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OVERCOMING BRUTAL REPRESSION BY POLICE-CPI(M) MUSCLEMEN Millions Rise Up For Total Bangla Bandh

A great wave of movement swept West Bengal on 10th January 2002. Overcoming brutal repression by police and CPI(M) musclemen, millions of people rose up in one mighty force to observe Bangla Bandh on that day. Our party SUCI called the Bandh against electricity-hospital charge hike, education fee hike, etc., implemented by the CPI(M)-Front government and the anti-people policies of the BJP-led NDA government. From the foot of the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, an area of 87,000 square kilometers, downtrodden people of the whole state created a landmark in democratic mass movement under correct revolutionary leadership in this historic bandh.

People have been suffering from globalization, being implemented both by the central and the state governments. Power tariff, hospital charges, fee hike as well as hundreds of thousands of retrenchment compounded by countless other problems have caused deep discontent among the people. People wanted protest, people wanted resistance. People awaited a guidance.

Right in this situation the SUCI which has a long record of developing

sustained mass movements, declared bandh to be held on 10th January, to be preceded by other agitational activities. In a press conference on 11th December 2001, Comrade Provash Ghosh, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee, gave the bandh call. Comrades immediately started to draw graffiti in favour of 10th January Bandh.

On 15th December, a General Body meeting was held in Calcutta where party comrades from all over

Bengal gave out their whole mind to listen to the leadership — how to reach the suffering people immediately on war footing with the call of bandh, how to accomplish other tasks — to enroll volunteers, to build up people's committees, to propagate in areas where we do not have organization, so on and so forth. The object was to reach people at every nook and corner of West Bengal with the bandh call. Immediately after the meeting, comrades jumped into intense all-out campaign.

The moment bandh was declared, people, particularly the poorest section, enthusiastically received it and told our comrades, 'It is our bandh, it is people's bandh.' People said, 'SUCI is the only party who fights for us, all other parties fight solely for ministerial posts.'

A special bulletin of *Ganadabi*

our party organ in Bengali, that explained the burning issues and called the people to observe bandh on 10th January, was printed and then reprinted on public demand to the tune of nearly one million. The burning issues, the exposure of the BJP-led NDA and CPI(M) Front's pro-capitalist anti-people policies and above all SUCI's appeal in the bulletin touched the million suffering minds. It was followed by distribution of two million leaflets. Besides Bengali leaflets, Hindi, Urdu and English leaflets were also distributed — all showing charts of terrible hikes in charges of electricity, hospital and education fees. These besides, wall writings, posters, street corner meetings, door to door approach, mobile microphone propaganda, fighting fund collection etc., lifted the propaganda to a high pitch. At many places, people themselves collected slogan matters and did wall writings where we have no workers. Many men took *Ganadabi* bulletins to distribute. A letter containing an appeal to observe bandh by the West Bengal State Committee of the SUCI was given to all kinds of public committees like market committees, associations of taxi owners, transport owners, hawkers, slum dwellers, unorganized workers, rickshaw pullers, state government and private sector employees, bank employees, teachers' associations, student unions, clubs, libraries, etc., who decided in favour of Bandh and extended active cooperation.

But beyond the limited force of our total activists, a greater force was in work — the force of the people who reached the remotest village, who talked to the village housewife, who conveyed to the boatman, or the harvesting peasant, or the other poor who have thronged to the towns and



Photo & caption by The Hindustan Times, 11.01.02

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**Observe Lenin Memorial Day
on 21st January in a befitting manner**

Worsening Indo-Pak Relation And Anglo-US Role

The BJP led NDA Government at the Centre uses the 13 December 2001 terrorist attack on Parliament to whip up national jingoism bordering on war hysteria. Both the NDA and its rivals are daily making bellicose noises. "The Government said December 13 crossed a threshold and India will not be satisfied until adequate action is taken by Pakistan to target terrorism against India" (*The Economic Times*, 2/01/02). L. K. Advani, the Home Minister observed: "More pressure was required to be put on Pakistan to force it to abandon its policy of cross-border terrorism." The Prime Minister retorted in Parliament: "India is not totally dependent on diplomacy... If action is required, we won't hesitate" (*The Statesman*, 20/12/01). The Opposition also, in the all-party meeting held on December 30 last, unanimously backed the major steps the Government has taken so far in this regard.

As part of the military preparedness, large deployment of personnel, equipments and arms has been made along the international border (IB) in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and as well as the Line of Control in J & K. The Indian bellicosity is expressed through its all-out preparations made "in broad daylight". The Indian Army has moved its Western and Southern Command headquarters from their usual locations in Chandimandir and Pune respectively, towards the IB. This is a significant move as a command is the highest single unit in the army (*The Statesman*, 29/12/01). The government decides to scale down the Republic Day celebration with a view to limiting the Army's role in it. The annual Army Day parade scheduled for January has been cancelled for the first time because of deployment of troops and Armour along the border (*Ibid*, 27/12/01).

Pakistan on the other hand is not sitting idle. General, now President Musharraf is trying to reciprocate squarely from across the border. Pakistan matches Indian deployment on the IB (*Ibid*, 23/12/01). The country has moved two army units, based in Quetta and Peshwar, to the Indo-Pak border (*Ibid*, 3/01/02). A Pakistan minister informs the press that the country's Air Force is kept on high alert to defend the country (*Ibid* 23/12/01).

The war-tension aggravated further by the "high-pitched diplomatic offensive" India has

started against Pakistan. The steps so far taken are the following. First, it has recalled its envoy to Pakistan. Then gradually it reduced the strength of the respective High Commissions in the two countries by 50%, restricted the movement of officials of the Pakistani High Commission and their families to municipal limits of Delhi, terminated the Samjhauta Express rail link and the Lahore-Delhi bus service, withdrew the facilities available to Pakistan Airlines like over-flying Indian airspace from 1st January, 2002 etc. Pakistan retaliated against the Indian diplomatic offensive by announcing similar measures. Already 121 staff of Indian High Commission in Islamabad was recalled and Pak reciprocated by recalling its 161 staff of its Mission in New Delhi. To the Charter of Demands forwarded by India to Pakistan which includes, among others, "handing over of the 20 terrorists whose names along with evidence of their crimes", the latter's response is steps would be taken against them as per the law of the land, with a straight denial of extradition. For stepping up further diplomatic pressure on Pakistan, India considers withdrawal of the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status from the latter and such other steps (*Ibid*, 26/12/01).

