

Proletarian Era

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Devilry of the Congress-led government to embellish a brazenly anti-people budget with *aam aadmi* colour

When Pranab Mukherjee, the Minister of Finance (FM) in the Congress-led UPA government and spokesperson of the ruling dispensation presented his budget for 2009-10 in July last year, he had said that “*aam aadmi*” (common man) is now the focus of all our programmes and schemes.” And the countrymen have seen in the seven months that have rolled by since then as to how the budget had “addressed” their issues. This time when the FM, so eloquent about his “overflowing concern” for the *aam aadmi*, has presented the budget on 26 February 2010 amidst applause from the media, monopoly houses, corporate sector and bourgeois columnists, the common people have been ravaged by draconian price rise, dipping income, massive unemployment and job loss, absence of rudimentary healthcare, sanitation, power supply and scope of proper education. Life of the overwhelming population has become drudgery with grueling poverty and appalling misery coupled with total insecurity and uncertainty having a stranglehold.

So the people have desperately been seeking some relief and if the government had even a modicum of concern for people it could have initiated some mitigating measures through the budget.

People’s issues bypassed

But to their utter dismay, they find that the entire budget and prior to that the Economic Survey presented before Parliament have not addressed even a single burning problem that is making the life of the common people yet more nightmarish with every passing moment. On the contrary, both the documents are only full of economic jargons and some routine (often doctored) figures and overtly concentrated on extending more help, benefit and financial benefits to the monopolists, large capital, business tycoons and the handful of rich. And the FM has made no secret of this in his budget speech which informed us that “with development and economic reforms, the focus of economic activity has shifted towards the non-governmental actors, bringing into

sharper focus the role of Government as an enabler. An enabling Government does not try to deliver directly to the citizens everything that they need. Instead it creates an enabling ethos so that individual enterprise and creativity can flourish.” It is thus clear that the government will only enable private entrepreneurs and non-government actors (read individual capitalists) to flourish and will have no direct role in delivering the people what they need. On the other hand, the measures suggested in the budget are overtly slated to make life of the suffering populace yet more dreadful and unbearable. Close examination of the recommended policy directives contained in the Economic Survey (ES) and the proposals put forth in the budget will vindicate this in no uncertain a term.

Facts speak loudly

The FM has embellished his budget with a plethora of statistics including some projections based on concocted optimism. Let us present some figures to portray the reality of the country. India accounts for 41% of the global poor. The Saxena Committee appointed by the Central government in its report published last year stated that 49.1% of the country’s population lives below the stipulated poverty line. It goes without saying that this is a most conservative estimate and arrived at after a lot of statistical manipulations and suppressions. Because Arjun Sengupta Committee also constituted by the central government revealed that as high as 77% of Indians are living below an income of Rs 20 per day. According to the World Food Programme,

more than 220 million people go to bed without a morsel of food and 7,000 lives are snuffed out from starvation daily. The majority of women and infants suffer from anaemia. India accounts for almost one third of total malnutrition-affected population worldwide, while access to clean drinking water remains elusive. 85% rural households are either landless or sub-marginal, or marginal, or small farmers.

How FM responds to the menace of price rise

This is the backdrop, let us analyze the budget from people’s perspective. The *aam aadmi-caring* FM in his budget has mentioned that “managing a complex economy is a difficult task, more so when it is a growing economy in a globalised world. And yet, choices have to be made and they have to be well-timed.” What precisely have been his choices? Take the question of tackling tyrannical price rise that warranted top priority. Admitting that double-digit food price inflation far in excess of overall wholesale price index inflation was a major concern, the Economic Survey pinned a large part of the blame on supply-side bottlenecks precipitated by the poor monsoon. It also pointed to possible hoarding and delays in release of imports as contributory factors. So the natural expectation was of a concrete time-bound fiscal and administrative step to bring down the prices. But, the FM, on the contrary, increased the taxes on petrol and diesel substantially to give relief to the profit-making oil companies and indicated mulling on accepting the

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Comrade Krishna Chakraborty leading anti-budget demonstration in New Delhi on 26 February, 2010

Handing over food production and distribution to private operators

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recommendations of Parikh Committee to completely deregulate fuel prices knowingly fully well that it would push the price-line further up. Such a crucial decision has been implemented straightaway without any scope for debate and discussion in Parliament. It may be mentioned that the BJP government during its rule from 1998 to 2004 had hiked the prices of petrol and diesel by 485% and 112% respectively. In the next five years, the Congress-led government had further increased petrol price by 41% and diesel price by 63%. It is now learnt from 1st April, 2010, there will be another dose of rise in fuel prices. One can easily imagine what a cascading effect it will have on the prices of all articles including essential food items. Several times, we have shown in the pages of our earlier issues that when the biggest component of petrol and diesel prices in the country consists of government taxes; there is no reason whatsoever, let alone logical compulsion about repeatedly raising taxes and duties on fuels. It is apprehended soon the sword will descend on cooking gas (whose price was substantially hiked a year back) and kerosene. What a novel way to demonstrate "government's concentration on supporting and delivering services to the disadvantaged sections of the society."

Malady of PDS and FM's remedial prescription

Though the government sought to emphasize that primary cause of the recent food-price inflation was the severe drought of 2009, which caused a downturn in food production in the third quarter of 2009-10 and the expectation of the resultant price rise itself fed further into the inflation, the government itself, as we have mentioned above, could not hide the fact that the food price rise is because of supply shortages caused and compounded by hoarding and speculation. The government claimed in the Economic Survey that when there was a supply shortage earlier, it reacted carefully by easing up imports of relevant foodgrains and sugar and also releasing wheat and rice from the stocks held by the Food Corporation onto the market. There is stated to be a surplus foodgrain stock (actual stocks minus the minimum buffer stocks) of 27

million tonnes as on January 2010 with the government. But the FM has preferred not to disclose whether this stock would be used to ease the supply situation and if so how. The possible reason may be that he is going to fast implement the novel (!) recommendation as brought out in the Economic Survey 2009-10. The recommendation is that the Food Corporation of India should not become too steadfast in maintaining inviolable buffer norms as permanent buffers cease to have a dampening effect on prices for traders and speculators. Indirectly, the option is to minimize the role of government-run FCI in intervention with release of buffer stock in case the market manipulators and hoarders create an artificial scarcity.

