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Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Memorial Day Countrywide Observance



Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, giving red salute to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh at Salt Lake Commune at Calcutta on 5th August.

Central Committee Flays Hike of oil price

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI in a statement issued on 1st August, 2004 condemned the highly anti-people act on the part of the Congress-led UPA government to impose within a gap of one month another dose of steep rise in petrol and diesel prices on the common people, whose rapidly dwindling purchasing power is now at a record low. Most undemocratically, the UPA government has effected the current hike through an announcement by the public sector oil companies who have also now been empowered to arbitrarily refix the oil prices within 10% variation without referring to the government.

Comrade Mukherjee also said that the UPA government and its allies like the CPI(M), CPI who wax eloquent about the interest of the poor and toiling masses, are despicably taking no initiative in creating world wide public opinion against the international oil cartel led by the US imperialists to artificially jack up prices and cause immense hardship to the common people bleeding white under ruthless capitalist exploitation. Rather they are making this international price manipulation by the oil barons a plea to

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The beacon that guides us everyday, every moment to build up class and mass struggles as true communists is the Thought of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat. When 5th August, the day the working class lost the great leader twenty-eight years back, returns, it urges us to renew our pledge to carry forward the tasks he had bequeathed to us. Like every year, this year too, we observed the day with profound emotion.

On 5th August, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, the General Secretary, SUCI garlanded the portrait of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh at the Salt Lake Commune, Calcutta. Comrade Yakub Pailan, Staff member, hoisted the Red Flag and garlanded the portrait of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh at the Central Party Office in Calcutta. On the 5th August Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Staff member, hoisted the Red Flag and garlanded the statue of the great leader at the Study centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought at Ghatsila, Jharkhand.

At all party offices and party centres in different parts of the country, Red Flag was hoisted and great leader's portrait garlanded. All leaders and cadres wore the Badge of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Comrade Sukomol Dasgupta, Central Committee member, inaugurated the Exhibition of Quotations from the works of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh held in Calcutta. Memorial meetings were held in different parts of the country starting with the song on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and ended with the *Internationale*. Comrades also listened to recorded speeches of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in many places.

We give below the report of memorial meetings received so far.

BHUBANESWAR, ORISSA

The memorial meeting was held at Lohia Academy Trust, Bhubaneswar on 5th August recalling the teachings and life-struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the founder General Secretary of SUCI. Hundreds of students, youths, women, peasants, workers and intellectuals attended the memorial meeting. Comrade Raghunath Das, State Committee member and Bhubaneswar District Secretary presided over the meeting. Comrade Tapas Datta, member, Central Committee and Secretary, Orissa State Committee was the main speaker. Comrade Uddhab Jena, State Committee member also spoke.

Comrade Datta highlighted the painstaking struggle conducted by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh for the historic emergence and growth of the

party of the Indian proletariat, the SUCI as the true Marxist-Leninist party. Comrade Datta also paid tribute to Comrade Frederick Engels, the great leader of the proletariat, who had also expired on the same date. He said: All of us know that Engels was not only a co-fighter of Karl Marx, the co-founder of Marxism and world communist movement, but his life-long friend. Both of them worked together to prepare the Manifesto of international communist movement and campaigned for it. Both of them together not only inspired all the workers' movement in Europe, but also participated in it and provided the necessary leadership.

Continuing, Comrade Datta said, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh is another great proletarian leader in this era from whose life-struggle we draw

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Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Memorial Day

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lessons for conducting class and mass struggles. The most important international event which stirred his mind was the establishment of socialism in Russia through a revolution under the leadership of Lenin. Comrade Ghosh wanted to bring about socialist revolution in our country in order to eliminate the exploitation of man by man. With this end in view, he developed a profound treasure-house of knowledge even though he had not much formal education. He conducted incessant and intense ideological campaign covering all aspects of life to develop ideological centralism to build up a genuine revolutionary party. He conducted ideological campaign uncompromisingly against the common beliefs, tradition and unscientific ideas. In the process, he developed into one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era. He taught his followers to live and lead the revolutionary life by examples and not by precepts as he wanted them to learn and grasp Marxism for realization of it through revolutionary action and not to serve any academic purpose. Just as he carried on uninterrupted discussions with other freedom fighters in the jail in the wake of the 1942 movement, he laid great emphasis on common constant living and discussion to develop uniformity of thinking and singleness of purpose, which continued after coming out of the jail and after forming the party, SUCI in the year 1948 through a convention at Jaynagar, West Bengal. To build up party organization at the initial stage, Comrade Ghosh moved about, going without food, shelter, proper clothing and without any resources or financial provision and sometimes without sleep. But he was never daunted by this. His invaluable teaching is that if the revolutionaries cannot procure the basic minimums and suffer, there is nothing to worry about and if they get amenities at any point of time they should neither be overwhelmed by it nor attached to it. The greatest gain of a revolutionary is to leave behind the petty, common and filthy life to lead a noble life — and the greatest inspiring force for it is the philosophy of communism and the realization of it.

In conclusion, Comrade Tapas Dutta said: Comrade Ghosh taught us not to copy anything and not to blindly follow anybody and guided

us to strengthen the leadership by criticism and self-criticism and to live constantly with the masses in order to lead them. Thus the party which started from West Bengal, gradually and steadily spread to other parts of the country due to his continuous guidance and stewardship. New chapters have been added to the history of peasants' movement, workers' movement, student movement, women's movement and language and education movement successfully conducted by the party in the country.

CALCUTTA, WEST BENGAL

The memorial meeting was held at Rani Rashmoni Avenue, Calcutta amidst inclement weather, attended by many thousands of people who came from all the districts of West Bengal. Besides Comrade Manik Mukherjee, State Secretariat member and President of the meeting and Comrade Provash Ghosh, Central Committee member and State Secretary as also the main speaker, other leaders who were on the dais included Comrade Anil Sen, Comrade Sukomol Dasgupta, Central Committee members, and Comrade Yakub Pailan, Staff member and member, State Secretariat.