In order to whip up national jingoism they are utilizing the media at their will. "Thirty-five Pak soldiers killed, 25 posts on LoC smashed: This is a retaliatory action taken by the Army against yesterday's unprovoked shelling from across the border". "Pak firing on LoC countered: Indian troops today inflicted heavy damage on Pakistani posts in response to unprovoked firing from across the border along the LoC". "Indian troops shot down one of the two unmanned Pakistani spy aircraft". These are some of the numerous press reports, briefed by the defense sources, which are published daily in national dailies. The Pakistan Defense Ministry feeds just opposite reports blaming Indian role and highlighting the success of their army in countering "unprovoked Indian offensives" to their media.

However, why is this war hysteria being generated between the two countries? The dastardly terrorist attack, which the Government of India makes issue for all the steps it has taken so far, doesn't prove beyond doubt that the Government of Pakistan is responsible for that. We wrote in this column in the last edition

: "The government says that the terrorists killed inside Parliament precincts are all citizens of Pakistan and the terrorist organizations connected with the attack are all Pakistan-based", though people are kept in the dark regarding whatever evidence the government has collected before concluding on the issue linked with country's security. "But to hold Pakistan responsible, the government will have to show along with this that it is the Pakistani government that planned and organized the attack". The government seems to be caring little to follow the logical path on a very sensitive issue like accusing a neighbouring country for the terrorist attack on its Parliament, let alone taking people into confidence on the question of national security. Thus, the NDA government is visibly inclined to fixing responsibility on Pakistan for the terrorist attack with some design. We showed in our earlier article how the 13 December episode "provided the government with an excellent opportunity to get over extreme discomfiture and tide over a tight situation" emanating from the issues of POTO, corrupt defense deal in the winter session of the Parliament. Now it is seen that the BJP-led NDA is keen on utilizing the episode for generating a war-tension between the countries, and so these diplomatic offensives and troops mobilization in the border. Already there is a popular view in the country that "guns are pointed towards Pakistan, but politicians are focused on UP and Punjab" as observed by a JNU academician obviously indicating the Opposition and the NDA vis-à-vis the ensuing Assembly polls in three states (*The Economic Times*, 2/01/02). The NDA knows it well how the Kargil conflict was a boon to them in the last Parliamentary poll. Thus, will it not be logical to conclude that the BJP led NDA now contemplates to create another warlike situation to utilize it for petty electoral gains?

The US Role

We showed in that article how the BJP-led government, utilizing the present situation was getting closer to US imperialism, the worst enemy of civilization and allowing the latter to intervene in the internal affairs of the country. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Washington increased its efforts to get a firmer hold in the region and the BJP-led government's policy thus made elbow-room for it.

Keeping with India's long tradition of anti-imperialist fight, the successive governments at the Centre had to declare that Kashmir was a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and no third party mediation was allowed. Thanks to the foreign policy of the NDA government, the western imperialist forces, the US imperialists in particular, have got a free hand to advise and interfere on various national issues. While it is an open secret that the US has been instigating Pakistan against India from behind the screen, at the same time it almost dictates terms on issues like Kashmir with a friendly posture. On the question of investigation of attack on Parliament President Bush has "urged both sides to share information, work with each other...". He even called both Musharraf and Vajpayee on 29/12/01 and urged restraint on the part of the two countries (*The Statesman*, 30/12/01). The British Prime Minister Tony Blair in his visit to the subcontinent said, "I emphasize to both of you (India & Pakistan) the desire of the UK and the international community to see that current tensions are reduced" (*Ibid*, 8/1/02). Just see the overlordism on behalf of the two leaders. If it were dictated to Bush and Blair to share information with Afghan-Government following the 11 September episode or called for a restraint before the indiscriminate bombing on the innocent Afghans, what would have been their reactions? They are so keen to poke their nose into the internal affairs that Collin Powell, the US Secretary of State even considers to depute a special envoy to this region to oversee the developments. The duplicity of these leaders is reflected through the contradictory statements they make here or there. In presence of Musharraf the United States highly appreciates Pakistan's commitment towards fight against terrorism, while before Indian leaders it reacts to Pakistan rhetoric by observing not only words but also dos are expected from Islamabad. Blair's role is not different. While visiting the subcontinent he said on board that Pakistan's position vis-à-vis Kashmir was strong but after reaching India this flair in his talk was absent. In fact the design of the imperialist forces headed by the US imperialists is to generate a never-ending conflict in the region so that they can utilize it for their interest.

Further Taxation of the People

The troops mobilization alone heavily taxes the government coffer. Operating the LoC in the winters costs a staggering amount — the Siachen sector alone requires Rs.20

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IN BANGALORE

Anti-Globalization Rally

The Karnataka State Committee, SUCI organized a state level protest rally and public meeting in Bangalore on 8-01-02. A massive procession of more than 15,000 men and women representing all sections of people from 23 districts of Karnataka started from Chiklabagh and converged at Basaveshwara Circle. It was led by State Secretary Comrade K. Radhakrishna and other members of the State Committee.

Comrade Krishna Chakraborti, member, Central Committee, SUCI who was the main speaker said that the thousands who had gathered to register their protest against globalization, liberalization and privatization also had the support of lakhs more who were with the movement. He said this was a part of the anti-globalization protest worldwide, demanding the dismantling of the WTO. Critically analyzing the situation in the world, he explained how socialism, as long as it existed, had put a check on the imperialist powers. But after the dismantling of socialism in the USSR and East European countries, due to the development of revisionism, the imperialists had become emboldened and in their search for markets had brought in the policy of globalization. This was being done to save capitalism from its crisis, he said. "Globalization has meant globalization of poverty and unemployment to millions the world over and now the people are bursting out in massive protests", he said. "All imperialist meets have met with stiff resistance forcing leaders of IMF, World Bank, WTO to run for cover, fearing public protests, even in advanced capitalist countries", he said.

