed with joy, embraced Shibdas. But afterwards, his studies at school went on as usual. He, however, earned a loving indulgence from his teachers for his brilliance, sincerity, sense of discipline, character and quality to lead and above all for his participation in the country's independence movement. His teachers had expected that he would fare brilliantly in the Matric Examination and would thereby bring fame to his alma mater; this expectation, however, remained unfulfilled as he engaged himself more and more actively in the independence struggle.

On the other hand, from the period he had joined the independence movement Shibdas Ghosh did not look back any more to his formal education at school or college. Not only that, his stay at home, too, gradually turned irregular. One of the striking qualities of his character, a rare quality, was his immense love for truth. In course of his journey in life, whenever and whatever dawned upon him as a task to perform, he tried utmost to fulfil that with all determination and sincerity, without caring anything else. Nothing could stand in his way — his studies, his family, his personal happiness and comfort, none of these whatsoever. One may think that this total dedication to the cause and ideals disregarding everything else is simple madness or thoughtlessness but in it was ingrained his deep and sincere love for ideology and strength of his character. Even his father said, after he had joined the freedom movement, that there were many people who took part in the movement; but certainly they had not gone mad, as he had, to

disregard their own family, studies and everything else with a view to devoting their life to the cause of the country. However, it was because of this immense love for truth, kindled in his heart, that he left indelible impression, deep imprint of his character on whosoever he came in contact with him. Again, it was because of this that he could step out fearlessly to perform an act, deemed necessary, but which even his elders did not dare to try at. Once he convinced a notorious dacoit of a neighbouring village that it was a despicable crime to rob people for wealth and money merely for one's own interest. Robbery which might really be heroic, was the *Swadeshi* robbery done for the cause of the country. Since then, the dacoit gave up his profession; not only that, he promised to help the *Swadeshi* movement.

It may be mentioned here that influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1917, many of the then leaders of the Anushilan Samity, just as many other revolutionaries fighting against British imperialism in this country, were attracted towards Marxism. During the thirties, when they were in jails, they undertook studies of Marxist classics. Coming out of jail since 1936-37 they started arranging political classes on Marxist classics even within the Anushilan Samity. Side by side they set with their attempts to build up trade unions. At the efforts of the Anushilan, workers' union came into being in the No.1 and No.2 Dhakeswari Cotton Mills in Dhaka; there were strikes too. The members of the Anushilan worked as volunteers during the strikes. Shibdas Ghosh, too, along with a few members of the club that he founded at Paschimdih, acted as volunteers in the strikes. The leaders of the Samity used to take classes on Marxist classics at the North Brook Hall and Labour Office in Dhaka. Shibdas Ghosh also joined those classes at the North Brook Hall in 1938-39.

In continuity of this process, the leaders of the Anushilan Samity founded the RSP claiming it as real communist party in India in 1940, when they were attending the Ramgarh anti-Compromise Conference under the leadership of Subhaschandra. Virtually all the members of the Anushilan Samity and with them Shibdas Ghosh as well, became members of the RSP. Towards the end of 1940, to escape from attention of police, Shibdas Ghosh had to leave Dhaka and go underground in Calcutta, because of his active participation in underground revolutionary activity.

He lived for slightly less than a year at Agarpara, a suburb of Calcutta. Within this short span of time, he founded a club there for the teenagers of the locality. In this club, youngmen regularly practised games, physical exercises, drills and so on; but when this club too drew attention of the police, he had to shift from Agarpara. It was in the initial stage of the famous August movement towards the end of 1942, when he was arrested and sent to prison. By that time there had been a great change in his outlook, too. Since then Comrade Ghosh started a new struggle to make his preliminary understanding of Marxism further deeper and more comprehensive — a realization which he had developed from whatever scope he had, to study and practise Marxism during the last days of his association with the Anushilan Samity as well as with the RSP till 1940-48. In jail, Comrade Ghosh waged an all-out relentless round-the-clock struggle to adopt Marxism in life covering all its aspects — philosophy, politics, culture, personal conduct even habits; this struggle

he conducted through discussions, debates and practice of Marxism, involving all other leaders and comrades. This untiring and all-embracing struggle continued for three years to make his realization of Marxism-Leninism much more developed, enriched and concretised than before. It was in the light of this realization that he concluded dispelling any doubt whatsoever, that for the emancipation of the common people of India from all kinds of exploitation, it was necessary to build up a real communist party. He also realized at the same time that if the RSP was to develop like this, it must, at the first, conduct an all-embracing socialist ideological cultural movement involving the whole party, from leaders down to the rank and file, with a view to attaining the essential characteristics of a genuine communist party. At the end of three years, when he came out of jail with strong determination and iron will to wage this struggle within the RSP, he was completely a changed man.