Comrade Provash Ghosh in his address said: Each year, 5th August asks our conscience — how far have we applied the revolutionary teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in our life, how far have we advanced to translate into reality his dream of anti-capitalist socialist revolution?

Congress-BJP-CPI(M) — all claim of achieving development under their rule. But the 'development' achieved by them is in the interest of the capitalists, big businessmen and those politicians who act as servitors of the capitalists, while millions of people groan being ruthlessly oppressed. Even before independence, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had warned about such a situation developing and had stressed that for real emancipation, people had to establish socialism by overthrowing the ruling capitalist class through revolution.

Comrade Ghosh said: those who fought for truth, justice, had to struggle hard to surmount great hurdles. This struggle had given them fighting spirit and character.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh is a shining example of this. When he left home he was only thirteen years old. His poor parents depended solely on him. When reminded of this, he said: all poor parents are my parents. I must strive to end their sufferings. It was the tears of the poor that drew Netaji Subhas Chandra out of his home. Saratchandra said that he had taken up the pen to write about those who had given their all but had not received anything in return. In our country, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was the first to perceive and say that revolutionary politics demanded a higher, nobler faculty of mind; cultivation of revolutionary politics was impossible with intellect only; without love and deep feeling, intellect would be misguided. He showed that one cannot become a Marxist with just honesty and dedication. The need is to acquire correct Marxist methodology, to apply correct Marxist process to build a revolutionary party and to determine the correct revolutionary line by applying Marxism-Leninism to the concrete condition of the country.

Comrade Ghosh further said: Mass media had virtually blacked out the great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and his teachings. But by dint of his revolutionary thoughts, dedication and indomitable struggle he has today made his place in the minds of millions, his thoughts have crossed the national boundary. If we want to know the future of market economy, the real character of bourgeois parliamentary system, and to free ourselves from exploitation, we shall not find the correct path from the Gita, the Koran, the Bible, the Ramayana, the Mahabharat, the Vedas or the Upanishads. For that we must know Marxism-Leninism — Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's Thoughts. No other philosophy can show the way in this era.

In conclusion, Comrade Provash Ghosh said: We are soldiers in a great and noble struggle, the decisive weapons for which Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has forged and handed down to us. It is our responsibility to keep the ideological weapons sharp and alive, develop ourselves as advanced revolutionaries and reach to the people this noble ideology. Only by doing so correctly can we become the worthy students of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

GUWAHATI, ASSAM

The memorial meeting was held on 5th August at Bishnu Nirmala Bhavan, Guwahati. Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Central Committee member was the main speaker. Comrade Bhattacharyya said that despite the existence of united CPI, a party professing communism and despite the presence of M.N.Roy, the Marxist leader, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was the only leader who presented, decades back, a truly scientific and historical analysis of the anti-British imperialist freedom movement before the people of India and showed that because it was under the leadership of the national capitalist class, people could not achieve true emancipation through independence. The economic-political situation of the past 57 years clearly showed how correct was that analysis as also the guidelines for anti-capitalist socialist revolution for emancipation from all sorts of exploitation provided by him. Not only that. While building up the SUCI as the real revolutionary party of the working class — the vanguard of this revolution, the great leader had presented an analysis about the method and process of building up a communist party, which was now attracting people connected with communist movement in different countries of the world. Comrade Bhattacharyya said that as a genuine revolutionary party was necessary for revolution, so also the need was to develop ceaseless mass movement on the basis of higher ethics and culture, through which only people of our country could be imbued with revolutionary consciousness and identified with revolutionary party. This higher ethics and culture, values should reflect in the life of every leader and worker of the party.

On the current political situation, Comrade Bhattacharyya said that it was clear from the way BJP had emerged within the womb of the Congress rule in the post-independence period that it would not be possible to combat BJP's communal politics by the present Congress-led UPA government although parties like CPI(M)-CPI, etc., supported the formation of the government at the Centre in the name of containing BJP. On the

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Andhra Pradesh Job Reservation

— A dangerous divisive step

On July 12 last, the Congress government of Andhra Pradesh headed by Rajashekhar Reddy issued an order providing for five per cent reservation for Muslims in government jobs and educational institutions in the state. The order was tabled in the state Assembly on the next day, and chief minister Reddy said that a Bill would be introduced soon in the Assembly to give statutory backing to the quota. On July 22, a division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, dealing with a number of writ petitions against the government order filed by, among others, a VHP activist, suspended the order as it was, prima facie, contrary to the Supreme Court judgement, and referred the matter to a larger bench. On July 23, chief minister Reddy indicated that his government was determined to implement the measure, if necessary by issuing an Ordinance.

During the long 57 years after the independence, not only have numerous physical attacks been launched on the Muslims all over the country through communal riots, but the Muslims have been subjected to economic oppression as well. They have been victims of widespread and intensive communal discrimination in the spheres of education, employment and professions — in all spheres of life. The ruling capitalist class and its subservient ruling parties, instead of reducing the backwardness of the Muslims, have gone on further increasing it in the generally prevailing Hindu communal atmosphere. As a result, the common Muslims are the most backward among the backward sections, the most exploited among the exploited. It is an urgent necessity to find out the correct, scientific method to redress this deep-seated injustice.