Continuing, he explained how the Indian ruling class, the bourgeoisie, too, was favouring globalization in order to serve its own need for markets. "Whoever opposes globalization is a friend of

the people, whoever supports it is an enemy", he said. All Indian political parties of all hues, including the so-called left except the SUCI had betrayed the cause of the people by implementing the policies of globalization, liberalization and privatization. Mr Vajpayee's promise of one crore jobs per year had in fact turned out to be 2 crores joblessness and more job cuts. "Life has become distressful and unbearable for all sections of the working people as job insecurity haunts them", he said. Even while congratulating the people for such a mammoth protest, he said that these protest meetings would help, no doubt, but it would be necessary to build a very powerful countrywide movement, strong enough to force the governments either to quit from pursuing the WTO prescriptions or step down from power. For this, those gathered would have to go back with this message, form people's struggle committees and organize people's resistance in industries, farms, offices and everywhere.

Comrade K. Radhakrishna, State Secretary in his presidential address gave a vivid picture of people's destitution after globalization. "The strident globalization, liberalization, privatization has made people's life hell, instead of the promised heaven. Lives of peasants, workers, students, youth, women have become unbearable. Peasants are losing right to live with dignity and being pushed to commit suicide. On the other hand, 1.7 million industrial units had closed down and 500 million rendered jobless. The sword of VRS looms above employees in the Railways, Power Corporation, Banks and Insurance. Unemployment has crossed 1800 million mark. Education is now being commoditised. Along with it, decadent western culture was flooding the country through TV,

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Bihar AIDS

School of Politics

A four day School of Politics of AIDS, Bihar was held on and from 24-28 December, 2001 at the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought, Ghatshila. The school was inaugurated through hoisting of Red Flag and garlanding the statue of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

In the inaugural session Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Central Staff, SUCI, dealt with the educational and different social problems prevailing in our society. He, in course of explaining the cause of change and development of human society, held that only those people did not want and rather prevent the change, who most benefited by the existing society. He told, society is always in the process of change and development. But this change does not occur automatically. It takes place since every conscious man plays his due role to change the society for abolishing injustice,

oppression and exploitation of man by man.

Comrade Arun Kumar Singh, member, Bihar State Committee, SUCI and Comrade Rabin Samajpati, member, Jharkhand State Committee, SUCI also took part in the conduction. Comrade Tapas Dutta, member, Central Committee, SUCI, told how by painstakingly waging struggles, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh formed a genuine Communist party, SUCI on Indian soil and in this process emerged as a great leader of the proletariat. He showed, in this context, the role played by the great men of different ages like Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammad, Ashoka for the progress of the society. Citing some instances from Vidyasagar's life, he told students assembled there to grasp the teachings of great men like Vidyasagar and adopt on this basis newer moral and ethics fit for the present time

Indo-Pak Relation And USA

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million daily. Added to this is the cost for personnel transportation. For each train, the fare is Rs.0.5 million, freight for ammunition and equipment is Rs.2.5 million while the airfreight is Rs.0.5 million per hour. Only for army mobilization along the LoC in Kashmir and Indo-Pak border after the terrorist attack on Parliament on 13th December, 2001 Rs. 18000 million has been spent. (*The Statesman*, 14/01/02) Moreover, the NDA has decided to form international opinion against Pakistan. Advani is now on a six day trip to the US; the government has proposed to send, in a diplomatic mission, forty MPs belonging to the NDA and the Opposition including the CPI (M), in ten groups, to a dozen of countries including USA, England, Germany and those in the Middle East to demonstrate India's united move against terrorism. This would further tax the government exchequer. To raise the necessary fund for all these the Union Cabinet considers making an Ordinance enabling the Finance Minister to impose 'war-tax' in the form of excise-duty. So far the FM could have doubled the duty. The new Ordinance would arm the minister to raise it without limit — three or four or more times, whatever he likes.

However, from the above discussion it is not known whether war would start, though the leaders of both countries observed that there

would be no war. Musharraf ruled out the possibility of any war just now; Advani admitted that India's war was not against a country but against terrorism. If we take these statements at face value, then where lies their justification of this massive war-preparation? Why the shelling at the border is mounting day by day? Why the loss of life of innocent people is becoming a daily occurrence? Why thousands of border-area people have to flee, on both sides of the IB, to safer places, to refugee camps? Who would answer these crucial questions? People do not want war, not even the war-tension. They want only a peaceful solution through discussion, which the two sides evade through rhetoric. Then why they would be bled white in paying all these? Why there would be imposition of further taxes? In fact, it is the game of the ruling classes on both sides to whip up national jingoism in order to divert the attention of the people from the mounting crisis in day-to-day life. Refusing to be driven by national jingoism, people should come forward to foil the heinous design of the ruling class. In Pakistan the democratic minded people, the women are organising anti-war rallies. In our country, too, democratic people should likewise raise their voice of protest against this war mongering and jingoism. We appeal to the people to rise up to the occasion to foil this conspiracy.



A section of the massive anti-globalization rally in Bangalore on 8.1.02

CPM-Front government's threat of upto 5-year jail for road rail blockade is unprecedented

(Contd from page 1)

cities, who discussed with the pullers of rickshaws or carts or men engaged in construction works, or the poor who set up a roadside tea stall. Why poor and middle class guardians wore a happy face, why patients in hospitals feel jubilant? What make the poorest slum dwellers look at our comrades with a kind eye, what made people to crowd our mobile propaganda units to take leaflets and distribute them themselves, what made a Calcutta college principal refuse the SFI union's pressure to hold examination on bandh day, what made some participants of anti-bandh CPI(M) procession to secretly tell the shopkeepers to observe bandh? It is the countless people who day in and day out, spread the message of bandh through the length and breadth of the state.

The call of Bandh caused a sharp polarization — the government, the ruling parties, the BJP, the Congress, the industrialist houses, big business, vested interest were on the one hand and on the other were the common toiling people and the rank and file of different parties, particularly of the CPI(M). It is noteworthy that a large number of the CPI(M) activists, a section directly and the other indirectly, worked for bandh defying the CPI(M) leadership stricture. The people of West Bengal particularly noted that the BJP held meetings, organized propaganda directly against bandh. The anti-bandh stand of BJP and CPI(M) exposes their true character once again.