But the RSP leadership opposed this effort of and in 1946 expelled him with all others in the party who were at one with Comrade Ghosh; so this attempt of Comrade Ghosh to build up the RSP as a real communist party was foiled. But that could not deter him in any way. Rather, he took the historic lesson from this event and with the goal of building up a genuine communist party he founded a Platform of Action of the SUCI in 1946 that included three political groups and labour organisations with socialist orientation. Though set up as a Platform, it was meant to fulfil the prerequisites to build up a genuine communist party. But the leaders of the organisation and groups of the Platform of Action differed among themselves in their understanding of Marxism-Leninism and, above all, they did not engage themselves in the correct process to resolve these differences through ideological struggles to pave way for the formation of a genuine communist party. On account of these, the Platform, too, became defunct in a couple of years. But even this failure for the second time to build up a genuine communist party in the complex, difficult and arduous struggle only strengthened the experience, realization and determination of Comrade Ghosh. In the next phase, he founded the SUCI in 1948, as the genuine communist party overcoming mountain-high obstacles and insurmountable difficulties and adversities, aided by a handful of revolutionaries who had fought as his comrades during the period of 1945 to 1948, sharing his views on the issue of building up the real communist party in the Indian soil.

In South Calcutta there was a club named Culture Club. Comrade Ghosh rejuvenated this club and made it his centre of activity particularly to recruit cadres. This club was founded by the leading wholtimeer of the Anushilan Samity, Chitta Guha, who as mentioned earlier, introduced Comrade Ghosh to the Anushilan leaders, Charu Roy and Durgesh Bhattacharyya. Centring round this club Comrade Ghosh undertook regular discussions and cultivation of philosophy, politics, literature, psychology and different branches of science. Brilliant students from colleges and universities used to attend those classes to listen to the discourses made by Comrade Ghosh. He, in turn, picked up his prospective cadres from amongst them. Side by side, the Club organised different social and cultural programmes, and thus created an impact in the locality around. During the communal riot of 1946, when the city was devastated in the orgy of communal riot, many

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Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

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people from both the Hindu and Muslim communities approached the Club for security ; its members led them to safe shelters taking great risks. Many a member of this Club became members of the SUCI party founded by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Shortly after the foundation of the SUCI, the KOMSOMOL was formed under the leadership of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, as the young boys' and girls' communist organisation in the Indian soil. Comrade Ghosh had deeply realized a truth from the experiences of his life-long struggles ; often he used to say it also. It was that the kernel, the living soul of all great ideologies lay in its ethical and cultural standard; at the touch of the lofty culture, people who had taken it as the culture of their life, were transformed basically in body, mind and character. Speaking even of himself, he used to say : Had I not found a higher moral and cultural standard in the ideology of communism. I would never have been a communist. And it was for this reason only that he founded the KOMSOMOL, so that through the activities of this organisation, its members are drawn towards the lofty proletarian culture and sense of values right from their young age and by that develop a high cultural standard and a developed character in themselves.

But to attain this, he seldom initiated routine political discussions with the members of the KOMSOMOL. Instead, he had for them his boundless love and deep affection. These were of such a kind that once somebody had its touch, he could never think any more of doing anything mean or vile. This way, he used to rouse in them, slowly and steadily, the sense of higher ethics and culture and thereby create in them a deep craving for a nobler life. He did not like to scold children and young boys and girls or domineer over them for trivial reasons. He was very watchful so that the joyous course of their spontaneous development was not blocked by unnecessary, senseless interferences and irrational strictures from adults or their emerging sense of self-respect was not injured. At the same time, there was nothing in their daily chores that went beyond his knowledge and attention. But he had a different way of rectifying any lapse in their behaviour. For example, if it was often found that a comrade was repeatedly doing the same mistake, Comrade Ghosh, in spite of that, instead of adversely criticising him, would encourage him in such a way that he could himself get at this fault and rectify it. But generally what he used to do to correct somebody's mistakes in his behaviour, was to initiate some general discussions involving everybody and covering different subjects so that the qualities in all present were encouraged in such a way that they themselves could find out their own defects and faults. He always vigorously encouraged the qualities in people to grow. In case, somebody showed even the slightest of quality in any respect, it was he who was most happy; he even went ahead to point that out to others. He was a revolutionary leader and teacher of a great height and that is why, he could make friends with the members of the KOMSOMOL, so easily. But even during that he was always very careful to note that their sense of self-respect and fighting spirit were not injured, rather enhanced all the time. Once he was having a

hand at the board of carrom with a child, a very favourite of him. He won every game of points ; the child tried hard but could not make it even for once. The more the win eluded him, the child got enraged and the more determined he became to win. Some other comrades present at the scene were surprised to see him treating a child as his equal ; they requested him to let the boy win at least for once, naturally out of pity. Comrade Ghosh refused to comply ; he said : No even a playful game gives you a lesson. The two contenders must fight to win. It is more necessary to help the child grow in him an indomitable spirit to win, fighting hard in different adverse situation than to pity him in the games and let him win.