But the proposed job reservation for Muslims will not even result in providing jobs to them, not to speak of removal of the discrimination and injustice against them. It will yield practically no jobs for the simple reason that the promised new jobs, as a rule, just do not exist. Crisis-ridden capitalism, suffering from perpetual recession, is unable to create new jobs, more so in view of the concerted ruthless global exploitation being perpetrated by

monopoly capital, multinationals, in the name of globalization. Rather, a process of net contraction of employment is on. In our country, the crisis-ridden capitalist economy is suffering from such stagnation that there is no scope at all for further net industrial growth. The few factories that the multinationals put up are capital-intensive employing high-tech and computerization so that practically no new employment is generated by them. And against each such unit that is put up, ten existing industrial units close down throwing out their workers and employees. Thousands of closed industrial units dot the landscape. A contraction of the total employment is on in both the organized and the unorganized sectors. The cities, towns and the countryside teem with unemployed mass of people. The position is, if anything, worse as regards government jobs which the reservation quotas “provide”. Banks, post offices, government departments and public sector enterprises have not only adopted a virtual moratorium on all recruitment, but have been retrenching hundreds of thousands of employees and forcing many more into retirement through “voluntary” retirement scheme (VRS). The spree of privatization, as a part of the globalization policies, along with more and more adoption of hi-tech, particularly IT and computerization and internet working, are sure to aggravate the situation much more in the coming days. There is a fast growing trend of replacing regular employment by contract employment, casual employment -- thus doing away with permanence of service, the statutory benefits accruing from it and all democratic and trade union rights of the employees. The announcement by the West Bengal government led by the “Marxist” and “Communist” CPI(M) to fill in over twenty thousand teaching vacancies through casual appointment is a pointer.

The people cannot be provided with more employment by the exploitative capitalist system, but at least they can be hoaxed by painting a rosy picture of employment in the coming days. This is what the parliamentary parties have been

doing over the years by holding up the mirage of future employment and prosperity before various sections of the people through quota reservation schemes, thus hoaxing them in order to reap electoral gains. It may be recalled that the reservation policy was introduced after independence in 1950 for only the downtrodden Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The framers of the policy viewed it as a temporary measure to facilitate upliftment of the exploited, backward Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to bring them on a par with the rest of the society whereupon the reservation policy would no longer be required; if the reservation policy was continued for an indefinite period, it might have some harmful effect, seriously and adversely affecting the overall development of the Dalit masses. Even Ambedkar believed that reservations were necessary only for a few years. But this original social objective was lost sight of long back. Over the years, the parliamentary parties have been doing everything to perpetuate and expand the scope of reservation policy in the petty interest of anyhow furthering their position in election politics.

V. P. Singh, as the prime minister, widely expanded the scope of reservation policy by bringing the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) within its ambit. More recently, the NDA government, from electoral consideration, included the economically and politically strong Jath community in the OBC category, triggering agitation by the Rajputs, Brahmins and Vaishyas in Rajasthan for inclusion in the OBC list. And now, the ruling UPA government led by the Congress at the Centre is reportedly contemplating introducing reservations in the private sector as well! The whole reservation system has been reduced to a farce. It is a farce and a hoax because, despite all the fanfare, only an insignificant number of jobs could be made available through reservation, given the ever increasing crisis in the capitalist economy and its resultant incapacity to generate new jobs. Secondly, the experience of the past five decades has been that whatever jobs could be dished out through the

reservation system, have been usurped by a privileged section, a top creamy layer comprising only a few per cent of the Dalits or underprivileged sections the reservation was meant for, leaving the balance vast majority languishing under growing capitalist exploitation.

Over the years, the ruling class has been encouraging and fomenting all sorts of divisive tendencies within the people in order to embroil the different sections of the people in strifes so that the people's unity is destroyed and they cannot unitedly fight against capitalism, the main enemy, towards revolution. And its subservient political parties too are engaged in the spree of fanning up divisive tendencies of all sorts in the narrow interest of election politics. The ruling class, to achieve its nefarious end, is busy all the time in devising ever new steps and measures to keep the people divided. The present employment reservation quota for Muslims is another step in that direction.

Reservation quotas for jobs do not yield any jobs practically, but create divisive forces which impair people's unity. Reservation on communal lines is even more dangerous as it destroys communal amity and has the potential to generate communal strifes. The present Andhra Pradesh Government order fixing a reserved quota of jobs for the Muslims has come at a time when it may well have explosive repercussions. Having been voted out of power, the BJP has been smarting under the shock of defeat. The only weapon it has in the bid to make up for lost ground is Hindu communalism. The Sangh Parivar hawks are already pressing the BJP leadership to adopt a strident Hindutva line. In this situation, the Andhra Pradesh step of job reservation for Muslims cannot but provide a handle to the BJP to intensify its Hindu communal politics. Already, the BJP has made this an all-India issue and plans a countrywide stir on it, which cannot but be a Hindu communal stir. By raising the bogey that conversion of Hindus to Islam will be abetted by the A. P. government measure, meaning that the Hindus in Andhra Pradesh would henceforth be tempted to embrace Islam to avail of the reserved employment quota, Vajpayee is trying to fan up rabid Hindu communalism.

We request the friends in the

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other hand, the suffocating situation that developed during the long Congress rule in the post-independence period would be repeated. The CPI(M) and the CPI did not directly participate in the government only to allow the anti-people decisions to be taken by this government in the interest of the capitalist class, while deceiving the people by trickery, waving red banner by making leftist noises while actually not voting against the government on any such anti-people measure. Otherwise, had they really opposed, what power the Congress-led government had to execute anti-people decisions one after another including price hike of petrol, diesel, etc. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had pointed out that these parties were the social-democratic compromising forces between labour and capital; today this was being revealed nakedly.

DELHI

A meeting was organized by the Delhi State Organizing Committee of the SUCI. It was addressed among others by Comrade Krishna Chakraborti, member Central Committee, SUCI.