Trinamul Congress (TMC), another bourgeois party of West Bengal, took a peculiar stand. On the one hand they said that they are opposed to any bandh, on the other observing people's response they are forced to say, TMC supported this bandh morally. But TMC said that they would not endeavour to get down on streets and propagate in favour of Bandh. By such contradictory

statements, the TMC tried to satisfy the ruling class on the one hand, on the other tried to exploit the tremendous people's support in favour of bandh to refurbish its image, lost after TMC's debacle in the last Assembly elections. But it went in vain and TMC made itself ludicrous the eyes of the people.

The barrage of false propaganda by the media that Bandh brings disaster to the poor and the middle class was most stubbornly faced by the poor, the middle class themselves.

On 28th December the government issued an order threatening punishment of upto 5-year jail and fine for road and railway track blockade.

As days passed bandh propaganda got more and more momentum. People discussed that this is the party that fought and compelled the CPI(M)-Front government to reintroduce English at the primary stage. People opined that when SUCI leads a movement, it continues to the final stage. This party alone is capable to achieve this. Such was the continued public talk.

The CPI(M) tried to spread confusion and terror through its daily newspaper, through hundreds of thousands of handbills, street corner meetings and processions, by means of defacing SUCI wall writings, spoiling bandh posters, etc.

As days were passing people's sentiment further deepened. This growing sentiment made the CPI(M) leadership panicstricken. Pressure tactics, threats, and finally deployment of huge police contingent, besides using battalions of Rapid Action Force and CPI(M)



A near empty Finance Department office at the Writers' Building on Thursday

— Photo & caption by Hindustan Times

musclemen, were resorted to. In Calcutta alone, 4000 armed police personnel were deployed to tackle about 400 workers of the SUCI — 10 police for one activist — beside RAF and musclemen. Comrade Provash Ghosh described the entire situation as an undeclared war on people.

The government and the CPI(M) declared that trains, buses, trams would run. Circular was issued to the central and state government employees that punishment would be meted out in case of nonattendance at office.

SUCI appealed to them to observe bandh even if police and military were deployed. The government employees decided not to go to office. Even bank employees, teachers, other middle class employees took the same decision. They took the decision because they witnessed and were inspired to see how rickshaw pullers, construction workers, grocers — etc. i.e. the poor who depend solely on daily earnings were ready to observe bandh. The situation became such that to keep functioning the Writers' Buildings, the WB government headquarters, all ministers were asked through newspaper notice to attend Cabinet meeting on that day there.

The CPI(M) supporters among whom yet the flame of leftism burns, mass movement yet has appeal, who are pro-communist, sadly had confessed to SUCI comrades, 'CPI(M) leaders were purchased in greed to become ministers, this party can't do anything for the people. We can depend on you only'.

Thus momentum for bandh rose. As a part of movement, during this time, electricity bill boycott started on January 1. It received spontaneous support. The Calcutta Electricity supply Corporation (CESC) had to

admit that a large section of consumers did not pay their electricity bills as a result of bill boycott.

Experiencing the massive mass support the CPI(M) declared on the bandh eve that hospital charges would be reconsidered. Through press statement CPI(M) said it is ready to hold talks with the SUCI. CPI(M)'s sole objective was to make people desist from observing bandh. But people were not confused because they knew the deceptive character of the CPI(M).

From 5th January onwards the entire West Bengal was in a mood as if a battle was imminent — on the one hand there are the ruling class, the ruling CPI(M), its allies — all panic stricken, and on the other hand there are people led by the SUCI, firm, determined, ready for any ferocious attack.

At last came the 10th January. History witnessed a new Bengal. The entire West Bengal stood up like one man and observed Bandh — Bandh was spontaneous, all out.

The Central government could run only a few trains for it could not compel all the employees to join work and the passengers, themselves held blockades on tracks. The few plying trains carried not more than 8-10 passengers. Same is the picture of government buses, and trams. Even under pressure private transport did not run. The few passengers, who rode, were ticketless so-called passengers deputed by the ruling party. The government buses, trams and trains thus plied, entailed wastage of huge public money. All transport including rickshaws boats, taxis, buses, minibuses — vehicles on land and river routes — did not work.

Most of the offices were closed.

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Writers' Buildings on BBD Bag at 1 p.m. on 10th January, Bangla Bandh day

Enroll volunteers, build up people's committees and develop sustained movement on burning issues

(Contd. from page 4)

Even many offices there were no men to unlock the door. Some offices, opened forcefully, showed only empty chairs. Schools, colleges, universities, markets, shops, etc., did not open. Most of the universities postponed examination scheduled for 10th January. CPI(M) leaders became more ferocious in the face of this picture. They unleashed musclemen and police on SUCI activists. Party offices were destroyed in Midnapore town, Cooch Behar town and Dinhata town. Police arrested SUCI organizers even from party offices. SUCI workers identified by CPI(M) leaders were mercilessly beaten up by police and musclemen. Even children and women were not spared. Police arrested 1581 comrades and instituted false criminal cases and even attempted to murder cases against our workers. Where police was reluctant to arrest, CPI(M) leaders compelled them to do so.

These made people so agitated that masses gheraoed many police stations demanding the release of the arrested. In some places police were compelled to release the arrested activists.

The media, controlled by big industrialists and business houses opposed bandh from the very beginning, and tried to confuse people against bandh. It said that SUCI with only 2 MLAs would fail to make the bandh successful. It said "Bandh will fail", again it opined "Bandh will happen because people want to enjoy a holiday," but again said, "bandh will be successful but not for SUCI, but for the moral support of the TMC."

Media tried to foil bandh. But also kept prepared so that in case of success it could say it was due to holiday mood or the moral support of the TMC. But people rejected the tricks and laughed it away.

But after the successful bandh, somenews papers said thebandh was

"partially successful", response to bandh was "lukewarm", etc.

False press propaganda against successful bandh evoked so much anger among people that some newspapers, after a few days passed since bandh, were compelled to sing a different tune. Press belatedly had to report though in a limited way that it was a successful people's bandh.