The much-trumpeted Public Distribution System (PDS) is, as per official figure, supposed to provide rationed amounts of food items and other essential commodities at below market prices to more than 10 crore ration card holders through fair price shops (FPS). However, according to a Planning Commission study released in 2008 only about 42% of subsidized grains issued by the central pool reach the target group. Fact is that PDS is practically defunct in the country not by accident but by design. India, incidentally, ranks 87th position out of 119 states of the World Corruption Index as brought out by Transparency International. And among other areas where one can get ample proof of rampant, deeply-entrenched corruption, the PDS under the aegis of the government is one of them. Deliberately, the government does not concentrate on procuring requisite quota from the peasants by offering them remunerative prices. It is left to the private operators for limitless exploitation of the penury-stricken farmers. On the contrary, whatever little is procured by the government either rots in the government godowns because of lack of maintenance facilities or makes its way to the open market through the route of pilferage aided and abetted by the utterly corrupt government officials for being sold at higher price. There has emerged an unholy nexus of corrupt ration dealers-government officials-police-hoarders-blackmarketers-political touts which operates with alacrity to deny the have-nots availability of basic food and other articles at subsidized price through PDS.

The government is well aware of this. The Economic Survey 2009-10 acknowledges the fact and indicates the possible way out in these words: "It is believed many of these storekeepers (i) sell off this subsidized grain on the open market, and (ii) then adulterate the remaining grain and sell the diluted product to the BPL and APL households, who have no choice in the matter. We may harangue about the dishonesty of PDS store-keepers and all those entrusted with delivering the subsidies. It is indeed true that personal integrity, honesty and trustworthiness in the citizenry are vital ingredients for a nation's economic progress. But when crafting policy, there is need to be realistic about the system within which we work. To assume that all those entrusted with the task of administering the programme will do so flawlessly and then to blame them when the system fails is not the mark of a good policy strategist. For effective policy, what is needed is to take people to be the way they are and then craft incentive-compatible interventions."

Food coupons to replace PDS

As an illustration of that 'intervention', the government now informs that it is aiming to target subsidies better through a less obtrusive mechanism. It is mulling to start issuing food coupons to beneficiaries who can then buy food items from the open market. The idea of food coupons was first mooted in the Economic Survey for 2008-09. Under the food coupon system, instead of grain being supplied at subsidized rates to PDS shops, the ration card-holder will get a food coupon worth the subsidy amount which he or she can redeem from the PDS shop. Households that get these coupons will be allowed to go to any PDS store of their choice. The PDS stores then take the collected coupons to the local bank and change to money, and the banks, in turn, will go to the government and have them changed to money. Lest the ration shop owners should refuse accepting such coupons, the government would buy back the coupons from them at 2% premium. In other words, these coupons would almost be equivalent to cash and shop owners would stand to earn extra 2% on the goods sold. Eventually, PDS outlets will be phased out and the poor will have to use their

coupons on the open market, the Survey 2009-10 envisaged. It is argued that in the current PDS, producer subsidy is conflated with consumer subsidy—grain is procured at a 'remunerative' price, stored, transported and sold to the consumers at a steep discount to the cost of carrying out these operations, inflated by wastage, spoilage and pilferage en route. Food coupons would separate producer subsidy from consumption subsidy though both would stay linked, reduce operational hassles, bring efficiencies to private trade and ensure direct transfer of subsidies to the actual beneficiaries. This great (!) idea is stated to be the brainchild of the economic adviser of the government.

But, it is not made explicit as to what mechanism would be adopted to implement the scheme with fulfilment of the proclaimed object. Our experience of NREGS and such other government sponsored schemes of "income generation" and "poverty alleviation" is that the beneficiaries hardly get either stipulated days of work or receive set wages for whatever work they do. Not only are they denied the due wages but government fund allocated for the purpose are pilfered by the unholy nexus of corrupt officials and political touts, as mentioned above, by preparing fictitious muster rolls. With no abatement of this thumping corruption in place and instead the government contemplating "outsourcing" many of its activities to private operators, this "overhauling of distribution process" is poised to bring more aberration in the system.

For example, let us assume that poor starving have-not below poverty line receive Rs.100 coupons. There is every possibility that they might like to convert it into cash. Rural touts and opportunist elements might pay them Rs 80 to corner the coupon, lift the quota from the shop and sell in the open market. The ration shop owner would be bound to sell goods to anyone tendering the coupons and tempted to earn 2% extra. Even if the government makes it mandatory to extend the facility only to ration card holders, it would not mitigate the problem. Most of the rural poor have no ration card and hence would not be able to redeem these coupons. ? At that

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'Exclusive' favour to industrialists for bringing 'Inclusive' growth

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time, the ration shop owner might lure them to redeem the Rs 100 coupon at a discount by delivering goods worth Rs. 80. In fine, a new avenue of cheating and embezzlement of government fund would be open to the unscrupulous elements. What an alternative to PDS from the fertile brain of servile economists!

It may be added in this connection that in order to prevent such mega scale malpractice and corruption in PDS, we have been demanding for long all-out state trading in foodgrains and other essential items under which there would be no private trading in these items and the government would procure from the producers at fair price and undertake distribution at affordable price. This alone can provide true relief to the people. The government ought to tone up administration to ensure that the system operates freed from any corruption. For this, it is necessary to develop people's conscious movement which alone can keep a check on corruption. When it was thus necessary to ensure that the government did undertake the total responsibility of PDS, no other political party came forward to endorse our proposal. And now under the pretext of PDS being in shambles, the government is practically handing over the entire area of food procurement and distribution to private trade dominated by giant native and foreign monopoly houses to squeeze the poor more ruthlessly. That is why in the budget, the FM has boastfully announced that "An enabling Government does not try to deliver directly to the citizens everything that they need. Instead it creates an enabling ethos so that individual enterprise and creativity can flourish."

