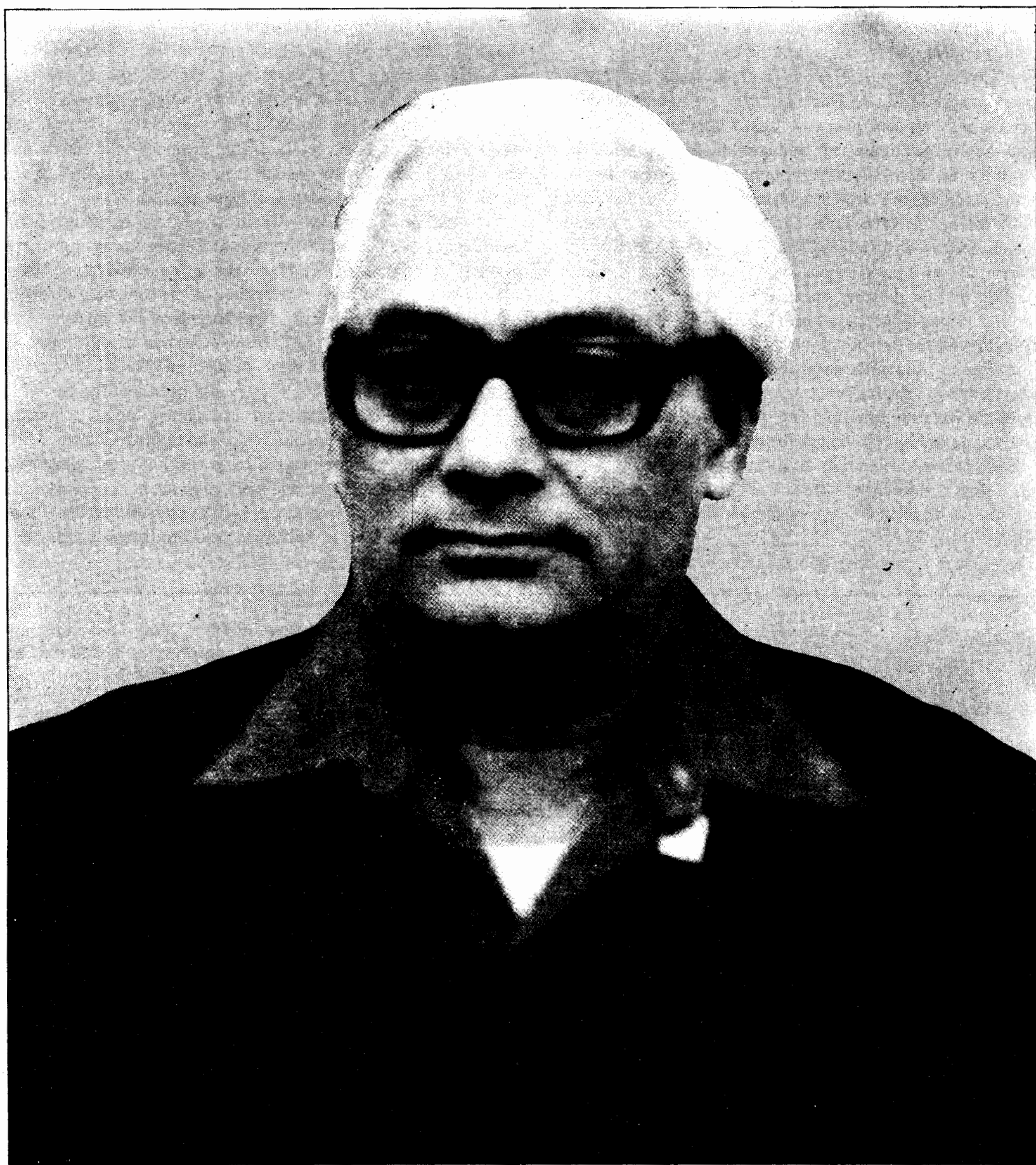


RED SALUTE COMRADE PRITISH CHANDA



A COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARY OF THE FIRST RANK

*Proletarian
Era*

Organ of the
SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA

Founder Editor-in-Chief :
COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

HOMAGE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Central Committee of the SUCI deeply mourns the demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda, member, Politburo of the party, and president, All India Committee of the UTUC-LS.

The Central Committee recalls with profound respect the exemplary struggling life of Comrade Pritish Chanda which he began in his early student life, as a fighter of the revolutionary current of the freedom movement, and later on, being imbued with and taught by the revolutionary thoughts of the great Marxist thinker and philosopher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh he could elevate himself to the height of a close comrade-in-arms of Comrade Ghosh and also an associate in founding the SUCI, the only genuine revolutionary party of the Indian proletariat, and then in expanding the party in different states — he conducted an arduous, toffuous and painstaking revolutionary struggle braving all odds and adversities till the last breath of his life.

The Central Committee firmly believes that the leading role played by Comrade Pritish Chanda in organising and leading class struggle of the working class, building its own revolutionary trade union on the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the Indian proletariat, and his ceaseless battle to free working class movement from economism, reformism, opportunism and legalism would remain a glowing example before the working class.

The Central Committee opines strongly that the untiring

battle conducted by Comrade Chanda as an internationalist revolutionary fighter and the upholder of the noble banner of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh's Thought in different forums of world working class movement abroad against modern revisionism and reformism would remain ever memorable.