Truly on 10th January it was witnessed that every man in West Bengal was a fighter. West Bengal gave the verdict in one voice — we want struggle against anti-people policies of both the state and central governments. We want SUCI to lead the struggles. We want to further develop and strengthen SUCI, the party of the oppressed.

Only one month comrades worked and people responded and worked. Just one month changed the whole of West Bengal. Everywhere at home and outside people were discussing bandh and SUCI. People received and are embracing comrades as if they are from a victorious battle. People at large are showing eagerness to join SUCI. Ranks of the CPI(M), too, are showing the same eagerness, countless volunteers are enrolling. Hundreds of people's committees are being formed. With manifold energy and enthusiasm comrades have jumped into work again.

Congratulating the struggling people Comrade Provas Ghosh made the following appeal :

"I congratulate the people for making the bandh successful against the anti-people policies of the central and state governments facing police brutality and terrorisation by CPM muscle men. In the past, great renaissance and humanist personalities inspired the entire country. Today the capitalist class and power greedy parties are taking such steps to drown the youth in perversion, self-centredness, conspiring to make them forget the great men so that the youth cannot rise up against exploitation. But this

bandh showed that the exploiters could not have destroyed humanity altogether. This has been possible because of the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great Marxist thinker following which mass movements are growing on the basis of proletarian revolutionary ideology and culture in continuation with the glorious renaissance and the uncompromising current of the freedom movement.

unity and struggling spirit become much more invincible than the total strength of the exploiting class, the government and the ruling parties. Anti-bandh propagandists ridiculed that none would respond to the bandh call of SUCI which has only 2 MLAs. People gave a fitting reply to it, as they did on 3 September 1990 and 3 February 1998 by observing successful bandh at SUCI's call. It is clear that people do not consider

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Message After Bandh

Comrades,

Bangla Bandh of January 10, called by the West Bengal State Committee of our party against the rise in the price for electricity, charges in hospitals and fees for education, has met with a historic success.

At first, I express my greetings to the common people of all sections of West Bengal, whose massive and heartfelt support could bring this success. Next, I also extend greetings to the activists and supporters of all Left and democratic parties, whose unstinted support too, was another reason for the all-out success. At the end, I greet cadres, supporters and sympathizers of our party for achieving this historic victory through their painstaking efforts.

This Bandh was not just a protest with certain demands raised; it was, at the same time, a struggle to establish democratic rights against autocracy. The success of the Bandh thus also heralds a victory against autocracy.

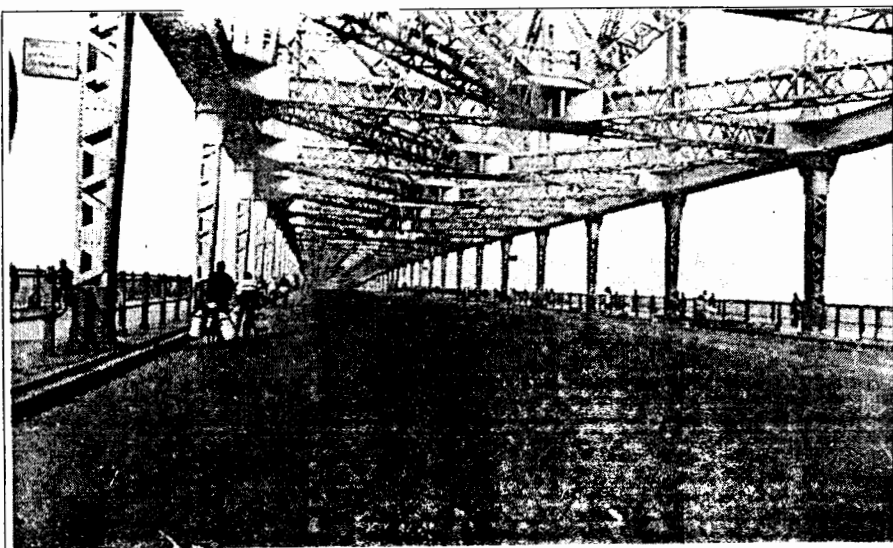
It is cunningly campaigned that Bandh is the last weapon in democratic movements. This is not true. It is one of the important weapons — it may be used for a day or two, or even may be extended continuously for days together. From the stage of a protest, it may then be raised to the stage of a resistance. To prepare for that, you should start right now patient and painstaking efforts to build up 'People' Struggle Committee' and 'Volunteer Force' as the instruments of struggle of masses at all levels in villages and towns.

The burning problems of people's life, in demand of solving which, the Bandh was called, still exist. Newer problems and demands will also crop up. With all these demands, you will have to raise and develop your struggles from protest to resistance movements. To meet that end, you will have to fast build up people's own instruments of struggles. All your work must be directed towards this end.

Panic-stricken CPM deployed its musclemen to foil 10th January bandh and it got BJP by its side to oppose and propagate against bandh. Despite false propaganda, threats, orders to central and state governments employees, joint attacks by police and CPM storm troopers on bandh day, attempts to forcibly open shops, forcibly running passengerless government buses-trains at the cost of a few crores of rupees, attacks on SUCI activists and arresting 1581 of them — yet CPM could not break the bandh. It happened because the poor and middle class people of the entire state stood with determination in favour of this bandh. Honest and struggling workers of CPM and other parties helped this bandh for which they deserve congratulations. This bandh once again showed, if people rise up under the leadership of a revolutionary party then that people's

joining mass movement on MLA or ministerial strength rather they consider whether the demands are just, whether movements are in people's interest and the party leading movements is dependable. SUCI acquired the trust of people through innumerable difficult struggles, bloodshed and supreme sacrifice under the leadership of our General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee on the basis of the revolutionary Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts. CPM, BJP, Congress, TMC — they may either become rulers backed by money power of the domestic and foreign capitals or while in opposition may scramble for power — but it is not at all easy to win people's love. SUCI got a place in people's heart through revolutionary ideology, higher ethics and difficult struggles. So people respond to

(Contd. on page 7)



View of Howrah Bridge on 10th January, Bangla Bandh day

MASS UPHEAVAL IN ARGENTINA**Globalization Leads to Extreme Economic Crisis**

The worst effects of globalization have now hit Argentina. The economic meltdown in Argentina has caused a mass upheaval bringing about unprecedented political turmoil in the country. The severe government repression resulting in death of 27 persons besides injuries to hundreds of other people and arrest of more than 3000 people only added fuel to the fire of mass wrath. As a consequence of the popular mass movements it is seen that four Presidents of the country had to quit office in quick succession within the span of a few days. De la Rúa, the former President who took office in December 1999 had to face an ignominious exit from presidency with 132 billion dollar debt burden on the country and tried to flee the country when he was debarred from doing so by two Argentine judges, pending the investigation into suppression of anti-government protest. Peso, the Argentine currency, which was pegged to dollar through the creation of a currency board had to be devalued by 30 per cent causing a heavy erosion of the real monetary net worth of the people.