Comrade Chakraborti stated that Comrade Ghosh, long back, by examining the class character of the then undivided CPI, concluded that



it could at best be called a petty bourgeois party. He stated that though the leaders of that party did not lack sincerity, honesty and devotion, they could not develop the party as a genuine working class party. Comrade Ghosh precisely pointed out as to how for developing a genuine working class party the leadership needs to involve itself in an intense socialist movement covering all aspects of life. They need to develop the Marxist-Leninist world outlook and to acquire proletarian revolutionary culture by initiating a ceaseless struggle against all old and decadent ideas and concepts. In the process, a band of professional revolutionaries develop, who to a great extent, have identified their personal interests with the interest of the working class, revolution and the party. Only then the material base for formation of a Communist party can be laid. Comrade Ghosh further showed that without giving birth to the collective leadership through practice of true democratic centralism — the organizational life-line of the Leninist party — the party thus formed, cannot emerge as the vanguard detachment of the proletariat and an instrument of social change. Comrade Chakraborti showed how Comrade Shibdas Ghosh founded the party with a handful of comrades-in-arms through this painstaking and arduous revolutionary struggle.

Comrade Chakraborti stated that the correctness of the teachings of Comrade Ghosh regarding the character of the so called communist parties of India is getting proved every day. He showed as to how the two biggest factions of the then united Communist Party of India, the

CPI and CPI (M), are openly supporting and strengthening the Congress — a dependable political party of the ruling capitalist class. Their attempt to paint Congress as a secular and progressive force has proved to be the worst opportunist line of sharing power and nothing else.

Comrade Chakraborti appealed to people to realize the basic fact that both the parties-BJP and Congress are trusted parties of the same ruling bourgeoisie. The CPI and CPI(M), by presenting the Congress as a progressive and secular force, are only confusing the toiling masses of the country. He exhorted the people, particularly the working class, not to get misled by opportunist propaganda of the CPI and CPI(M), but to develop mighty movement against the anti-people policies of the UPA Govt. supported by these parties from outside.

The meeting was presided over by Comrade J. N. Mandal, member, Delhi State Organizing Committee.

GHATSILA, JHARKHAND

The memorial meeting at the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought held on 5th August was presided over by Comrade Hem Chakraborty, Secretary, Jharkhand State Organizing Committee. Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Staff member of the party, in his address upheld the teachings and struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh for building up a genuine Marxist-Leninist party and developing class and mass struggles conducive to anti-capitalist socialist revolution. He emphasized the utmost importance of struggle against vile individualism and attaining higher communist character as handed down to us by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Andhra Pradesh Job Reservation

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CPI(M) and the CPI, who are so enamoured of the “secularism” of Congress, to note how a Congress government order is providing fillip to BJP’s communal politics.

The evil effects of communalism cannot be redressed with counter communalism. A reservation for the Muslims on communal line will not only not solve the employment problem of Muslims, rather Hindu communalism would be further intensified as a reaction to it. So, what is the correct course of action? It lies in united democratic mass movement of the people of all sections irrespective of caste, creed, region and language. It

is only through mounting pressure of such mass movement that the government can be forced to desist from the spree of privatization and to set up some new industries so as to generate some employment, even if on limited scale, within the capitalist system. It is only through the process of such movement that secular democratic norms can be established in the society, to the extent possible within the capitalist system.

Because of CPI(M), CPI’s role mass movements are not developing. So people should rally round in true working class party, which builds up sustained mass movements.



A portion of memorial meeting on 5th August in Calcutta. (Left top) Comrade Provash Ghosh addressing

River water dispute — a perspective

Ever since the birth of civilization rivers have been among major sources of water, one of the most essential elements for human life and living. Using river water has always been a vital and sensitive issue for the population depending on it. The land of India is no exception. Through years, immemorial rivers have played vital role in civilization here; there have been disputes, accords as well to shape man's life on this piece of earth. The issue has recently come up in this country once more, centring round the Punjab Termination of Agreement Bill, 2004 passed by the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Dispute on sharing river water by states of this northwestern part of India is a long-standing one and now when it has come up unwarrantedly, it calls for a serious scrutiny not only by the people of the states concerned, but also by the people of India. However, before entering into this specific issue, a few relevant points need be clarified first. It should be appreciated that such a vital and sensitive issue of sharing of river water, bearing grave importance for people there, can not be handled on emotion or hearsay; what is needed is some common guiding principle. In fact, sharing of river water is guided globally by a few internationally accepted principles, that take into account geographical, historical, political, economical and other aspects.

Internationally accepted principles to guide water sharing

Rivers may be long or short. But one and all, they have their own basins. The area from where a river originates, the catchment areas from which water flows into or from a particular river through all its tributaries and distributaries respectively and the area through which all these rivers and rivulets flow down into the sea or another river, together make the river basin or riparian areas of that river. The first internationally accepted principle of sharing river water entails that all these areas of a river basin have their right to the river water, even if they may belong to different nations or to different administrative territories or states of the same nation. For example, all the six rivers, namely, Indus, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej (Satluj) originating in the Himalayas in India, and flowing through the plains into the Arabian Sea, have their river basin areas in India in the early parts and the same in Pakistan in later parts near the sea. Right to these rivers is accorded to both the nations. Thus the Indus Water Accord was reached on this premise in 1960 after a long tussle between Pakistan and India. Accordingly, Pakistan had the rights of Indus, Chenab and Jhelum and received a sum of Rs. 110 crores from India. India had the same rights of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. Similarly, the Farakka Barrage Agreement was reached between India and Bangladesh for the river Ganga (Padma in Bangladesh). The complicated dispute between Sudan and Egypt over the Nile river was

also settled on this same internationally accepted riparian principle, with Sudan accepting the rights of Egypt on the Nile. Internally for India, agreements on sharing of river water between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu or on sharing of the Yamuna river-water among the five states of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan, reached as long back as in 1954, were also on the same riparian principle.