Agricultural Sector

We now turn to the agricultural sector which produces basic food grains. The FM has unfolded a four-pronged strategy to "enhance rural incomes, sustain food security and spur growth in agricultural sector." First he has mooted a plan to "extend the green revolution to the eastern region of the country" and provided Rs. 400 crore for this initiative. First of all, allocation of Rs 400 crore for one fourth of Indian population residing in this region amounts to Rs 40 per head when a kilo of sugar costs more

than that. Secondly, most of these people live in eroded and degraded land. What would then be the exact nature of ambitious green revolution there?

The *aam kisans* are tormented by galloping rise in the prices of agricultural inputs including fertilizer. The number of peasants' suicide has already crossed one lakh. When the need has been to spare the peasants as far as possible from bearing this price by increasing government subsidy in fertilizer, the FM under camouflage of introducing a nutrient based subsidy policy effected a subsidy cut in fertilizer by a whopping Rs 3,000 crore from what was spent last year. This would entail a further spurt in fertilizer tariff making things more unbearable for the peasants, who will at the same time be deprived of receiving maximum retail price as fixed by the government as per revised fertilizer policy. At the same time, however, duty on import of agricultural equipments has been lowered to please the rich peasants and kulaks. The *aam aadmi* is dying of starvation and malnutrition. So the food subsidy has also been reduced by over Rs 400 crore despite the commitment to enact a food security legislation. It is also learnt that the Union Cabinet has approved a new agreement with the USA on 'Agricultural co-operation and food security', and that under an India-US Agricultural Knowledge Initiative, multinational agribusiness firms such as Cargill and Monsanto can become members of the policy-making body.

Next he has addressed the all important issue of food supply to *aam aadmi* initially by reducing the nominal outlay for Food and Public Distribution from Rs.56, 721 crore in 2009-10 to Rs.56,133 crore in 2010-11. His next two "elements of strategy relating to reduction of significant wastages in storage as well as in the operations of the existing food supply chains in the country" have been to "open up retail trade to private players" and "extending the guaranteed period of hiring godowns by the Food Corporation of India from private parties from 5 to 7 years." And the fourth strategy of tackling the issue, the FM unfolded, has been "lending a further impetus to the development of food processing sector" and "establishing five more mega food parks." There is no

mention as to whether the government is contemplating any concrete implementable measure to increase irrigation facilities, availability of diesel and power at concessional affordable prices to the poor peasants. And now it is learnt that the Planning Commission, the country's apex planning body, is calling for a sweeping reform to rescue a stagnated agricultural productivity because the agricultural sector is still full of controls and dissuading private sector investments. So the prescription is to delink support prices (i.e. minimum price the peasants are guaranteed by the government) from procurement prices (actual price paid to the peasants), removing stock limits on agricultural commodities, doing away with bans on exports of and speculative derivative trading on agricultural produce and abolition of levies on rice and sugarcane. In other words, the recommendation is to dole out the sector to monopolists for unbridled plunder. In absence of any stipulation of offering minimum price, private operators will force the peasants from selling their crops at the prices dictated by them. Thus, removal of government restrictions and dismantling of MSP (minimum support price) will one hand deprive the peasants a minimum price for their produces as and on the other hand entail massive increase in the prices of agricultural produces in the retail market making the common consumers bleed white.

But the government is not bothered. The ES has spelt out the government's standpoint in no uncertain term. "India is too large and complex a nation for the state to be able to deliver all that is needed. Asking the Government to produce all the essential goods, create all the necessary jobs, and keep a curb on the prices of all goods is to, at best, court failure, and, in greater likelihood, lead to a large, cumbersome bureaucracy and widespread corruption. The aim must be to stay with the objective of inclusive growth that was laid down by the founding fathers of the nation, but to take a more modern view of what the state can realistically deliver." As a part of this 'realistic delivery', the Economic Survey takes the stand that in the absence of clear evidence on the connection between rising prices and futures trade in food

commodities, the government should ideally desist from imposing an outright ban on speculative futures trade which, as everyone knows, manipulates market price of essential commodities, including foodgrains. It has also been made clear that the legislation provides for establishment of private markets and yards, direct purchase centres, consumers' and farmers' markets for direct sale and promotion of public-private partnership (a euphemism for privatization) in the management and development of agricultural markets in the country. Thus, the government is preparing to serve the *aam aadmi* by handing over food production, procurement and distribution to the same very profit-seeking private players who are trading in the hunger of the deprived and the have-nots.

Industrial Front

The industrial scenario in the country is not just dismal but horrifying—not for the corporate sector and monopoly houses but for the working people. The government is, so to say, digging out figures from the stable of statistics to show that "While the CSO's (Central Statistical Organization) advance estimates place industrial-sector growth at 8.2 per cent, as against 3.9 per cent in 2008-09, the IIP (index of industrial production) industrial growth is estimated at 7.7 per cent for the period April-November 2009-10, significantly up from 0.6 per cent during the second half of 2008-09. The manufacturing sector, in particular, has grown at the rate of 8.9 per cent in 2009-10." (ES-09-10) It has also been reported that the big industrial houses are on double digit profitability track with net profit of top 25 business houses showing an increase of 96.8% during the December quarter of 2009 over the previous year. (Financial Express 05-02-10) Aggregate net profits of Indian corporates are, according to a Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) Study, expected to book a rise by 77.3 per cent in 2009-10. Latest RBI survey projects a growth of 14.5% in corporate sector profit for 2010-11.

But, what about growth and prosperity filtering down? Increase in corporate profit is marked by massive lay off and retrenchment. Over one lakh of industries and establishments have downed

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Budget recklessly widens yawning gap between the rich and the poor

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shutters throwing millions out of jobs. There is a moratorium on fresh recruitment even in government establishments. Whatever little industries are coming up here and there are all capital-intensive with hardly any scope of gainful employment. The owners of industries are embezzling even Provident Fund money of the workers and employees. Suicide among starving workers are on a steady rise. But these are of no importance to the government and hence do not feature either in the budget or in the Economic Survey because the profit-greedy industrialists are, according to the government, the “drivers of growth”, not the toiling workers and employees. So the government feels no obligation towards creation of permanent remunerative jobs for the *aam mazdoors* and unemployed by taking initiative in setting up labour-intensive industries in the public sector. Instead, they are doling out the profit-making PSUs to private hands and making some cosmetic statements about job creation to play to the gallery.