When Manmohan Singh, the high priest of globalization was initiating in our country the new economic policy in early nineties, the bourgeois ideologues, the capitalist controlled media, the bourgeois politicians and their henchmen were all hilarious in praising and welcoming this new economic policy. They were then citing the examples of the South East Asian countries which were then projected as 'Asian Tigers'. But these 'tigers' soon turned into cats with the Asian crisis of 1997. The balloon of the economic prosperity of Japan of the eighties was also pricked in the nineties. Japanese capitalist economy is in throes of one of its greatest post-war set back, Brazil and Mexico also met the similar fate as a result of globalization of their economies. And now it is the turn of Argentina which was flaunted till recently by the IMF as a success story. But despite all these glaring examples of disastrous fallout of globalization the protagonists of globalization of our country are keeping their eyes shut and pushing the country to inevitable doom by vigorously pursuing the policy of globalization.

What ails Argentina? Three Presidents, Raul Alfonsín, Carlos Menem and Fernando Du La Rúa each aggressively pursued the policy of globalization reversing the existing economic structure. The policy of structural adjustment, privatization and free market economy has been pursued for a decade and a half. The people were subjected to face the onslaught of the market driven economic order. During the regime of Carlos Menem the privatization process was in full force, causing extreme hardship and pains to the people. The lucrative PSUs, Argentine economic jewels were handed over to Argentine and foreign capitalists at a price far below their market value. Thousands and thousands of workers were retrenched and became jobless. In the big working class suburbs the unemployment was 30 to 50 per cent and underemployment 40 to 50 per

cent as the great majority of the household fell below the poverty line. Even as per official version the overall unemployment figure in the country was 18.2 per cent.

To pacify the growing discontent the ruling class of Argentina tried to embroil the people in a two party parliamentary system, the two major parties being the Radicals and the Peronists. These two parties tried to distribute the largesse among their loyal followers who helped in forming the clientelistic electoral machines.

The major trade unions, particularly the CGT have been run by a group of highly paid repressive bosses who are closely aligned with the Menem regime and unwilling to confront the regressive policies of the government. These trade unions resort to occasional denunciation and even general strike to confuse the workers, but the main motive is to 'blow off steam' and to submit to the government. After symbolic protest the leaders of these trade unions negotiate with the state and the employers behind closed doors, reaching agreements that ignore workers' main demands and then impose these agreements on the workers. These leaders prefer to secure half an hour appointment with the minister of labour in order to form a tripartite committee to discuss the measures to cushion the austerity programme and ensure the governability. The fact is that all these major trade unions in Argentina are only concerned with the ties with the official parties and have become totally irrelevant.

The protagonists of the new economic policy asked the people to swallow the bitter pill of privatization and assured them that the tide of globalization would raise the boats of both the rich and the poor. But it is experienced by the people that while the boats of the rich have been raised to a new height, those of the poor have been sinking. There has been a dramatic sharpening of social inequalities. The growth of poverty was abnormally high. Wealth and

income gaps widened dramatically as a result of the market driven economic order.

To curb the growing discontent of the people the De La Rúa government turned to violent repression. But the demonstrations mobilized thousands in protest against job cuts, plant shut downs and high electricity rates charged by the private power companies. The government failed to meet its promise for alternative employment as a result of budget cuts to meet IMF conditionalities. The government resolved to harsher austerity policies like massive retrenchment and 12 per cent cut in salaries of the public employees as proposed by the IMF and supported by the US and the European private bankers. The government, having failed to stem the tide of recessionary pressure, now in its fourth year hardened its resolve to adopt new austerity measures in the hopes of attracting speculative investment from the Wall Street and a new bail out from the IMF. But what sealed the fate of De La Rúa government was its decision to implement strict currency control (Peso having made fully convertible) and restriction on cash withdrawals from banks. While the common people were debarred from withdrawing more than 1000 Peso per month the flight of capital by the big sharks was not restricted. As a result central bank's net reserves slumped rapidly. The two institutions that had credibility – the currency board and the central bank, has been weakened beyond repair. The IMF promised a bail out package of 8 billion dollar to Argentina. But in the first week of December 2001 IMF refused to release an installment of 1.26 billion dollar because of noncompliance with the stringent restructuring measures as demanded by it. In a last bid attempt Cavallo, the finance minister announced a further cut of 9 billion dollar in spending which let loose hell in the economy. At a single stroke majority of the Argentine society was reduced to penury. The people who were already restive because of the continued process of privatization, liberalization and globalization burst forth in the streets of cities, towns and suburbs of Argentina.

But these outbursts though elicited wide and spontaneous support of the people belonging to all sections of the exploited masses were not however sporadic or unorganized. The Argentine people were reported to be getting organized at the grass root level to throw challenge to the two party elitist electoral system, dubbed as 'democracy' by the

bourgeoisie. Movements were being developed for a considerable period of time before this mass upheaval in last December.

It is reported that in August 2001 a nationwide mobilization of the unemployed numbering over one hundred thousand people blocked 300 highways in Argentina paralyzing the entire economy. Previous to this road blockade 5 picketers were killed and over 3000 were arrested by the police in violent clashes throughout the country in previous months. By the pressure of such a massive movement the organized unemployed were able to secure thousands of minimum wage temporary jobs, food allowances and other concessions from the state. In September 2001 the unemployed were able to organize massive high way blockade throughout the capital city of Buenos Aires and a successful general strike.