The Central Committee firmly holds that the rare and indelible mark of courage, sacrifice, firmness, dedication and honesty Comrade Chanda has left behind by his long tireless and relentless struggle in the interest of class, revolution and party and his playing an advanced role in the difficult struggle for identification with class, revolution and party according to the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and, above all, as a communist revolutionary, his remaining all the time fully absorbed in the thoughts of the emancipation struggle of the working class despite excruciating pain from a disease like cancer and conscious of his imminent death — all these unique examples would provide a source of inspiration to the leaders and cadres of the party.

The Central Committee pays its deep revolutionary homage in memory of the struggling life of Comrade Pritish Chanda, a life-long revolutionary, a disciple and close revolutionary compatriot of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and calls upon all state organisations to observe condolence week from 24th to 30th September '98 by keeping the Red Flag at half mast, wearing black badges and holding memorial meetings.



Comrade Pritish Chanda, Polit Bureau member of the SUCI and President, UTUC-Lenin Sarani, is no more. Human Engine, as he was, stopped running at 5-15 a.m. on 24 September, 1998. The murderous attack of cancer took him away from our midst — fifty long years after the SUCI was born.

The bier carrying his body bedecked with flowers reached '48', the headquarters of our party at 8-45 a.m. on 25th with all the solemnity and sombre silence occasionally punctuated by the resolute slogans of the comrades. Here comes the General departing from the field after long glorious battles, never found outsmarted, for the last time to the place dearest to his heart.

But what a difference since he stepped in for the first time. The office was small, smaller the

number of comrades. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader and teacher of the proletariat, founder General Secretary of our party with a handful of compatriots with revolutionary dare, rare in history started the process of formation of a revolutionary party of the proletariat on Indian soil through an all-out socialist movement covering all aspects of life — something novel, something unique in our country. It was not a ready-made party formed after a gathering, call it a congress or anything else. What was in them, these close comrades-in-arms, the generals or advanced detachment of the proletariat in our country among whom Comrade Chanda was a prominent one? It was what not only Marx used to say about the making of a revolutionary repeating the word uttered by Danton, one of the leaders of French Revolution, — "Audacity, Audacity and again Audacity", — but also was uniquely manifested in the revolutionary audacity of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh through the most difficult and stubborn struggle of party building in which Comrade Pritish Chanda was a steadfast and dependable disciple.

At the party office he was received by Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, our General Secretary, his close comrade-in-arms, since the journey of the SUCI started towards the goal of glory in emancipating the exploited, oppressed and humiliated humanity from the bondage of capital. Also present were other disciples of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on the Central Committee and other bodies added by hundreds of young and old ones, grief-stricken but in firm resolve to carry on duty in flawless precision. They translated into concrete activities the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh working as unforgettable guidance.

The General Secretary along with the

members of the Central Committee and the Central Staff present at the headquarter stood in guard and all the comrades joined in the Red Salute offered to Comrade Pritish Chanda, the giant revolutionary till the last breath. *Farewell Comrade! You will remain forever as you were to us, so near so dear, with the charm and love your personality exuded.* It was not out of any effort, something contrived, but a spontaneous expression of a revolutionary soul within. He loved most the younger, the budding comrades, the revolutionaries in the making.

The Last Journey of this departed leader was scheduled to start at 4 p.m. to give minimum necessary time for comrades coming from afar to rush to join the march to offer their respectful revolutionary gratitude and ardent farewell to this veteran general. They have learnt from him many

Last Journey

things about the great revolutionary thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and how to apply those to concrete problems. Above all, the character of this leader ever shining before them with poignancy and with resolute firmness to carry through to the end, the battle in which he engaged himself as a worthy and close comrade-in-arms of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader and teacher.

Meanwhile, came the leaders of our own organisations and fronts as also leaders of different political parties and trade unions and even distinguished men whose pain was writ large on their face, to pay their tribute to this noble soul who had many political opponents but not a personal enemy. Distinguished among those who paid tribute were veteran leader Ashoke Ghosh and Minister Naren Deb of Forward Bloc, Biman Bose and Anil Biswas of CPI (M), Satya Bhattacharya of CPI, Kartick Pal and Kalyan Goswani of CPI (ML)-Liberation, Chitta

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He Departs Blazing a Trail

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Goswami of Workers' Party of India, Chitta Nath of Bolshevik Party, Sumanta Hira of PRPI, Kallol Chatterjee of MCPI, Prasanta Dasgupta of TUCC, Kamalapati Roy of BPTUC, Chittabrata Majumder of CITU, Samar Chakraborty and Pramathes Sen of INTUC, Ashoke Ghosh of UTUC (Bowbazar), Naren Sen of NFTU, Bhajan Dasgupta of HMS, Netai Ganguli of Sara Bangla Shikshak O Shikshakarmi Samity, Dr. Arunabha Sengupta, Dr. A. B. Dutta, Comrade Amriteswar Chakraborty, Secretary, Bihar State Committee, Comrade Shibsankar, member, Bihar State Committee, Comrade Yakub Pailan, veteran member, West Bengal State Secretariat. Tributes were also paid by Comrades Badsha Khan, All India Committee, UTUC-LS, V. N. Singh, AIKKMS, Prativa Mukherjee, AIMSS and Swapan Chatterjee, AIDSO. Tribute was paid on behalf of *Proletarian Era* and *Ganadabi*.

The journey started at 4 p.m. Beside the bier where lay the mortal remains, the respected members of the Central Committee and some Central Staff and some volunteers were seated followed by cars carrying the old and physically



Comrade General Secretary paying homage

weak comrades in between thousands of comrades including the young pioneers, the KOMSOMOL detachment, with the flags down, 74 in number symbolising seventy-four years of Comrade Chanda's life; hundreds joined their hands in firm clasping guarding the march to ward off disorder.