In addition, a second principle, the principle of prior appropriation, laconically called "first in time, first in sight", involves that a state or a country already using water of a river, will continue to enjoy the right, even after any partition of that state or country. A third such principle entails that if two states arrive at a common agreement on river water sharing, that should be given recognition in future too. Further, there is the principle defining that even when some part of a state is not in the riparian or basin area of a river, its water can be diverted and used for that area. Extended it means: within the same political jurisdiction, river water may be supplied to an area, not riparian or basin area of a river, particularly when it needs to divert water to a water-poor administrative part of a country from another with abundant water resources. Thus even when Tamil Nadu was nowhere on the bank of the river Krishna, flowing through Andhra Pradesh, a 330km long Telugu Ganga Canal was constructed to bring water from the Krishna to Tamil Nadu for supply of drinking water to the latter; the rationale lay in the fact that both Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh

belonged to the same Madras Presidency prior to 1951.

This very principle also forms the anvil on which we should judge the argument of Punjab government, that since Haryana is not a riparian state of rivers Ravi, Beas and Satluj, why should the share of water of the said rivers be given to Haryana.

Haryana and Punjab differing though in conditions, face capitalist exploitation alike

Before judging the issue of sharing of river water in the states like Punjab and Haryana, in particular, we should further make ourselves familiar with some salient aspects of the concrete situation prevailing in the two states; for their need for river water may differ on the basis of these. It needs to be appreciated that particularly in areas of poor rainfall, of uncertain rains and of scanty or no surface water, agriculture depends mainly on irrigation based on canals, wells, pumpsets and such others. Even in regions of a fair reserve of groundwater, there may be depletion, if the rate of recharge lags behind that of withdrawal; as a result, the watertable may go down adding to shortage of water. The two states of Haryana and Punjab have clear-cut differences in quality of composition of land and soil, hence in fertility, and availability of water. Land in Punjab is usually plain, well-watered with irrigation and fertile with clay loam soil. On the other hand, in about half of Haryana, particularly in its southern part, land is uneven with rocky highs or sandy dunes, hence largely barren and without both ground and surface water; even a few canals that were constructed have never been filled with water. Hence agriculture, more so the Kharif crop, in the latter state depends mainly on poor and scanty rainfall. Besides, depletion of groundwater through years in these areas has taken a serious dimension leading to drought. In some areas groundwater is not touched even at depths of 1600 feet; in some others it is salty and thus not suitable for agriculture or for drinking. The situation has come to such a pass that it affects people in various ways. Cultivable areas shrink with lack of irrigation, this, along with drought and shortage of potable water cause village people to migrate to cities, and agricultural workers and other daily wage earners to lose their

traditional jobs related to agriculture. Obviously this leads to steep rise in unemployment already prevailing with retrenchment, closure and lay-off in industries in urban areas.

Coupled with these, come the devastating policies of globalization and privatization, introduced and followed also in agriculture by both the central and state governments. As a result, government procurement of foodgrains and crops at minimum support price is stopped; import of agricultural produces from foreign countries is kept in force, rather increased. Prices and costs of agriculture inputs like diesel, fertilizers, seeds, implements, pesticides, electricity and water for irrigation, are constantly on the rise in both the states of Haryana and Punjab, on account of curtailment of subsidies by both the central and state governments. Most of the peasants of the two states have small land holdings. Not only these small and poor peasants, even middle peasants are being affected, even economically ruined by this two-pronged complex of drought, water and irrigation scarcity on one hand and increase in production cost with non-remunerative prices of their produce. Unable to recover their production costs, small and poor peasants and agricultural workers are increasingly trapped in debts, forced to auction and loose whatever land they may have; are compelled to become agricultural workers or tenants of big farmers or the owners of big farmhouses and are finally dragged to the tragic end of committing suicides, even family suicides. To add to their miseries, governments are proposing to hand over to private companies the natural water resources like rivers, ponds, tanks and other courses of river water such as canals etc, to earn profit from water, the lifeline of people turned into a commodity.

Governments of any and every shade, of one or the other of the states concerned follow the same policies. Thus Amarinder Singh government of Congress in Punjab withdrew hitherto available free supply of electricity to peasants. Similarly Chautala government of Haryana also denied people of free supply of electricity. Congress government of Punjab is bent upon privatizing the Punjab State

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Ruling class and parties use water dispute to destroy people's unity

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Electricity Board. In Haryana too, the election promise of restoring Haryana State Electricity Board is not fulfilled. Side by side, they come down heavily upon democratic movements. In Haryana resistance movement against the forcible recovery of long pending enhanced bill of electricity are being curbed, putting numbers of farmers behind the bars.

Parliamentary parties use water dispute to bring about people's disunity to meet their election ends

In this backdrop only, must we look at the enactment of the Punjab Termination of Agreement Bill, 2004 by the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Through the years, governments of Punjab and Haryana in particular, as also of other nearby states as well as the central government, of any and every shade run by one or the other major parliamentary parties or their combinations, have revealed the plain fact that the issue of inter-state river water distribution have proved a boon to their parliamentary ends and to the interests of the ruling capitalists, rural or urban. Without evolving any proper water management policies, the governments have always reflected attitudes of crass negligence, indifference and discrimination on questions of exploration of water resources, water management and legitimate and fair distribution of water for drinking, irrigation or other purposes. Their policies are decided on one hand by petty political interests of winning parliamentary battles. Consequent decades-long disputes naturally give rise to grievances in people's mind. And then playing upon this popular and legitimate resentment, parliamentary parties in power or in opposition, joining with and serving for the vested interests incite parochial feelings of regionalism and provincialism provoking one community or nationality against another, dole out concessions to this community and curb others, as and when possible. To fan up parochialism and regionalism, they do not hesitate to mix issues, like which state will have capital city Chandigarh or Abohar Fazilka area in exchange of river water. Water

serves as the pawn, people the victim of deception.