Another important revelation in the Economic Survey has been that delay in the implementation of government projects resulted in cost overruns. Incomplete contracts are a major cause of cost overruns. The Survey blamed this on delays due to bureaucratic hurdles (red tapism). On bureaucratic transactions costs, in terms of ease of doing business, India ranks 133rd in the world. Will one be wrong in calling it deliberate wastage of people's money?

The bourgeois columnists and self-proclaimed economic experts of course have found an “impeccable” logic to justify the government's “exclusive” attention towards the owning class and the affluent to spur “inclusive” growth. They assert that if abundant prosperity is guaranteed to the rich, some of it will inevitably percolate down to the impoverished and have-nots. To buttress this argument, the ES has openly said, “India's labour regulatory structure does not have the flexibility commensurate with a buoyant, growing economy. For firms in the organized sector having more than a certain critical number of labourers it is extremely hard to retrench workers or downsize the labour force. At first sight this looks like a pro-labour legislation, one

that protects the interests of workers..... once they (most potential firms) become sufficiently large in terms of employment, if they later need to retrench workers because the demand for their product slacks off, they will not be able to do so easily. This is likely to prompt them to remain small or not go into business at all, since all laws also play an expressionist role whereby they affect behaviour beyond the actual ambit of the law. Hence it is arguable that our labour laws, such as the Industrial Dispute Act of 1947, if appropriately reformed, can lead to a greater demand for labour, and through that improve economic well-being of workers.” And that is why, the government is mulling a move to rob the workers of their hard earned trade union and democratic rights, revise and extend hours of service and give the owners unfettered right to retrench, lay off or terminate at their whims. The entire country has been protesting against establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) which grant the industrialists this unbridled right of hire and fire, oppress and suppress without any accountability. But the current Budget states that “Government is committed to ensuring continued growth of SEZs to draw investments and boost exports and employment.” That is why, the FM in his budget speech has preferred to be on record to have said that “For the UPA Government, inclusive development is an act of faith.”

Social sectors

In the Economic Survey it is written that “We need a government that ...plays an important role in directly helping the poor by ensuring that they get basic education and health services and receive adequate nutrition and food.” The FM boasts in the budget speech that “The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 creates a framework for legal entitlements for all children” and so the plan allocation for school education has been raised from Rs.26,800 crore in 2009-10 to Rs.31,036 crore in 2010-11. Expenditure on education as a proportion of total expenditure is stated to be 10.6 per cent in 2009-10 (Budget Estimate). It sounds mellifluous but has to be understood in conjunction with the government's declared policy of

gradually handing over the education sector to private operators for being run on commercial basis. The government is also gradually shaking off its responsibility of providing proper education and healthcare to the people and allowing private investors including foreign players to make fabulous profits by converting these two vital social sectors into commodities. The National Knowledge Commission, Yashpal Committee and all other government appointed bodies have been hard selling this concept. It is learnt that around 44% of the schools in the country are privately run and the number is increasing every day. During the month of October 2009 the Union HRD Ministry in a significant move proposed to introduce Private Public Partnership (PPP) in the government school system as well because it feels that PPP is a viable alternative to improve access to quality school education. Once private investors are allowed to enter into the area of school education through the conduit of PPP, they in order to reap maximum profit shall jack up the cost education by way of raising fees exorbitantly. Thus education as a whole is and will be drifting out of reach of the poor, lower middle class and middle class students. So in paper many rights are being granted. Right to education is one of them. But, curiously enough, people are denied the right to exercise the rights so granted in paper.

That the health sector is in a shambles is evident from the admission contained in the ES. The Economic Survey says India at present is short by 20,486 sub-centres, 4,477 primary health centres (PHCs) and 2,337 community health centres (CHCs). What's worse is that basic facilities like proper buildings, hygienic conditions, electricity and water supply were still found absent in many existing health centres with many PHCs and CHCs not providing even the guaranteed services such as in-patient services, operation theatres, labour rooms, pathology tests, X-Ray facilities and emergency care. High absenteeism among personnel manning PHCs and CHCs makes the situation further worse. Almost 29% of the existing health care infrastructure is in rented buildings. We all know from experience that real state of affairs is still worse.

In view of this, when the budget talks of “Expenditure on education as a proportion of total expenditure has increased to 10.6 per cent in 2009-10 (BE)” or “the share of health in total expenditure has also increased from to 4.8 per cent in 2009-10 (BE)”, do they not sound like prattles? Does it not point to the fact that this allocation is purported towards being pilfered by the corrupt administration or the PPP partners? Cost of medicines is also slated to go up on account of higher raw material costs due to the 2% excise duty rollback.

The irony is that while the total budget allocation towards social sector is Rs 1, 37, 674 crores in a country abounding in the deprived and destitute, unproductive defence budget has been raised to Rs 1, 47, 344 crores using fear of war and external threat as scarecrow. Instances of mega-level scam and misappropriation of funds in the military are pouring in every day but without any redress. But the FM in his Budget has claimed, “Every penny we spend goes to the people.”

Plethora of sops for capitalists

It may be recalled that also while presenting the Budget for 2009-10 in July last, the FM had clearly stated that “the principal growth driver in this period has been private investment.” He was categorical in saying that his Government was committed to creating a facilitating environment in which a competitive private sector can thrive and play its rightful role in nation's economic development. So, he has been steadily pursuing a policy to fatten the purse of the capitalists under the garb of “stimulating economy,” “recovering lost grounds”, “boosting resilience” and of late, “achieving double digit economic growth”. Last year, the FM in the name of salvaging a sagging economy and come out of recession announced substantial reduction in commercial taxes to the private entrepreneurs and capitalists. He called it ‘fiscal stimulus’. In other words, he spared the capitalists from shouldering a substantial tax burden and thus, in effect, subsidized them at the cost of public exchequer. FICCI has come out with a report that the stimulus packages have helped industry add capacity worth \$30 billion. But the FM's so-

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State Memorial Meetings

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, a great revolutionary in his exemplary identification with class, party, revolution

[After the central memorial meeting in Calcutta on 3 March state level memorial meetings to pay homage to the great revolutionary leader, our departed General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee were held throughout the country during the month of March, 2010. We cover some of them.]