The refrain of the *Internationale* declaring the internationalist goal of the movement was being heard. Also was being heard the song composed on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. The first halt came at the party press frequented by him with pride, to receive the floral tributes of the comrades and red salute. Then came the headquarter of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani, the organisation which has come to a new height adhering to the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and because of the herculean efforts led by Comrade Chanda. It is today not only nationally but internationally recognised representing alone in our country the voice of the exploited and oppressed millions of toiling people unlike those led by the apologists of bourgeois interests. The comrades led by the leaders paid their homage and floral tributes. At the UTUC-LS office, floral tribute was paid by Comrade Achintya Sinha, one of the secretaries, UTUC-LS, All India Committee, Comrade Anil Sarkar, Secretary, Bihar UTUC-LS, Comrade Sanat Dutta, President and Comrade Sankar Saha, Secretary, West Bengal UTUC-LS, Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta, veteran trade union leader and WB state office secretary, and other District Secretaries and union representatives.

The march, a huge one, had to take a circular move via Suerndranath Banerjee Road and then proceeded towards the burning ghat at Keoratala along the roads of Chowringhee and downwards.

A meeting of workers of a different organisation was being held at Bhowanipore. It stopped, declaring their great regard for this departed leader. It showed the range of respect he commanded as a leader of the masses.

The procession proceeded with people gathering on both sides talking in hushed voice — "Here is a party totally different — how big and noble are its leaders, not corrupt and thugs." Another joined: "What a time! The corrupts are squabbling for share of loot, our money. And you see, the newspapers back them." "We are poor and hungry. Our voice is not heard. So also this party which upholds our rights, is blacked out in Press," — said another voice. Such were the comments of common people, people with shabby dress, emaciated. They need to move further, strengthen themselves by joining the SUCI, the party of the exploited, to make their voice heard more strongly, their urgent demands wrested and to chart out the path of their emancipation from the slavery of capitalist system.

The procession is now near the burning place. Emotion runs high and the high pitch is being matched by the pitch of slogans and solemn vow to carry the battle through to the end.

Some one said, "Oh, we will miss him." Came a calm and sombre reply: "No, the burning candle that kindled thousand other comrades will remain. The candles aglow will multiply."

Long Live Comrade Prithish Chanda!
Long Live SUCI!
Long Live Revolution!
Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!



Activists accompanying Comrade Prithish Chanda on way towards the burning ghat

COMRADE PRITISH CHANDA

A Communist Revolutionary of the First Rank

Comrade Pritish Chanda, member of the Polit Bureau of our party, passed away on the 24th September, 1998. He was born in 1924 in a middle-class family of Coomillah of present-day Bangladesh whose environment was influenced by the patriotic spirit of the-then anti-British nationalist movement. At the age of 15, in 1939, Comrade Chanda plunged into the freedom struggle and later on organised students movement in the Jagannath Intermediate College of Dhaka where he studied. He was imprisoned by the British. Around 1945 he came in contact with the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Comrade Ghosh had already realised the painful fact that in the absence of a genuine communist party the Indian capitalist class would reap the entire harvest of our glorious freedom struggle and was therefore fully engrossed with assiduously building up in India such a genuine communist party. Imbued and inspired by Comrade Ghosh's thought and his towering personality, Comrade Chanda became his disciple and plunged body and soul in the struggle led by him, never to look back again.

He started with organising the students centring round the Ashutosh College and the youth centring round the Culture Club, which was then a recruiting centre of the party, both situated in south Calcutta. He was endowed from the outset with a charming personality coupled with a spirit of fierce determination. Soon he emerged as the leader of the students and youth around him and, in course of time, as a figure in the students' movement of Calcutta itself. One by one, he brought into the vortex of the arduous struggle for building the new party led by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, students and young people some of whom are the frontranking party leaders today. In those initial years of unimaginable hardship and painstaking struggle Comrade Chanda contributed in this way to the forging of the party of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

The new party, SUCI, was born at the founding convention held from 22 - 24th April, 1948, at Joynagar of the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was elected its General Secretary. At this convention, Comrade Pritish Chanda was elected a member of the Central Committee. For a brief while afterwards he functioned as the secretary of the Calcutta district party and as editor of the party's Bengali organ *Ganadabi*, then he was sent by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, in 1948 itself, to Sindhri in Dhanbad, Bihar to explore possibilities of party-building there. The giant Sindhri Fertiliser Plant was then just being set up with thousands of workers and INTUC had already entrenched itself in their midst. Under these circumstances Comrade Chanda — setting foot for the first time in Bihar, completely unknown and singlehanded and passing days together with scarcely any food and the nights in car-sheds and similar places — persevered with a singleness of purpose and an indomitable zeal. He was faced with constant threat and intimidation by the immensely influential Congress and Socialist Party of that time, the management and the administration and also attempts on his life by goons employed by the INTUC. But overcoming all these he built up the Sindhri unit of the All India CPWD Mazdoor Union — within a year. In 1949 he was elected secretary of the Sindhri unit and in 1950 the Bihar state president of this all India

organisation.

All this while, he had been mixing with different other sections of people and persuading, inspiring and organising them with the great thought of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, aiming to start activities of the party. By 1951 the first party units grew up in Arrah, Chhapra and Dhanbad districts. Powerful peasants' movement broke out in Kolarampur of Arrah. Series of coalminers' struggles took place in the coalmines owned by the Tatas in Jeolgora, Digwadih, Jharia and in the entire coalfields of the Jharia-Dhanbad region. In 1953, assigned by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Chanda again came to West Bengal to aid and assist the central committee members Comrades Sachin Banerjee and Subodh Banerjee who were then spearheading the heroic 'Tebhaga' peasants struggle (demanding peasants' legitimate share of crops) in the hinterlands of the Sunderbans. He gave a commendable service here also and contracted typhoid in its course. Upon recovery, he returned to Bihar.