The movements drew wide support from a vast section of people because of several reasons. The small and medium sized entrepreneurs and merchants were threatened with closures of their industries or establishments with bankruptcy as consumer power drastically declined because of largescale retrenchment of workforce; thousands of government and municipal employees were not paid for months or paid a paltry amount, public employees and professional people were fired because of drastic budget cut and fiscal austerity measures, pension to the retired people was reduced and public health workers and school teachers confronted with major pay cuts and worsening work condition. As a result of the privatization policy the township locating the PSUs were "ghost town" or "industrial cemeteries", and the people were migrating to other places in thousands in search of livelihood.

In this context the role of the IMF, the US controlled financial institution is worth noting. *The Times of India* editorially commented, "... the IMF would have reacted differently if it felt there was any risk of contagion. Having decided that an Argentine collapse would not endanger the global financial system, the IMF threw it to the wolves." It means that as long as the US interest is not affected, the US can go to any extent to realize the debt service charges of the debtor nations. Lenin long ago wrote in his famous works, *"Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism"*, – "The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of

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IN CHENNAI**UTUC-LS Takes Up Workers' Vital Issues**

The Buckingham & Carnatic Mills (B & C), a century old mill has finalized to close its gates for ever. The Mill which is situated at Perambur in the heart of Chennai had produced the finest fabrics for export as well as for domestic consumption. Five to six generations of workers had seen the mills in prosperity, and now the present day workers watch helplessly the doom and ruins of permanent closure.

The management announced a VRS scheme on 29-4-98 assuring payment of compensation and gratuity in the year 1998 itself. None of their assurances were implemented.

Chennai Chengai Podhu Thozhilalar Sangam B&C Mill unit, affiliated to UTUC-Lenin Sarani is taking all out efforts to get the voice of Binny Mill workers heard in various fora. Comrade A.K. Majumdar, leader of UTUC-Lenin Sarani represented B&C Mill workers in BIFR meetings held at New Delhi on 6-8-2001 and 13-12-2001. He demanded VRS compensation to be paid to 398 workers whose VRS applications were rejected on the ground that 331 workers will be attaining the age of retirement. As the mills are closed the management dismissed without reason 67 watch and ward staff depriving them of their VRS benefits. Also, he argued to reopen the mills immediately and give employment to 1000 workers. Workers were forced to vacate their quarters before receiving their compensation. Comrade Majumdar

in the BIFR meeting held on 13-12-01 criticized and condemned the management for forcible eviction. The management thereafter agreed to the suggestion of payment of compensation first, and, vacating the quarters after receiving the payment.

To consolidate the workers and their demands, UTUC-Lenin Sarani organized a demonstration near memorial hall, Chennai on 7-1-2002. Hundreds of mill workers along with their family members protested against the anti-labour acts of the management. Agitated workers demanded the management to pay compensation in a single instalment without any more delay. The workers appealed to Tamilnadu government to waive the interest on loans available from B&C Mills workers Co-operative Society and asked the loan amount to be absorbed by the mill management, which is going to amass huge wealth by selling the property of the mills. The speakers included Comrades Adhikesavalu, former General Secretary, Madras Labour Union, Arul Xavier, G.S. MLU (present Employees' Union), Pushparaj, President, Barracks Village Committee, G.Elumalai, Secretary, Chennai Chengai Podhu Thozhilalar Sangam B&C Unit (UTUC-LS). Fraternal leaders from AITUC Comrade Ramasubbu, Vice-president and TRS Mani, Secretary greeted the demonstrators for their sustained struggles. Comrade V. Sivakumar, Chennai Dist. Secretary (UTUC-LS) was in the chair.

Anti-Globalization Rally

(Contd. from page 3)

while the BJP-led Central Government was blind and deaf to it, despite its tall talks of traditional Indian culture.

Comrade Uma, member, Karnataka State Committee spoke on the demands enlisted in the Memorandum submitted to the President of India as well as to the Governor of the State. Comrade A. Ramanjinappa seconded it. The ten point demands included, among others :-

To quit WTO and give up the policies of globalization-liberalization-privatization;

To refrain from borrowing loans from World Bank and IMF; instead, it should generate resources by collecting the huge balance of

corporate tax, recover NPA along with interest, taxing the rich, withdrawing subsidies/subventions to the industrial houses and putting an end to wasteful expenditure of top heavy administration as well as to put on check laundering of public money;

To restore and enhance subsidy to agriculture and to PDS; introduce all-out state trading in essential commodities;

To take back the policy of VRS and CRS in Banks, Insurance, Telecom, Railways, Government services, in all sectors of the economy;

To provide employment to all ; pending employment, provide adequate unemployment allowance, etc.

Argentina Crisis

(Contd. from page 6)

the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means that a small number of financially "powerful" states stand out among all the rest."

In the midst of severe crisis of world capitalism the powerful capitalist imperialist countries want to overcome this crisis through a planned framework for management of world trade through the formation of the WTO, thus shifting the entire burden of the crises on to the less developed countries of the world. These countries, while protecting their own internal markets are forcing open the markets of the less developed countries through the policy of globalization so that the big MNCs of these countries can loot and plunder the entire wealth of the world. As a result, most of the people of the world are rapidly getting pauperized.

It is heartening that the people of

different countries of the world are coming out in the streets and organizing movements to resist the onslaught of globalization foisted by the imperialists. In Latin America alone several countries are in the vortex of movement. The face of Latin America will undergo a change if the people of these countries coordinate their struggles against the imperialist machinations. But while hailing the glorious struggles of Argentina and other Latin American countries we appeal to the people of the countries to be on guard so that these movements are conducted on correct base political line under the correct leadership. If this is not guarded the movement will go astray despite tremendous sacrifices and the reactionaries who are waiting in the wings will take advantage of the situation much to the detriment to the interest of the people.

BANGLA BANDH

(Contd. from page 5)

SUCI's call, protect it with love and care. You surely have noticed, what a total bandh it was, yet not a single bomb exploded, no bus or tram damaged despite CPM musclemen's torture and police repression on our activists. They behave in a disciplined manner. All these happened alone owing to revolutionary politics and higher ethics of the party. It is a teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that "the kernel of revolutionary politics lies in its higher culture and ethics".