Delhi

The Delhi State Organizing Committee of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) held a memorial meeting on 17 March, 2010 at Hindi Bhavan, New Delhi to pay homage to the revered departed General Secretary of the party who breathed his last on 18th February, 2010. Comrade Pratap Samal, Secretary, Delhi State Organising Committee of the party presided over the meeting. The Central Committee's homage to the departed leader, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee was read out by Comrade Pran Sharma, a senior member of the Delhi State Organizing Committee of the Party. Comrade Birju Nayak from the Communist Gaddar Party of India in his short speech paid his homage to the departed leader.

Rajasthan

Comrades of Rajasthan arranged the memorial meeting on 13 March to pay homage to their beloved departed leader. Comrade Girijeshwar Singh, state in-charge read out the homage to Comrade Nihar Mukherjee. Party leaders from different parts of the State spoke on how every call, appeal and writings of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee touched their hearts and provided guidance on all aspects of revolutionary life and struggle at crucial junctures.

Karnataka

The Karnataka State Committee of SUCI (C) 21 Mrach organized a memorial meeting of the recently departed freedom fighter and general secretary of SUCI, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee at Seva Sadan, Malleswaram. Hundreds of activists and supporters of the party as well as general public took part in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Comrade K. Radhakrishna, Member, Central Committee and Karnataka State Secretary said, "After the demise of Com. Shibdas Ghosh in 1976 he gave an able leadership to the party. He waged an unprecedented and prolonged

revolutionary struggle against several diseases and finally sepsis with multiple organ failure. None of these ailments robbed the ever inspiring smile on his face. His brain remained active even when he was emaciated physically. Despite being confined to a room and being immobile he was alert and active mentally and guided the planning and organising of the second party congress. He set a glorious example on how a genuine revolutionary can face and conquer death."

Haryana

Haryana state SUCI (Communist) organized a state level memorial meeting at Chhotu Ram Park Hall, Rohtak, on 14 March. Comrade Ramphal, member, State Committee, read out the homage of the central committee. Comrade Anoop Singh, member, State Committee presided over. Comrade Satyawar, Member, Central Committee and State Secretary recalled some of the inspiring aspects of the noble communist character of the departed leader.

In all the above memorial meetings, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Member, Polit Bureau of the Party was the main speaker. In his speeches, Comrade Chakraborty dwelt on various aspects of the revolutionary life of the great departed leader and exhorted all to learn from the same. He cited examples of how Comrade Nihar Mukherjee throughout his life fought all shades of bourgeois individualism and emerged as the unparalleled leader of the Party and worthy successor to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. He showed how till his last breath Comrade Nihar Mukherjee worked ceaselessly not only to spread the Party throughout the length and breadth of the country but also elaborated and enriched the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

As comrade-in-arms of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, he elucidated further the invaluable analysis of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh about the conditions of the Indian working class and the

character of the exploitative Indian State.

While Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in course of a historic revolutionary struggle emerged as leader, philosopher and guide of the Party, Comrade Mukherjee as his true successor and ablest revolutionary compatriot carried forward his unfulfilled task by strengthening the Party, both ideologically and organizationally, and gave practical shape to the principles of democratic centralism in the Party. His was an extraordinary effort in leading the Party along correct revolutionary base political line after sad untimely death of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Today the Party has spread to and growing in strength in 22 states under the inspiring leadership of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee.

His call to the leaders and workers of the party to initiate the rectification and elevation drive has strengthened the Party as a monolithic whole and his drive for revitalization and consolidation of the Party and its mass fronts paved the way for holding the 2nd Party Congress successfully held under his leadership and guidance. Comrade Chakraborty described how Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, during his long illness, despite his physical movement having got restricted, kept himself abreast of all the political and organizational developments and conducted the Party accomplishing revolutionary objective.

While taking care to ensure all-round development of all the comrades and giving concrete shape to the organizational structure of the Party based on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, he reflected at all times high impersonal approach. It was this quality which helped him guide the expansion of the Party even while he was unable to move out of the commune premises—an instance unparalleled anywhere in the world. He had set a very lofty example of identification of the self with Party, class and revolution.

Comrade Krishna Chakraborty in his speeches also covered various dimensions of the contributions of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee in reviving the International Communist movement and

intensifying worldwide anti-imperialist struggles. He correctly termed the revisionist Perestroika and Glasnost policies of Gorbachev as blueprint of counter revolution and provided guideline for defeating the same ideologically. Dismantling of socialism in the USSR vindicated his analysis. Also after the demise of Comrade Mao Zedong, he pointed out that revisionist Deng leadership was poised to destroy socialism in China. He realized that pacifism is not the proper way to resist the imperialist attacks world over. It was under his leadership and direction that our Party, based on the realization of the necessity to rally together the anti-imperialist forces of different countries, initiated move to give concrete shape to broad-based anti-imperialist platform with genuine communists acting as their core. Formation of the International Anti-imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee with Mr. Ramsey Clark, as the President and Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Member, Polit Bureau of our Party as the General Secretary to coordinate various struggles has been a glaring example in the process of that initiative.

Comrade Chakraborty stated that under a situation where the major bourgeois parties, for their narrow electoral benefits, were out to fragment the country and divide the people on the basis of regional, parochial, casteist and communal feelings and where the so-called left parties have given up the path of mass movement, it is only the SUCI(C) which under the leadership of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee and the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, has been uniting the people of the country through democratic mass movements. He stated that the objective condition is ripe for the revolution but it is the subjective preparation which is lagging behind. Based on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, he correctly analyzed that the two party system has become the main trend in country's politics and called for unmasking this bourgeois conspiracy to keep people's electoral choice confined between two parties or

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee Memorial Meeting

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combinations of the ruling capitalist class.