Party in Bihar was growing steadily. Work spread to Ranchi and also Patna, among other places. It spread among newer sections of people also. Exploration among railway workers started with the help of railway employee-contacts around Ranchi. In Singbhum district of south Bihar, seniormost central committee member Comrade Hiren Sarkar had already laid, since long, a strong foundation of the party in the Bahragorah, Narsingarh, Ghatsila, Mosabani region. Copper Mazoor Union of the miners of the Mosabani group of mines was formed. A large number of tribal people now joined the party along with other sections of miners. A veritable awakening of the oppressed tribal people took place along different parts of Singbhum district. With painstaking and tireless effort Comrades Hiren Sarkar and Pritish Chanda reared a number of promising organisers who now required personal supervision of and ideological and cultural remoulding by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh himself. In 1952 Comrade Ghosh conducted the first School of politics in Bihar at Ghatsila, in '53 and '54 at Digwadih, in '56 at Narsingarh. There followed more such schools, study classes and workers' meetings, all conducted by Comrade Ghosh personally. From these arose the first batch of Bihar's leading organisers who are today the veteran leaders of the State.

In April 1958, Comrade Pritish Chanda became the secretary of the Bihar state party. The growth of the party and of the different mass movements led by it have by no means gone unnoticed by the ruling class and the state government. It showed itself through the increasing and endless harassment, arrests and torture of party workers and leaders including Comrades Hiren Sarkar and Pritish Chanda. Comrade Chanda was repeatedly imprisoned in 1956 July, '57 June, '64 August and September, in '65 and also in '66. The party now came to be regarded as a force of movement and Comrade Chanda as a renowned mass leader of Bihar — achievement of eighteen years' principle and painstaking struggle.

Over seven thousand people filled the Bhaga Maidan of Dhanbad on 2nd May '65 in observing



Comrade Pritish Chanda addressing the open session of the First Congress of the party on 4th April, 1988 at Brigade Parade Ground, Calcutta. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee seated by his side

the historic May Day where Comrade Pritish Chanda was the main speaker. In 1966, by our party's initiative, a five-party United Front of Bihar was formed. It took a series of programmes against mainly the scarcity of food and high prices. The movement culminated in the unprecedentedly successful 'Bihar Bandh' on 9th August '66, despite massive repression and arrest of more than 1800 leftist party activists and leaders including Comrades Hiren Sarkar and Pritish Chanda. He also developed a number of his contacts among railway employees into dedicated party workers who initiated party activities in Purulia which was then in Bihar, and now a district of West Bengal.

In the mid 1970s, Comrade Chanda was entrusted with consolidating state party organisation of UP and Haryana. With patient and perseverent work enriched by his vast experience Comrade Chanda played an indispensable role in developing party in these two states, gradually, to their present shape. From 1978 - 1987 he looked after the Delhi state party and that of the union territory of Chandigarh. The historic All India Protest March on November 4, 1980, the first in the country organised by our party after Indira Gandhi returned to power and unleashed a series of anti-people measures, could not attain the success it did without Comrade Chanda successfully arranging beforehand the elaborate and meticulous preparatory work for it with a limited number of comrades in Delhi. This resourcefulness he also demonstrated on many other occasions. From a small beginning he gradually consolidated the party in the different terrain of Rajasthan also. In the intricate and complex political situation of Punjab, too, he succeeded in developing contacts among different cross-sections of people. In all these endeavours he emerged as one of the ablest organisers of the party.

Comrade Chanda played a very significant role in organising also the UTUC-LS. He was elected in 1969, and remained for the next seven years, secretary of the All India Executive Committee of the UTUC (precursor of the UTUC-LS) at its 7th All India Conference at Jharia. In 1976 he was elected its General Secretary and continued in that office till '85. In 1985, at the 17th All India Conference of the UTUC-LS in Delhi, he became its President and so he remained till his end. He also

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A Communist Revolutionary

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served in different capacities numerous workers' and employees' organisations in the steel, iron, copper, railway, engineering, jute, textile, banking, etc., industries all over the country. All his life he upheld the revolutionary thought of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh against all sorts of economism, opportunism, legalism, sectarianism within the working class movement and struggle indefatigably to protect and safeguard working class unity. He played a significant role in the historic all India railway strike of 1974 as permanent invitee in the NCCRS (National Coordination Committee of Railwaymen's Struggle) and fought a determined and uncompromising battle to safeguard the historic struggle with great possibilities against the naked betrayal of the social democratic forces. He also played an important role in the historic students' and peoples' upheaval in the late 1970s, led by Jayaprakash Narayan, in trying to give it a leftist direction following the teachings and personal guidance of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Once again his tireless effort and initiative played a most significant role, aided by also certain other trade unions, in forming in 1980 the well-known NCC (National Campaign Committee of trade unions). It led many significant united workers' movements till 1993, and Comrade Chanda was always at their fore. In this forum also he persistently upheld the anti-capitalist revolutionary line of working class struggle. The 29 November, 1991 All India General Strike organised by the NCC against the New Economic and Industrial Policy of the Narasimha Rao Government and that on June 16, 1992 on the same issue and especially the September 9, 1993 'Bharat Bandh' against both the New Economic and Industrial Policy and the Dunkel proposals are some of the NCC's notable movements. In late '93 too, when the All India Sponsoring Committee of the trade unions succeeded the NCC, Comrade Chanda played a significant role in the formation in 1993 itself of the still broader National Platform of Mass Organisations. In both these forums Comrade Chanda played a significant role.