More so, history looms large in the background. The Indian Independence movement remained majorly under the compromising leadership of the national bourgeoisie. As a result, the tasks of democratization of society and building up of a modern nation getting over the bars and barriers of nationalities, religions, castes and creeds, languages and such other divisions among people, remained unfulfilled. The weakness was carried over in independent India. Instead of developing one uniform democratic thinking and feeling in social and cultural affairs, a 'nationality mental complex' remained mixed up with our national mental make-up. This often leads to a tendency to suppress and dominate over other nationality, caste or community, to be found not just regionally, but even from village to village. Bourgeois political parties complicate the question of river water distribution, inciting these nationality or community feelings and thus leading to interstate hostility. In the name of defending people's interests, they split people's unity and amity.

This is very much true for the present case of Punjab and Haryana. The party, be it Congress or BJP, which may swear in Punjab that it won't allow giving water to Haryana, will clamour in Haryana for bringing water to Haryana from Punjab at any and every cost. Congress serving capitalists for the longest period in power accuses Chautala government of neglecting Haryana's interests; Chautala's friendship with Sardar Prakash Singh Badal, Akali Dal leader and former chief minister of Punjab is the issue that Congress plays upon. It accuses Akali Dal of giving away water to Haryana; as a proof it cites that Akali Dal government under Barnala constructed 85-90% of the SYL canal in 1987. But it keeps absolute mum about the fact why it did not even try to solve the water problem, remaining though in power for the longest period in Punjab, Haryana and the Centre simultaneously. Similarly, the BJP-led NDA government under Vajpayee at the Centre ran at the same time when Akali Dal-BJP

alliance ruled Punjab and Bansi Lal led HVP-BJP government followed by Chautala-led INLD government in power in Haryana. Behaving in the same way as Congress did, none of these governments took any initiative to settle the river-water dispute. Such being the role of Congress and BJP, branded national parties, the less said the better about the regional ones like Akali Dal, INLD, HVP and so on, either in Punjab or in Haryana.

All these bourgeois political parties rise to or fight for the power representing and with the support of, this and that section of capitalists of their respective states. Their words and acts are guided in tune, naturally leading to discriminating distribution of river water between different states, even different regions of the same state. The glaring example is to be found during the rule of Lal-s (Devi Lal, Bansi Lal and Bhajan Lal) in Haryana. Southern parts of this state including Rewari, Mohinder Garh and adjacent districts make a dry, arid, sandy desert-like, drought-prone and single crop area in dire need of canal water. But the entire water (about 18 lac acre feet) received by Haryana from the rivers Ravi -Beas was diverted to rich peasants of three districts of Sirsa, Hisar and Fatehabad and Narwana tehsil of Jind district for growing cotton for the textile industries there. It may not be irrelevant to point out that the Lal-s or the present chief minister Chautala, all belong to these areas. These political parties also come out as competitors representing capital of a state pitted against that of another. So these bourgeois political parties look at river water or for that matter, any other natural resources, in terms of profit generating potentiality, just as rich peasants earn profit by selling water of their tubewell to poor peasants. Once in power, forgetting about the masses of poor people, the parties start considering themselves as the owners of the water available in their state and thus serve their real masters, the ruling capitalist class.

Punjab-Haryana dispute through years: a mark of treachery and callousness of governments

The Central government also falls in line. However, the complex

and treacherous role of the central and the concerned state governments need be viewed at some length, on the strength of facts and figures accumulating through years. It dates back to 1947, when with the territorial partition, West Punjab, the area with one of the best canal systems in the world, went to Pakistan (West Pakistan at that time). India received East Punjab with only 20% irrigated area. River water distribution between India and Pakistan remained unresolved till 1960, when the Indus River Water Agreement, referred to earlier, was signed by the two countries. India had a vast desert in Rajasthan. So it was awarded a larger share of water in that agreement. Subsequently India government took up multipurpose projects of dams and link canals; Bhakra Nangal Dam and Beas Projects were among them, though they were planned in 1908 by the British rulers and the final draft of the former was signed in January 1945. Bhakra Nangal Dam project, constructed for six districts, namely Bhatinda and Sangrur of present Punjab and Rohtak, Gurgaon, Mohinder Garh and Hisar of present Haryana, was completed in 1958-59. At that time states were differently organized. PEPSU, a the then state that included Mohinder Garh, merged with Punjab in 1956, along with its river water share. In 1966, the united Punjab was divided with two separate states Punjab and Haryana coming out as successor states. As a successor, Haryana was awarded its share in river water property, without however defining the exact amounts of the shares of river water and electricity. The seed for a dispute between the two states was sown right then.

There were guidelines though. Section 78(1) of the Punjab Re-organization Act, 1966 held: "Rights and liabilities in regard to Bhakra Nangal and Beas Projects — (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Act, ...all rights and liabilities of the existing state of Punjab in relation to Bhakra Nangal Project and Beas Project shall... be the rights and liabilities of the successor states in such proportion as may be fixed and subjected to such adjustments as may be made by agreement entered into by the same

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Build up united movement to solve water dispute

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states after consultation with the central government, or if no such agreement is entered into ... as the central government may by order determine ...”

Events to follow were enough to add salt to the wound. Unable to reach agreement with Punjab, Haryana referred the case to the central government in 1969. The Centre gave award on it on 24 March, 1976 about the distribution of the surplus water of the Ravi and the Beas. Punjab disagreed and filed its objection in the Supreme Court on 17 March, 1979. On 31 December 1981 a new agreement was signed by chief ministers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan ; Punjab withdrew the Supreme Court case; the Punjab Assembly approved the agreement ; arranging for construction of SYL (Sutlej Yamuna Link) Canal in two years was agreed upon; Haryana deposited a sum of one crore of rupees with the Punjab government for the purpose. But things turned the other way round in later years, with unrest in Punjab and dilly-dallying by Haryana and the central governments.