Comrade Krishna Chakraborty appealed to the workers of the party, its supporters and sympathizers to come forward and strengthen the Party to fill up this void not only organizationally but ideologically as well by initiating a relentless struggle against individualism. He stated that only by doing this shall we be able to pay our real homage to Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, the great revolutionary and worthy successor to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Assam

Under the auspices of the Assam State Committee of the SUCI (Communist), the memorial meeting to pay tribute to the departed beloved General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee was held at the Laksmiram Barua Sadan in Guwahati under the presidency of Comrade Bhupendranath Kakti, member Assam State Committee of the party, on 15 March last. Comrade Kalyan Choudhury, member, Central committee and Assam State Secretary, also addressed the meeting. Tributes were paid by different frontal organisations and by CPI leaders. The homage of the Central Committee was read out by Comrade Azahar Hussein.

Orissa

The state memorial meeting in Orissa was held on 18 March at Cuttack Shahid Bhawan, Cuttack under the presidency of Comrade Dhurjati Das, secretary, Orissa State Committee. Large number of party workers, supporters and sympathizers over flooding the meeting hall attended the occasion to pay tribute to their departed leader. Comrade Binapani Das, member, Orissa State Committee tread out the Central Committee's homage in Oriya.

At both Guwahati and Cuttack, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Member, Polit Bureau of the Party was the main speaker.

By paying tribute to the departed leader, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya said in his addresses : We had Comrade Nihar Mukherjee as the General Secretary of our party for the long 34 years till February 18, 2010 since the untimely demise of Comrade

Shibdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, our leader, teacher and guide, in 1976.

It is not an easy task to bear the responsibility of the General Secretary of a genuine revolutionary party. But we have witnessed how Comrade Nihar Mukherjee carried out this difficult task with all honesty, sincerity and grit shouldering the great legacy of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and expanded the bounds of party's thought and its revolutionary leadership.

Comrade Bhattacharyya recalled that during the Quit India Movement in 1942 both Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and Comrade Nihar Mukherjee were arrested. It was from within the jail that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh realised and concluded that although there was a party, Communist Party of India, by name, it did not grow as a genuine communist party. Herefrom, on this realisation he resolved to build up a genuine communist party on this soil. The country was then at the threshold of achieving freedom. In the mean time, immediately after coming out of the jail, the leaders and cadres of Anushilan Samity decided to form a Marxist party in the country and formed the RSP simply by changing the name of Anushilan Samity without giving effect to any fundamental change. They held onto their positions in the struggle .. Coming out of the jail both Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and Comrade Nihar Mukherjee first joined the RSP and ensued the inner party struggle within that party. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh continuously tried to convince the RSP leadership that it was not because any lack of sincerity of CPI leadership towards accepting Marxism-Leninism that the CPI could not grow as a genuine communist party. Rather the root cause of their failure lay in their inability to follow the correct process based on the correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism, the process indispensable for building up a communist party. Correctly applying the understanding of Marxism-Leninism, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh firmly opined that those who would initiate the struggle for building up a genuine communist party in a country, must first give birth to a unified socialist movement covering all aspects of life, to mass

movements and class struggles. Those who would take up this struggle must free themselves not only from private property, but even from all sorts of private property mental complex. It was on this premise of understanding of Marxism-Leninism that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh engaged himself in an unthinkable ideological struggle with the leadership of the Anushilan Samity. In a sense, it was the inception of the principal struggle for building up SUCI as a genuine communist party in India. The comrade who dedicated himself consciously and to the greatest extent to this fundamental ideological struggle and identified himself with it, was none other than Comrade Nihar Mukherjee. Critically judged, the contribution of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee is inseparably linked up with the unique historic struggle of the great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, in giving effect to the inception of genuine communist movement in India. In the history of development of real communist movement in the country, the name of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee shall surely remain distinguished for ever.

While building up a different type of party with fundamental difference from all other existing political parties, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh defined politics saying that 'politics calls for noble feelings of heart, nobler still is the feeling that spurs on to revolutionary politics'. Realizing Leninism on the basis of this concept of politics, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that the 'revolutionary theory' enunciated by Lenin is not simply a political theory. It is a revolutionary theory that guides all aspects of life, even covering sex. No revolutionary party can be built up, without this struggle. This struggle inside the Party will help emerge a band of professional revolutionaries on the understanding 'revolution and only revolution is life, life is only revolution'. Those revolutionaries emerging out of sincere conduction of ceaseless mass and class struggles will earn the ability and efficiency of leading revolution. But mere words won't suffice. The struggle must be concretized. In the process of giving this struggle a concrete shape, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh gave birth to a concept of very high standard of commune on

the basis of Marxist-Leninist thoughts and in reality founded such commune too. This is also a new contribution of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh to the world communist movement. Comrade Ghosh pointed out that at the time of the Russian and the Chinese Revolution, efficacy of the bourgeois humanist movement, though eroded largely by that time, still existed to some extent. But subsequently, that role of humanism was totally exhausted. In the era of proletarian revolution, humanism has totally lost its capability to elevate human character. Humanism can no longer provide strength and zeal to the masses of the proletariat and the working class to conduct their struggle for emancipation. So, to accomplish revolution today, it is necessary to give birth to higher understanding of Marxism and develop organisation on its basis. It was this thought that found concrete expression in founding the commune system contemplated by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. In continuity of the thoughts of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh developed even higher and more elaborated thoughts, to suggest that the leaders must not have any separate family life of their own. Not only the leaders should live together, they should live jointly with ordinary workers too. In course of this unceasing struggle, they will have to face the test of how far they have been able to free themselves from private property and the mental make-up arising from the private property. It will also reveal whether revolutionary ethics and culture are being reflected through everyday activities of the leaders. Such a commune system developed on Comrade Ghosh's thoughts. But the unique role Comrade Nihar Mukherjee played in translating these thoughts to reality will be ever-remembered. It was then the fifties of the last century. The Party was in a quite weak shape. There was no acquaintance, no familiarity, no resources, no money. What an unthinkable immense responsibility Comrade Nihar Mukherjee had to bear! It was he who first realised that to keep Comrade Shibdas Ghosh alive was the historic necessity in the interest of revolution in India. No doubt, he