With equal courage of conviction and firm determination did Comrade Pritish Chanda uphold the revolutionary thought of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh against all shades of reformism and modern revisionism in each of the many international fora of trade unions he attended. In this sphere also, he reflected consistently and competently the central committee's relentless attempt to carry Comrade Shibdas Ghosh thought to the world working class movement and before the different communist parties and forces the world over. Notable among these are the All China Trade Union Conference of Beijing (1985), Conference on 40th anniversary of victory over fascism in Moscow (1985), World Peace Conference in Denmark (1986), Conference of Trade Unions of Albania in Tirana (1987), the Karachi Conference (1990), the WFTU World Conference in Berlin (1986), Moscow (1990), Damascus (1994) and the SAARC regional trade union Seminar in Dhaka (1995).

In January 1996, cancer was detected and he was operated upon. His health broke down irreparably, but not his strength of will, resilience and tenacity of purpose. After barely eight months of his operation he attended in October, 1996, in Delhi, the 33rd ILC Conference to give a scathing exposure of the cunning and calculated anti-

working class schemes of the government. Since then till he fell ill again in 1998, this time irretrievably, he plunged into feverish activity with a burning sense of purpose, completely ignoring his frail and failing body. In 1997 the central government declared — following its policy of modernisation — closure of all its copper mines. It meant loss of thousands of jobs at a stroke. The miners of the Musaboni group of copper mines desperately sought Comrade Chanda. He was for decades president of the Copper Mazdoor Union of Mosabani. Without a care for his own dwindling health Comrade Chanda rushed, revived the morale of the workers and unleashed a veritable battle organising the nearby villagers also in its support. And the battle went upto the Supreme Court. While attending this court case in March 1998 in Delhi, he fell grievously ill, was rushed to Calcutta and was found to have suffered a relapse of cancer.

The six more months he lived, in unbearable pain, he lived with exemplary fortitude and self-possession and till the end retained his lively demeanour. Those characteristic features which marked out Comrade Chanda were his stubborn resolve to discharge a duty once taken whatever the odds, together with his innate good humour and cheerfulness, his youthfulness, his irrepressible urge as also natural mode of always being in the midst of the people of all ages and descriptions, and especially his great happiness in being with the

common workers. He had an inimitable way of not only attracting the comrades, all comrades, with his common constant and lively association and discussion and thereby imparting to them his rich experience but also of irresistibly attracting anyone who came in his contact for even once. Above all was his unfailing loyalty to the party and its decisions even when he might have had a different view earlier. Needless to say, he conducted a conscious and conscientious struggle in acquiring in his own life these values flowing from the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. These qualities greatly impressed also his doctors. This is why, realising Comrade Chanda's intense agony and torment — to attend the public meeting at Sahid Minar Maidan, Calcutta on April 24, 1998, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the party — the doctors allowed him to attend it. Comrade Chanda presided over the meeting and remained on the dais although the proceedings during five long hours in an inclement weather, despite repeated entreaties by comrades to retire and repose. With the fast approaching end, lying in the hospital, he was engrossed always with the problems, prospects and progress of the party. Even on his death-bed he continued to live for the class, revolution and the party. He has proved by his conduct, till the very last breath, that his struggle for identification with the party ceased only after he ceased to exist himself. In departing, Comrade Pritish Chanda left for the revolutionaries of future a living example of how to live and die with the dignity of a communist revolutionary of the first rank.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGES

Communist Party of Cuba

It is with great sorrow that we learned about the death of Comrade Pritish Chanda, a veteran Marxist and trade union leader who devoted himself to the revolutionary cause, the anti-imperialist struggle and the well-being of his people.

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, we would like to express our deepest condolence to his comrades and family.

Central Committee,
Communist Party of Cuba

WFTU

The Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau of the WFTU expresses its deep sorrow and condolence on the death of Comrade Pritish Chanda — a leading member of the WFTU affiliates, President of the U.T.U.C.(LS) and a member of the Polit Bureau of the SUCI.

Comrade Chanda's deep commitment to the cause and service to the toiling people, Proletarian Internationalism, and modest life style received appreciation from the working people and their Trade Union movement irrespective of affiliation and political orientation.

Comrade Pritish Chanda will be remembered as an exemplary socialist leader of the working class movement.

Our fraternal salute to Comrade Pritish Chanda.

Deb Kumar Ganguli
WFTU Secretary

MULYANKAN, Nepal

We are deeply grieved and shocked at knowing the news of sudden demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda, Polit Bureau member of SUCI, and an outstanding vanguard fighter of working

class yesterday.

We have felt his departure as an irreparable loss to the party and Indian working class movement.

Deeply engaged in the copper mine workers' struggle against closure of mines by the central government and in the consequence he fell critically ill ending in death, we are deeply moved and impressed. His was the exemplary death and revolutionary workers all over the world can be proud of such selfless devotion.

Through you, we would like to convey our heartfelt condolence to the Central Committee of SUCI and his family. May all of us learn a great deal from his Communist-like ideal and estimable life values.

Shyam Shrestha
Editor-in-Chief
and
Whole staff of MULYANKAN

Socialist Party of Bangladesh

We, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, deeply mourn at the demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda, member, Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India and All-India President, UTUC-Lenin Sarani.

We recall with great reverence the unique role of Comrade Pritish Chanda in the revolutionary movement of India and in the international revolutionary workers' movement.