Ultimately on 24 July, 1985 in what was known as the Rajiv-Longowal Pact, the issue of river water distribution was vested with the Ravi-Beas Water Tribunal. Constituted on 12 April, 1986 under the chairmanship of Justice V Balakrishnan Iradi, the Tribunal in its report submitted in January 1987 termed SYL Canal as a lifeline for Haryana peasants and recommended its immediate construction. Accordingly Surjeet Singh Barnala government of Punjab completed 85% construction work of SYL Canal by May 1987. However, since dissolution of Barnala government and imposition of President's rule by the Centre, the construction of SYL canal has stopped, never to start as yet. Interestingly the report of the Iradi Tribunal has not yet been notified even after these seventeen years and even in spite of repeated references of it made in Inter State Council meetings.

On 15 January 2002 Supreme Court directed Punjab government to complete the construction of the canal in a year's time, failing which, it further directed, the central government should take it up to complete construction. Without any

response from either of the two, on 28 July 2003 the Court once more directed, this time Haryana government, to submit plans, according to which the Court may direct the Centre to construct the Canal. Reportedly, Haryana government has suggested in its plan to the Supreme Court to carry on construction by a Border Road Organization under joint supervision of the Central Water Commission and Haryana government. Punjab government, on the other hand, is preparing for legal steps to stall the construction work. The whole sequence of events thus presents the sorry tale of callousness and teachery of the governments, including the Centre on the question of such a vital issue of people's life as river water.

Nor did any central government try to resolve the problem of shortage of water for irrigation and drinking and of electricity, particularly for water-poor states, by sanctioning construction of multipurpose hydel projects of both the states jointly with water-rich states that remain pending for long with the Central Water Commission. The proposed Kisau Dam Water project for Haryana remains an instance

Another bone of contention lies in whether Ravi- Beas rivers carry surplus water or not and if it is surplus, whether Punjab is utilizing the entire volume of water allotted by the Iradi Tribunal or not. The Iradi tribunal report reveals the stark reality. It holds that Haryana receives 16.20 lakh acre feet water out of 38.30 lakh acre feet allotted to it. Rest of the water remains in Punjab . Punjab utilizes 31.06 lakh acre feet out of its 50 lakh acre feet water. Rest, about 40%, flows out in the rivers. Rajasthan utilizes 49.85 lakh acre feet out of its 86.00 lakh acre feet allotment. Summing up, it means a large volume of water is flowing unutilized to run into the sea. River water is held surplus if it does not deposit silt in river bed and in the vicinity of its mouth near the sea. Since there is no report of Ravi and Beas rivers depositing silts in their mouths, with ports existing at those points in Pakistan, the inflow of water in these rivers must be accepted surplus and thus as wasted without proper utilization in the Indian states of Punjab and Rajasthan. Haryana, on the other hand, is seen to be lagging in

receiving and hence also in using this same surplus and thus wasted river water.

Tasks people face : build up movement on a correct outlook to water problem

With these facts and figures before us and the attitudes and activities of the major parliamentary parties discussed, we may now face a few questions. It is on these considerations that our party SUCI has condemned Punjab Termination of Agreement Bill, 2004 passed by the Punjab Legislative Assembly. We urge upon every right thinking person to ponder the questions we pose here, with a view to finding our answer to how should this vital river water, rather water management issue be approached. We all are aware that Rajasthan, a state of India, has a vast desert, has no sources of water of its own, neither has it any big river flowing through it. Can a truly democratic-minded person disagree to any proposal to share water with this state, if needed ? Can anybody claim that since a river flows through his state, he has the sole and exclusive right to it and cannot share its water with others? Likewise, nobody can obstruct a river course through his territory, on the ground that his demand of water is not met in exact amount and kind. Can sharing of river water be approached with the bourgeois outlook and be used as a tool to meet parliamentary ends or fetch profits, obviously creating disunity, mistrust and misery among people? Or, should the outlook be to meet the needs of all people concerned or associated , to meet their needs for survival , for drinking water and irrigation, as well as necessary for further development of human civilization? The stark reality of Haryana-Punjab river water sharing issue is that all the bourgeois political parties have neglected the need of common people. Instead these parties are out to pave unhindered path for capitalists to reap profit even from water, at the same time creating cleavages and confusions among people, lest they may get to this truth and stand united against it.

Under the circumstances, people on the contrary need the correct outlook to confront this problem of supply and sharing of water for irrigation or for drinking as also adequate supply of electricity. They

face the responsibility of evolving this outlook themselves and establish it in the society. We place the following points for consideration of all who may feel really concerned.

First, it is necessary to realize that Indian toiling people, obviously not excluding those of the states involved in the river water dispute, like Haryana and Punjab, are suffering alike from the capitalist rule and exploitation that deprive them of minimum basic necessities of life. So whatever be the dispute, water, electricity or else, it cannot be resolved disturbing unity, harmony and fraternity of people of different states. They have to save themselves from falling victim to the election-politics and divisive, parochial and provocative policies of the governments, state or central, or the bourgeois parties in the fray.

Second, appreciating that everybody needs water and cannot just do without it, in any dispute on water, atmosphere of hostility, hatred and enmity on the grounds of religion, language, regionalism, or provincialism must not be allowed to hold sway. What is needed on the contrary, is an atmosphere of amity and sincerity, in which accords may be reached through thorough discussions and mutual agreement.

Third, sharing of water among contending states must be based on due consideration to universally recognized principles, traditions and conventions, mutual agreements and history pertaining to water distributions. These constitute also the base for debate-discussion or the sort, necessary to reach an accord.

Fourth, all available water sources should be tapped on the strength of a comprehensive, effective and concrete policy, plan and programme of action for their proper utilization with a view to resolving the problems of drought and flood, water logging, decline of water table etc..People of different contending states must build up mighty and united mass movement for their common cause.

Fifth, new water resources should be explored that can be utilized by two or more states jointly and new projects be started on them.