Through this association and friendship with the members of the KOMSOMOL, Comrade Ghosh created in them a clear and concrete outlook of life with the help of numerous anecdotes, proverbs and sayings and through stories and discourses on different aspects of life and the stories on the broadness of character and bravery of Karna, a leading character in the *Mahabharata*. He used to point out: He was the true donor, as Karna was, who could give up everything. He also mentioned the stories of the *Ramayana* and added: He was the real brave hero, who could stand unmoved in his fight against all odds, even when he knew that he faced a sure defeat. By that measure, Ravana was the real hero, not Rama, who won with the help of 'divine miracles'. At the same time, often he cited examples of the noblest characters of bourgeois humanist movement of this country, particularly that of Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. He also dwelt thoroughly on different stories and novels by Saratchandra and the characters depicted therein. He emphasized : if the KOMSOMOL members are not conversant with the past of this country and do not assimilate in themselves the then rich values hidden in the art and literature etc. of that past, they will not be able to acquire the higher proletarian values of the present days. At this, he also elucidated clearly and in simple language, the differences that existed between the highest values of the past and the proletarian values. For instance, once a KOMSOMOL member considered himself unfit for some responsibility; Comrade Ghosh reminded him of the well-known lines from Vidyasagar which went as this; Don't say you can't; if others can, you too will be able to do that, If you can't do it once, try it for hundred times. Then he added his own words : the communist values are still higher ; the communists must step out further to say 'what others can't do, I must be able to do', then why do you say you can't ?

He often pointed out that age old proverbs and anecdotes too had lessons to teach : such as 'be humble to be noble'. He used to say : It is he, who is really great, is humble too, and can work with modesty. He does not care about fragile prestige ; he only thinks how best he can accomplish his task and for that he does not hesitate to work under everybody else, if that be necessary. Only then who have such spirit can supersede all. So he advised: Start humble to grow big.

To help the KOMSOMOL activists acquire the really higher values in life, Comrade Ghosh carried out numerous such brief discussions throughout his life. In addition, he discussed it number of times what a comrade should do, if and when, in spite of

all efforts, he commits some improper act or falls victim to some bad habits. He used to say that such mistakes should be driven out of mind as if with a VOLCANIC eruption. It meant, he warned, when a mistake or a fault had got into habits, one couldn't remove it with a dilly-dallying attitude. He should then rather create within himself a strong reaction against it like a volcanic explosion and eradicate the mistake or the fault by one stroke.

In course of these discussions, some comrades might have referred to the extraordinary strength of character, ability and vigour in him and would have expressed whether it was at all possible for anybody else to become like him. Comrade Ghosh did never take pleasure at these words. He had his point ; he used to say : if you start with such an understanding, you raise hindrance to the course of development right from the beginning. You cannot predict what one might grow up into. What everybody should do was to try always and constantly practise in life what he realized as truth. In case of any reference to his own instance, he added : to begin with, I was just like others, a village lad who did not go much further in formal education too. But I had a strong desire and determination to know and learn about everything around. I have reached the point you find me today, only by way of this course. Those who may carry on continuously the uncompromising struggle to apply their ideology in life in the same manner, are to become successful. Human ability, too, develops in this way, And so it is wrong to have such an idea at the very root that 'man do not have equal ability'.

Through these simple words, he gave an idea about the fundamental process in the struggle to achieve a revolutionary character. It was through this process that he too developed in stages — first an activist in the revolutionary Anushilan Samity, subsequently an organiser of the Marxist movement and then the founder General Secretary of the proletarian party, the SUCI, and further onwards, in culmination of different arduous struggle to develop the SUCI he emerged as the Great Leader of the Proletariat.. The concrete concepts of the lofty ideals of proletarian culture, ethics and morality that were realized in his consciousness and thoughts in course of this historic struggle, have found their best expressions in the character of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. His life and character make it amply and convincingly clear that only the revolutionary life built on the strength of the revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism can bring real happiness, dignity, fulfilment and meaningfulness to life. He himself has laid it down clearly, "The wants and privations, thousands of sufferings and oppressions which the revolutionaries have to put up with may seem very painful to common people, but the peace and happiness which the revolutionaries enjoy, even being in the midst of an apparently painful and constantly struggling life, cannot be fathomed by those who live in comfort and security. So, whatever a revolutionary gives up while he takes to the life of a revolutionary for the sake of revolution, he never considers it a sacrifice for that, even if it means sacrificing his own life One can become a revolutionary only when this urge for a revolutionary life grows into a tremendous force in one".

The entire life struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh is a glowing concrete example of these thoughts which is also our source of inspiration.

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