At this hour of grief we convey our deep condolence to all leaders, workers and supporters of the SUCI.

Central Committee
Socialist Party of Bangladesh
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“My Last Appeal — Never Forget the Final Aim” — Pritish Chanda

[Exactly four months before passing away, on 24th April '98 at Saheed Minar Maidan, Calcutta, Comrade Pritish Chanda attended in precarious health the public meeting commemorating 50th Anniversary of the Party and presided over it. This presidential address, his last, is given below, slightly edited. — P.Era]

Comrades and friends,

At the very outset I tender my apology to you all since in the present state of my health I am unable to speak standing.

Comrades, you know this meeting marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of our Party. To many people fifty years might seem a pretty long time. And again from another angle, say in the time-frame of evolution of the universe, fifty years would mean nothing. In any case, there have elapsed fifty long years. But only those few revolutionary compatriots who dedicated themselves at that 1948 founding conference to bring about a revolutionary transformation of society know how these fifty long years have passed in surmounting what impediments, against what challenges, what adds and in the face of what mountains of harassment, heckling, humiliation and attack that we passed through all this while. Of course, it is nothing new. Revolutionaries in all ages had to wade through such situations as a rule.

Still, I would like to very briefly dwell on this very aspect for the benefit of those of the present generation who need to know this history. Comrade Ghosh did not build the SUCI in a day. It took him a fierce, painstaking and prolonged struggle to lay its foundations. In the Indian freedom struggle innumerable workers, peasants, students, youth and women made great sacrifices. But at the time of our freedom the departing British rulers handed over power to the Indian big capitalists and merchants. The people's aspiration for full emancipation thus remained unfulfilled. Why such a failure, why could the Indian working people not hold its sway over the freedom struggle and why did free India thus emerge not as a working class state but as a capitalist one? These complex and critical questions haunted us from 1945. It was Comrade Ghosh who then provided the answer and who taught us the crucial lesson. He showed that a genuine working class party was not yet born in India. There, of course, already existed several so-called Communist Parties including the CPI. But having followed wrong methods since the very inception, none among these grew into a genuine communist party. They were, in fact, petty-bourgeois parties. Indeed, how can you raise wheat if you have sown barley? Such was the case with these parties. It was Comrade Ghosh who showed us the correct path of revolution and building up a genuine communist party by scientifically analysing the history of India, the mental make-up of its people, the course of evolution of Indian society and of the class struggles in it. The SUCI was built on this basis of comprehensive and concretised concept of Marxism in the soil of India.

Our slogan then was : recruit cadres, expand units and organise the masses to lead their just struggles. In those days we worked all day and night without fame, name, shelter, a helping hand, a meal a day or even a single paise in the pocket quite often. But that is how revolution advances. You know yourselves how strong and big has it grown in these five decades. But, of course, we don't walk in the corridors of power and never aspired to do so. So, if you want to judge us by

that yardstick you would make a mistake. What mistake? Look at the economic, social, political, educational, moral and cultural and ethical domains or even at that of art or literature. You will see everywhere the stark evidence of an abysmal degeneration and decay that took place during the last fifty long years since independence. But as for the SUCI, it can legitimately claim to have grown in all these years into a veritable force to reckon with. Some of our fraternal parties have sent from abroad messages to this meeting. How they evaluate and view our party, you yourselves must have noted in these messages. Whether in America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, South Asia or in the Arab countries - leaving aside the revisionists parading as communists - nowhere do the genuine communist parties and

forces today any more consider CPI(M), CPI and like parties of India as communists. They are in search of the right path today. And they regard us as a brother party and are gradually coming to regard Comrade Ghosh as a foremost thinker of not only our country but the entire world communist movement. It is not an ordinary thing, not a mean achievement. And this we have achieved solely on our own.

I know there are some who would argue that although the SUCI's line is undoubtedly correct it is yet too small. To them I say, SUCI has never stooped to lick the boots of the bourgeoisie and for increasing its strength by anyhow winning elections and sticking to governmental power.

SUCI is a party of revolution. Even in the total darkness of the apparently reactionary situation it can locate the sparks of revolution. Revolution is the inevitable, inexorable, historical destiny. Comrades, there is much more I feel like

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CONDOLENCE MESSAGES

(Contd. from page 5)

Socialist Workers' Front, Bangladesh.

At the demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda, All-India President, UTUC-Lenin Sarani, we express our deep condolence on behalf of the Central Committee, Socialist Workers' Front and the toiling people of Bangladesh.

We recall with deep respect the unique role of Comrade Pritish Chanda in the international revolutionary workers' movement.

At the demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda we express our deep sympathy at this hour of bereavement to all leaders, activists and supporters of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani.

Secretary, Socialist Workers' Front
Bangladesh

I. K. Gujral

I am sorry to learn about the sad demise of Mr. Pritish Chanda on the 24th of September, 1998. I can well imagine the void it would have left. May his soul rest in peace and may the Almighty give family members courage to bear this irreparable loss. He was indeed a very valued leader of the SUCI and his dedication to the social causes will always be remembered by the country.

Joining you in this hour of grief,

I.K. Gujral

Communist Party of India

Grieved at Com. Pritish's death. My heartfelt condolence.

A.V. Bardhan
Communist Party of India

Hind Mazdoor Sabha

We learnt of the sad demise of Comrade Pritish Chanda. It is indeed a great loss for the working class people. Leaders like Pritish Chanda were the ones who ushered in the trade union movement. Their experience has been invaluable for the struggle of the workers. He has left us a rich legacy of experience which we can use and remember him by. In that sense leaders like him never pass away.