Sixth, people must come forward to make all-out efforts to compel the central government to refrain from taking side with any particular contending side on petty

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Water Dispute

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politics or from retracting from legitimate point. Its handing over power and water to private companies must be stopped. The government must frame a proper, pro-people and scientific national water policy with priority given to drought-prone areas and keeping in view the interests of small and poor peasants.

Seventh, demands for canal water and electricity supply at concessional rates for agricultural purpose and free of cost for poor peasants as also for priority to drinking water supply must be raised in full united voice.

Eighth, mass movement for canal water and electricity supply must incorporate the demands for subsidy in agriculture, ban of import of agriculture produces from foreign countries, government procurement of agriculture produces at minimum support price, employment to all, redemption from debt trap, repeal of the new agricultural policy against peasants and agricultural workers.

With the outlook thus defined it becomes the crying need of the hour that people themselves, particularly the agricultural workers, poor and middle peasants of both the states of Punjab and Haryana should realize that with them lies the responsibility of taking guard that they do not fall victim to the game of bourgeois political parties and get entangled in the trap of their narrow sectarian, parochially divisive parliamentary, rather vote-bank politics. They have to safeguard their traditional unity and fraternity like the apple of their eye and prepare an atmosphere for their respective state-wide powerful democratic mass movements against

the anti-people policies of the central and state governments on the burning problems of their life including the problems of water and electricity. In one strong voice they should raise the following demands :

- 1) Construct SYL Canal immediately. For this, the central government must take positive initiative and make Punjab and Haryana state governments agree to negotiate on this issue and resolve this problem through earnest attempts;
- 2) Both Punjab and Haryana governments should take steps for better water management and legitimate distribution of water resources available in their respective states.
- 3) All discriminations prevalent in the states should be stopped immediately;
- 4) Plans for new water and power projects should be prepared;
- 5) Sanctions must be issued for all multi-purpose projects of irrigation works, dams, canals and others pending with the Central Water Commission; adequate central government funds to be provided for them. Kissau Dam project for Haryana is a case in point.
- 6) A just, pro-people and scientific National water Policy must be framed with an eye to the interests of poor, small and middle peasants in particular and giving priority to drought-prone areas in it.

Inter state river water dispute has accumulated through years. Its solution thus demands reason, wisdom, patience, and all the more, an approach that recognizes the problem as a vital problem for all concerned.

Central Committee Flays

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successfully burden the people with significant increase in fuel tariff. Most tragic aspect of the situation is that this Congress-led UPA government is mounting such savage fiscal assault on the people with the active support of the CPI(M), CPI who claim themselves to be leftists.

Comrade Mukherjee called upon the toiling people to build up massive united democratic movement to resist this highly unjust move of the central government to raise oil prices.

Slashing down of EPF interest rate

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, general secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 10 August, 2004 said that after being saddled in power, the Congress-led CPI(M) backed government, within a span of just hundred days, has taken a host of anti-people measures to devastate the life and livelihood of the common masses. The latest among them is the drastic cut in the P.F. interest rate. Curtailment of subsidies, reduction in the budget for rural development and employment generating schemes, imposition of cess on various services that would trigger inflation and spiral the prices of essential commodities, augmentation of the FDI investment limit in telecom, insurance and aviation to enable foreign monopolists exploit these sectors to the hilt and opening the grain market to the multinational corporations to backstab the cause of the poor Indian peasants, have been some of the other draconian steps the Congress-led central government has taken following the road map of the erstwhile BJP-led government to satisfy the interest of the national monopolists and foreign capital. It is thus that the Congress-led government is fulfilling its avowed aim to pursue capitalist reforms with a "human face." It is shocking to observe, Comrade Mukherjee added, that the CPI(M) while exhibiting a show of protest to hoodwink its honest cadres and the toiling people, is in reality working as a guide and advisor to the Congress-led government in private to serve its petty party interest and subserve to the national and foreign capital in the name of protecting and stabilizing the "secular Congress-led government." This is nothing but a glaring manifestation of double standard betrayed by the social-democratic parties. Comrade Mukherjee demanded immediate withdrawal of all these anti-people measures and called upon the toiling millions to build up massive organized democratic movement to compel the government to yield to the just demands of the people.

Proposed hike of prices of Petrol, Diesel, LPG and Kerosene

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, general secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 13 August, 2004 severely condemned the contemplated move of the government of India to impose another dose of steep hike in petrol and diesel prices supposed to be effective from 14th August midnight, third time in succession within a span of two months, and the reported proposal to escalate the LPG and Kerosene prices every month by Rs. 4/- per cylinder and 20 paise per litre respectively.

Comrade Mukherjee said that while the international oil cartel backed by the US imperialists are whimsically and unilaterally indulging in raising oil prices solely to earn maximum profit, the bourgeois government of the third world countries which are affected most, were expected to resist the offensive and save their countrymen from shouldering the backbreaking burden. Instead, all of them including the Congress-led Indian government are found to tamely surrender to the despotic savagery and impose the burden of skyrocketing price-line on the common people.

Comrade Mukherjee exhorted the people of the world to immediately come forward and build up massive resistance movements in their respective countries against this fierce economic onslaught. Calling upon the people of this country, Comrade Mukherjee observed that although the process of developing such united mass movement here against the hike shamelessly obeying the dictates of US-backed oil barons is seriously hindered because of the unqualified support of the CPI(M), CPI to the Congress-led central government, yet there is no alternative course to protect their life and livelihood from total ruination.

Website for the Party

Our party SUCI has announced that a website www.suciweb.org

has been launched to facilitate dissemination of the revolutionary ideas of the party, more particularly the revolutionary thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the founder General Secretary of the party and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of this era.

For the moment seven major published works of Comrade Ghosh and the issues of Proletarian Era starting from January 1, 2004, can be viewed. The site will be dated on the second and sixteenth day of every month and on all important occasions. Suggestions for improvement are welcome.

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