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Budget replete with shameless falsehood and hypocrisy

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called rhetoric of "deepening and broadening the agenda for inclusive development" remained a cruel joke as the benefits of lowered tax did not percolate down to the neediest. On the contrary, the poor is further strangulated because of lethal jump in price line spurred, among other things, savage fiscal policy. It is further learnt that credit worth Rs 30,000 crore to private sector would turn bad (non-recoverable) by next year when two-thirds is expected to mature. Under public pressure, it is disclosed by the authorities that NPAs (loans that private houses would not repay) of banks increased from Rs 55,800 crore on 31 March 2008 to Rs 66,900 crore in March 2009. Unofficial sources indicate that the actual figures would be double of that. It is interesting to note that the Economic Survey, while not batting an eyelid over these figures, repeatedly refers to "heavy subsidies" on food and fertilizers. There is no mention in the Budget of any punitive measure against these defaulters of bank and government loans. Law will remain ever blind to such palpable lawbreakers. Because the capitalists and corporates are licensed to expropriate public money, entitled to government support for financing losses and authorized to all kinds of tax exemptions, waivers and other fiscal concessions because they,

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after all, are "growth drivers" as per the FM of the bourgeois government and hence their interest ought to have precedence, if not exclusiveness, in the Budget.

So, further bonanzas await them. The government has now decided to hand over the profit-making Public Sector Units (PSUs) created after independence by public money to private monopolists by way of disinvestment. Budgeted sum to be raised through disinvestment of PSUs rout in the coming fiscal is stated to be Rs 40,000 crores. Although the disinvestment of PSUs was not announced in the Union Budget for 2009-10, Budget 2010-2011 documents show that disinvestment of equity in PSUs fetched the government Rs.25, 958 crore in 2009-10 as per the revised estimates. But the FM is quite confident that his policy of carrying coal to Newcastle will benefit all and sundry and will entail "inclusive growth" though inflating the purses of the few rich.

Hoax of tax reduction

The FM has taken pride in announcing relief to individual taxpayers by enhancing the exemption limit for all taxpayers and withdrawing the surcharge on personal income tax. Also surcharge on corporate tax has been lowered. Tax exemptions in various forms have also been granted to corporate sector, housing, real estate and hotel businesses. The proposed relief, he has been of the view, will provide substantial relief to a large number of taxpayers. First of all, who are the beneficiaries of direct tax concessions? *Aam aadmi*? Unfortunately, not. Around 30 million people belonging to middle and higher income out of a total population of around 1,200 million are tax payers. According to the FM, proposals of reducing direct tax rates and slabs are estimated to result in a revenue loss of Rs.26,000 crore for the year. So he has spared 30 million of Rs 26,000 crores (2,60,000 million). But at the same time, he has in the name of withdrawing 'fiscal stimulus' increased the excise and customs duties the quantum of which is estimated to be Rs 49,500 crores. Needless to say that the capitalist owners and corporate houses will straightway shift this burden of additional taxes on the consumers

by increasing end-price. Thus while 30 million of relatively well-off sections, monopoly houses and business tycoons will enjoy tax waivers, the remaining 1170 million of sharecroppers, agricultural workers, marginal peasants, factory workers, unorganized and casual labourers, fishermen who risk their lives daily by venturing out to the sea, the poor primary school teacher, small shop owners and such other segments of toiling masses who constitute the *aam aadmi* will be back-broken by this huge dose of indirect tax and fuel price hike. What better could be termed as *pro-aam aadmi* Budget! Moreover, it is observed that typically for every one rupee that the government spends, it earns 70 paise, thus having a deficit of 30 paise. This deficit needs to be financed. The government in order to meet the huge budget deficits either resorts to monetisation (printing of currency notes) which fuels inflation or goes for huge market borrowing which, besides repayment, causes substantial drain on public exchequer to meet interest obligations. Incidentally, the government had borrowed as high as about Rs 4.51 lakh crore last year and plans to repeat the same this year as well. On the other hand, out of Rs 735,657 earmarked towards non plan expenditure, Rs 248,664 crores accounts for debt servicing. Another point worth observing is that typically of the one rupee that the government spends, 26 paise is spent on non-plan expenditure and subsidies while another 19 paise goes towards interest payments. Thus while the government borrows 30 paise, it spends 30 paise on revenue expenses like interest payment and subsidies! It goes without saying that this burden of interest payment or debt servicing is also borne by the common people.

People must rise up

Perhaps we need not elaborate anything more to unravel the *aam aadmi* character of the Budget! It goes without saying that the bottom quintile of the population derive no solace from the magnanimous declaration of improving Indian economy as reflected in GDP growth, revised estimates for the current fiscal year showing the revenue deficit at 5.3% of GDP up from 4.8% in the budget estimates and the budgeted revenue deficit for the next fiscal being pegged at 4%

of GDP higher than the 3% figure in the medium term fiscal policy statement announced last year and so forth. All these are bunkums. GDP growth does not mean that fruits of this growth are equitably distributed. Claim of lowered budget deficit as percentage of GDP is a misnomer because if the projected GDP is higher, the gross deficit figure though may be low as a percentage of the projected GDP, actually work out to be higher. The fiscal deficit is running now at Rs. 3.5 lakh crore and will continue to go up in a crisis-ridden capitalist economy enmeshed in problems endemic of the system. Black money running into thousands of crores of rupees together with huge amount of fake currencies will continue to plague the system with budget or ES preferring to observe the code of silence in the matter. On the other hand the brunt of the capitalist crisis will go on being systematically passed on to the *aam aadmi* under the garb of high sounding economic jargons like "fiscal stimulation and consolidation," "inclusive growth", "imparting a fresh momentum to the impressive recovery in growth" and the likes.