We offer our condolences to you and to his family.

R.A. Mital
Secretary
Hind Mazdoor Sabha

L. Mishra

Secretary, Ministry of Labour
Government of India

I was deeply distressed to hear about the sad demise of respected Pritish Babu, President of UTUC(Lenin Sarani) this morning.

I had the occasion to know Pritish Babu for more than two decades. Being at the vanguard of the trade union movement he had a long, passionate and abiding commitment to fight for the just and genuine causes contributing to marginalisation and exploitation of labour. In statements as in action in real life, he had always come out clearly and unequivocally in support of the genuine problems and concerns of the poor, the deprived, the disadvantaged and the marginalised. His day-to-day life and struggle was a transparent reflection of his sincerity and earnestness of intentions, deep and passionate commitment to wipe out tears from the cheerless faces of mute millions viz. landless agricultural labourers, the share-croppers, the rural artisans, the fishermen and women, the leather workers, the salt workers, the quarry workers, workers in brick-kilns, building and construction workers and so on. Pritish Babu's life marks the close of half a century of unremitting, tireless and dedicated efforts for emancipation of the common man who is tied to the yoke of bondage in numerous forms, who does not have the option and discretion to regulate his life and alerting in the manner in which it would be regulated and who does not know what he does not know. It won't be easy to fill in the void caused by the departure of Pritish Babu.

On this sad occasion, I send my sincere and heartfelt condolences for the bereaved members of the family and for the members of the UTUC(Lenin Sarani). May God give you the strength of body and peace of mind so that you can withstand this calamity.

L. Mishra
Secretary, Ministry of Labour
Government of India

MEMORIAL MEETING

Calcutta, 7 October, 1998 : Footsteps of history often go unheard. Like they go in the political cross-currents of the country, especially in this city where the force of revolution applied itself today to turning its grief into strength and so elevating the communist character of its ranks towards attaining its revolutionary goal, while the force of conciliation between labour and capital is coming out of its guise now to more nakedly serve its capitalist master. Thus works history its way in this hour, though perhaps few care to notice it.

The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Centre of India held today a memorial meeting at the University Institute Hall in the city to pay revolutionary respects to the memory of the polit bureau member of the party and eminent leader of national and international working class movement, Comrade Pritish Chanda, who breathed his last on 24 September. Party units in all states observed a condolence week, flying the red flag at halfmast, and leaders and cadres wearing black badges, and memorial meetings being held at different levels. At today's meeting Comrade Anil Sen, member, central committee, proposed the name of Comrade Tapas Dutta, member, central committee and general secretary of the All India UTUC-Lenin Sarani, as the president of the meeting. Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, member, central committee, seconded.

Thousands of the party rank and file, veteran revolutionaries of the independence struggle, leaders of many a left party, and members of the public assembled in the premises. The auditorium overfull, many more hundreds filled the skirting roads wearing black badges on their chest. A hushed silence there fathomed the depth of grief which these men and women are determined to turn into strength to accomplish the task for which beloved Comrade Pritish Chanda laid down his life at the call of the departed leader, teacher and guide, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Wreaths were being placed on behalf of party units and mass and frontal organisations at the foot of a portrait on the front stage of the hall. Leaders of party state units, frontal organisations, artist Tapas Sen, wife and son of Comrade Chanda paid respects with floral wreaths and red

salute. Wreaths were laid by compatriots of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and members of the first central committee, Comrade Rathin Sen and Comrade Manoranjan Banerjee. It all culminated as Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, beloved leader and general secretary of the party, slowly approached the portrait and, bending forward, placed a wreath of red roses, and then stepped back to stand erect and raise his hand in red salute to the departed comrade-in-arms. The whole house stood up in unison as mark of oneness, uniformity and singleness to carry forward the task with which Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had charged the party, to carry forward from where Comrade Pritish Chanda left when he breathed his last.

The same call was now sounded on the emotional note, as the DYO music squad sang the *Internationale*. A homage to the revolutionary life of Comrade Chanda was read out by Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, member, central committee, on behalf of the Central Committee : a tribute to a life which symbolised the revolutionary mode of existence, a life with its roots only in the party and in revolution, and a wholesome life in the joyful spirit of revolution. To articulate its resolve to emulate this resplendence in the spirit of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the house observed silence for two minutes.

From leaders of fraternal parties and mass organisations of the country and abroad, and from other individuals messages of condolence had been received, which Comrade Provash Ghosh, member, central committee, read out : from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba ; the WFTU, Asia Pacific Region ; Central Committee, Bangladesh Socialist Party ; Bangladesh Socialist Workers' Front ; Mulyankan, a Marxist magazine of Nepal ; Central Committee, Communist Party of India ; Hind Majdoor Sabha ; Labour Secretary, Union Government of India ; I. K. Gujral, former Prime Minister of India.

From the chair Comrade Tapas Dutta paid tribute to the revolutionary communist character of Comrade Pritish Chanda who kept alive the struggle till death in the light of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, not flinching in the least even as he lay in his deathbed.

On behalf of fraternal parties, Comrades Geeta Mukherjee (CPI), Sudhir Bhattacharya (MCPI), Sankar Mitra (CPI(ML)-Liberation), Sailen De (Forward Bloc), Chitta Goswami (Workers' Party of India), Sumanta Hira (PRPI), Kshiti Goswami (RSPI), Manohar Chakraborty (RCPI) and Kalipada Ghosh (Bolshevik Party) spoke before the gathering, recalling incidents and glimpses of their personal acquaintance with Comrade Chanda to highlight his qualities, each as she or he perceived them to be.