Time has come for the suffering people to understand that in a crisis-ridden decadent moribund capitalist economy, they will be increasingly pauperized and wretched. No political party subservient to the class interest of the ruling bourgeoisie will make any desired endeavour from the seat of the government to provide rudimentary relief to their escalated suffocation. They might at best give some political stunts to woo voters. But that will not abate the situation. Pretending affinity for the poor, they all, irrespective of hue, pursue policies bluntly against the poor. And the entire scheme will be camouflaged under jugglery of words, gymnastic of statistics and surfeit of counterfeit arguments. The suffering people have no other way but to close their rank and embrace the path of united organized sustained path of movement to wrest their demands. It is only pressure of powerful people's movement that can beget some succour to the stifling situation. So rising up against this brazenly anti-people budget through movements is the only course people need to adopt to voice their protest and fight for their cause.

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could bear this profound responsibility in those days, only by identifying himself with the cause of revolution. Had Comrade Mukherjee not conducted this struggle those days, we might not have been able to see Comrade Shibdas Ghosh as he emerged. In this task of concretizing the commune system, the unimaginable struggle that Comrade Nihar Mukherjee carried out, involving his nearest ones, to conduct on one hand all essential party activities and on the other, to fulfill the need for the minimum fund to run the communes, played a very significant role in the emergence of SUCI as the only genuine communist party in Indian soil, Comrade Bhattacharyya opined.

While enriching the thoughts of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, noticed the alarming footsteps of counter-revolution through the rise of ugly heads of modern revisionism in Russia and China. He cautioned and said that the new type of individualism emerging in the socialist states, which he termed as socialist individualism, would carry and foster the germ of capitalism, as against Marxism. As a safeguard against this individualism and new type of economism born out of it, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that not only in leaders and workers, even within every individual of the society the thinking that must be instilled is that there is actually no contradiction between individual and social interests. Individual interest lies within social interest itself. So individual interest must be completely merged with social interest. The more intensely this concept is developed, the more will it be possible for one to remain free from individualism. Inside the party, this struggle is to be conducted for identifying oneself with the interest of the party. Again, identification with the party means nothing but allegiance to the revolutionary leadership. Loyalty to revolution, to revolutionary party cannot exist in a void. Loyalty to the cause of revolution is concretely expressed in conscious submission to the revolutionary leadership. We have witnessed how these two

fundamental concepts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh were reflected through Comrade Nihar Mukherjee. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's submission to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh developed singularly through his submission to the cause of revolution. The instance of limitless sense of allegiance to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh guided by correct ideology and uprooting individualism, that we found in Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, I must say, proved that he was existing far ahead of all as a fountain of inspiration. Only this prompted the party to consider none but Comrade Nihar Mukherjee as the sole successor to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, after his demise.

In the memorial meeting in Calcutta our newly elected General Secretary, Comrade Provash Ghosh referred to an incident. Once Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in course of a discussion asked Comrade Provash Ghosh 'How do you view Comrade Nihar Mukherjee?' Comrade Provash Ghosh replied. 'I cannot view him separately from you'. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, 'Provash, you are still young and immature; when you will grow up and be matured, you will be able to actually realise the significance of this observation'. During the life time of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh we found Comrade Nihar Mukherjee as his very obedient and trusted student. After the demise of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, we found how he intensified his struggle thousand times to identify himself with the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. He used to read anew Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's works, used to listen to his tape-recorded speeches attentively. What a wonderful allegiance and sense of identification even being elder to him! This thing must be properly realised to correctly assess the greatness of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee.

After the death of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's health, on being attacked by cardiac ailments, considerably broke down. It impeded the activities of this great ever-active revolutionary to a large extent. In spite of it, it appeared, with each passing day Comrade

Nihar Mukherjee's mental composure and grit kept on growing. On one hand, leading the party on the strength of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's thoughts, enriching its realisation in varied newer forms in order to give birth to ideological centralism and strengthening the party by developing organisational centralism on the other, protecting the party and party workers from the pernicious fallout of disarrayed world communist movement and counter-revolution at that critical juncture – in all these aspects Comrade Mukherjee had made his contributions. In the struggle of spreading the highest thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh throughout the world to keep the world communist movement free from the pernicious effects of revisionism and taking steps to strengthen anti-imperialist movement on international scale, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee was the helmsman. Even amidst dire financial constraints of the party, he engaged himself in publishing the Works of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh thoughts, including their renderings with a view to propagating them to different parts of the country and abroad by collecting funds from people. The feelings with which Comrade Nihar Mukherjee took up this task, itself speaks of his greatness. I remember the days of his assuming the post of General Secretary after passing away of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. We can easily feel how difficult was it to take the place of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Even those days we found no change in his conduct and behaviour. We saw how silently he shouldered this immense responsibility. Today we realize what a profoundly wise role he played!

Comrade Bhattacharyya further said, we have witnessed the outcome of modern revisionism in Russia and China considered to be the two pillars of socialism after the death, respectively of great Stalin and Mao Zedong. But after long 34 years from the death of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh not a slightest deviation from his thoughts did appear and the problem of individualism could not create any serious crisis within the party. It could have been possible only due

to the way Comrade Nihar Mukherjee firmly and unwaveringly steered the party on the basis of correct understanding of very high thoughts and ideas that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh developed on the basis of Leninist guidelines in the field of party formation. If any incident which could prejudice at the slightest the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and came to the notice of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee he would severely deal with such things. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee is no more with us. A sense of void has appeared. On the strength of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, we must say, 'we must do it'.

In the memorial meeting of Comrade Subodh Banerjee, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, leader of such a high stature was the product of a particular process of struggle within the party. Referring to the above, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya said, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee was also a luminary born out of such process. The unparalleled example of his struggle for identification with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, not from any personal relation, but based on correct grasp of revolutionary ideology, will keep his memory aflame to imbue us for ever. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, if necessary sense of duty is not evolved out of great grief then that grief becomes meaningless. We have to correctly grasp the proper significance of the way Comrade Nihar Mukherjee identified himself with the higher understanding of the Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, apply the same in our lives and have to lead SUCI(C) on the basis of that. Only then our tribute to him will be meaningful. With these words Comrade Bhattacharyya concluded.

Everywhere, the memorial meetings started with the rendering of the song composed on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, great leader of the proletariat followed by offering floral tributes to the departed leader by the state, district and frontal leaders of the Party and observance of two minutes silence and ended with the *Internationale*.

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