One strain was common : the courage of conviction of Comrade Chanda, the binding spell with which he drew others to himself, and his and his party's tireless striving for building unity among left and democratic parties and forces against the common enemy — the ruling capitalist class and its political agents.

What was the character of conviction which gave Comrade Chanda the revolutionary audacity to fight in the face of every odd and obstacle and conduct struggle till the last breath ? What teachings did exhort him to educate people on the correct course of winning emancipation and forging unity to organise mass movements against the capitalist rule of exploitation and oppression ? What instilled in him the evergreen and ever-dynamic spirit of revolutionary existence ? To answer these questions Comrade Nihar Mukherjee explained how Comrade Chanda, in his manifold struggle covering every sphere of life, followed the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh to build himself into a communist character ; how he remoulded himself to elevate himself to the place where we find him today. Outwardly, the life of a revolutionary is one that is full of sufferings and sacrifice. But the true revolutionary knows he has sacrificed only the falsehood, the vanity and all that is outworn. In their place he has embraced a life resplended like the burning sun itself. This life is founded on truth, on the correct understanding of the world around and within. That is the source and fountainhead of joy and happiness of a communist revolutionary. To him, existence is bereft of meaning unless it takes shape in the mode of revolution.

To subordinate one's individual interest to the interest of the class, revolution and party is no longer adequate for a revolutionary to develop into a good communist in the present era of vulgar

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, is addressing the Memorial Meeting.

MEMORIAL MEETING

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individualism. To be a communist of noble standard a revolutionary ought to identify himself with the class, the revolution and the party. In this phase of total decadence in every sphere of the capitalist society, winning emancipation depends upon how far advanced the revolutionary has carried his struggle to build himself into a genuine communist character.

Comrade Chanda did not attain this position at one stroke. Guided by the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Chanda conducted a protracted lifelong struggle to attain the level of character for which the speakers at today's meeting paid him glowing tributes. Mixing at ease with everybody around was a hallmark of his character. Whoever came in touch grew a sense of deep respect for him, not to speak of a feeling of love and affection. He had problems, too, in his life, to tackle which he always turned to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh for his guidance. A revolutionary has to give test for his standard every moment and till the last breath. Comrade Chanda proved himself equal to it. He left his mark of creativity in organising and leading the struggle of industrial workers, agricultural labourers, landless peasants, middleclass employees and every other section of the working people.

In so doing not only did he happily surrender his self to the party, he undertook most arduously that struggle to identify self with the class, the revolution and the party so to attain that standard where revolution is the life, party is the life, and outside of it there is no individual life. This struggle for complete identification of the self with the revolution and the party under the guidance of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh carved him out into what we find him today and for which he has earned place in the heart of the toiling masses in so many parts of the country, a place of genuine respect in hearts of the ranks and leaders of other parties even. This is why, too, so many from outside the

party ranks have assembled here today to pay respects to his memory.

It should not be forgotten that Comrade Chanda is the creation of the total struggle of the party, the SUCI. And it should be understood that by doing away with the ideological struggle no united movement can advance to attain its goal. History adjures all left forces to strive to build united democratic mass movements on the burning problems of the people's life and against the anti-people policies of the ruling capitalist class and its serving political parties. Comrade Chanda laid down his life for this united struggle. Can this struggle attain its cherished revolutionary goal by keeping the masses politically uneducated? Is there any other course to rouse the masses towards this goal? This question has to be answered in actual deeds, should true respects be paid to the memory of ever-green, ever-dynamic, ever-ready Comrade Pritish Chanda.

After Comrade Nihar Mukherjee closed his speech with these words, the music squad sang the *Great Proletarian Leader*. That affirmed the pledge of all present to carry forward the task Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had charged us with.

Memorial Meeting in Alipore Jail

Inside Alipore Central Jail inmates held a meeting in memory of departed leader Comrade Pritish Chanda. Initially, the jail authority had refused permission, after which the inmates resorted to fasting in protest. This created a connotation on the jail precinct, forcing the authority to accede to the demand at around 1 p.m. in the end. At half past three the meeting was held, conducted by Comrade Saokat Sardar. Tributes came from the core of heart as speakers addressed the gathering.

"Never forget the final aim"

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saying to you today, no matter what says my health. But Com. Nihar Mukherjee will place before you his valuable speech. So I will conclude here with a last appeal to you all. Today, on this dais are present the party representatives from around eighteen states of India - from states bordering on the Bay of Bengal to those on the Arabian Ocean, to the Punjab, Kashmir and down to Tamil Nadu and Kerala. So, we are not really so small any more. But nor are we yet as big as demands the need of revolution. We, must also admit that there still exist many shortcomings and limitations within. Armed with Comrade Ghosh's Thought you will have to traverse a long way still and rid the party of all deficiencies. But never forget the final aim - the revolution. Economic, political, social crises are becoming increasingly intolerable in every state today. Whichever party runs the government follows the same economic policies as prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank — liberalisation, privatisation, modernisation and globalisation etc. These will not be changed by any of them. Obviously so. Because they all serve capitalism. Can it then ever happen that these parties will remain, the capitalist class will continue to rule, these policies also will all be in force but poverty, starvation, unemployment, price rise and complete moral degradation will vanish of their own? It can never be. Therefore, Comrades, gird your loins and lead the masses against this exploitative capitalist order and finally accomplish the anti-capitalist socialist revolution of India, overthrowing the Indian capitalist state machine and marching forward towards breaking the present imperialist shackles all over the world.

Long live revolution!
Long live SUCI!



Central Committee and Central Staff members paying RED SALUTE at Keoratala Crematorium

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