You have seen most of the newspaper reports despite such a successful bandh as bandh had almost no impact. It is because the ruling class, ruling and power greedy parties and the corporate house owned newspapers fear democratic mass movement, feel the only friend of the exploited class – the SUCI. These very newspapers during freedom movement did not publish the news of the revolutionaries like Kshudiram, Surya Sen, Bhagat Singh, Netaji. Those papers only propagated the views of the rightists, the compromising force. Today, too, they are playing the same role.

Ponder, why do power tariff, hospital charges, and prices of petrol, diesel, Kerosene, fertilizer etc. have been soaring steadily? The governments are doing away with the subsidies on the plea of financial crunch. But they are suppressing its real cause. The central and the state governments are giving tax reliefs in crores to the domestic and foreign capitalists who also are dozing taxes of many more crores of rupees at the indulgence of the government. The governments are spending crores and

crores of rupees on police and military and for luxuries, salaries, and allowances of the ministers and bureaucrats. What remains even after that is plundered by the ministers and leaders of the ruling parties. Deficit is due to all this, and people are burdened with the deficit. On the other hand, governments are handing over education health and such other fields of activity to the business men for profit. So the state and the central governments would not accept these demands easily. Though the government proposes token reduction in hospital charges and the Goenka-owned CESC is now talking about discussion with the consumers on observing strong public support for bandh, the main demands remained unfulfilled. So the movement is to be continued. In the past our party compelled the government reintroduce English at the primary level by the protracted 19-year long struggle. This time to movement is to be conducted for a long period. This bandh is an important step in the course of that movement.

Formation of people's committees or struggle committees and formation of volunteer corps with honest and brave students and youths are necessary for sustained movement. Remember, more severe attacks are in the offing. We will also have to fight against those attacks. So as weapons of movement, people's committees and volunteer corps are essential. It is to be remembered, however oppressive and autocratic a government may be, only a conscious, organised and democratic movement endowed with higher ethics led by a revolutionary ideology can defeat it."

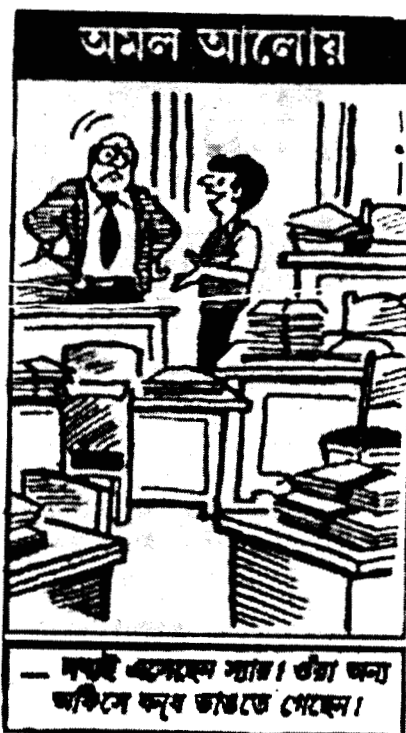
Bangla Bandh Briefs

"The state drew flak on Thursday for failing to prevent the 24-hour statewide bandh called by the SUCI.

Trade and industry in the state were severely affected due to the strike as small and big enterprises remained closed. Calcutta Stock Exchange was also closed for the day. ...

Chambers of commerce staff were also disgruntled. 'We did not expect the bandh, called by such a small political party, to have this impact. Its success might encourage similar bandhs. Government should issue an ordinance or take legal measures to check them,' CII vice-chairman, Dipankar Chatterjee said" (*The Asian Age*, 11-01-02)

"... Bangla Bandh today brought the State to a grinding halt. ... Buses, trams and taxis were out in



(Yes Sir, everybody has turned up, but has gone to other offices to break the Bandh !)

— *Sambad Pratidin*, 11-01-2002

Kolkata, but most of them went without passengers. A CTC employee said staffers like him has been forced by the union to report for work. Most city markets were shut, ... Jadavpur, the chief minister's own constituency remained shut down throughout the day." (*The Hindustan Times*, 11-01-02)

"Although the state government took all measures to keep public life normal by foiling the Bandh call from the early morning atmosphere of Bandh in Calcutta along with all the outside districts was visible. ..."

From early morning most of the shops and establishments in all districts including Calcutta were closed although a very few shops were found open here and there in a stray manner. Although the state transport department deployed some buses in Calcutta and adjoining

districts number of passengers were negligible. The government by deploying empty buses tried to keep up an image of unsuccessful bandh. Trains ran in different sections, but a very few passengers were found. The same picture in metro rail. Important spots in Calcutta like Hazra, Garia, Shyambazar, Sealdah, Burrah-bazar, Dharamtoilla, Bidhannagar and B.B.D. Bag wore a deserted look from the morning. Occasionally government buses were found running empty." (*The Sandhya Khabarer Kagaj* dt.10.01.2002)

"In spite of stray blockade movement of train, planes was on the whole normal. Metro rail and government transport was normal but passengers were very few. Shops and establishments remained closed. People on road were found rarely." (*The Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 11.01.02)

"In Calcutta roads were vacant on this day. Although government buses plied, passengers were a few. Private and Mini buses plied rarely. Most of the educational institutions were closed. ... most of the markets in the city remained shut. ... So far as our correspondents' reports from different districts go, in most of the places shops and markets were found closed. Although government buses were on roads, private buses were absent. Government offices were open but attendance was low. People were found rarely on the streets." (*The Bartaman*, 11.01.02)

The Falsity Galore!

"On Thursday, attendance in Calcutta Municipal Corporation was 60 percent. Although this was the rate of attendance claimed by the Mayor the real picture in the office rooms were otherwise. Very few were found. Most of the chairs were vacant." (*The Bartaman*, 11.01.02)

Bandh Banter

"Overheard while waiting at the parking lot in front of the Writers' Buildings. Senior employee of the finance department : "We have unnecessarily been forced to come to work today. In fact, we are fools that we took the chief minister seriously, look at the employee turnout today." The officer had come down for a cup of tea with five other colleagues. "It is very easy for the ministers to force us to come to work. They come to office in chauffeur-driven cars but what about the likes of us who come in buses and trains and will get no conveyance back home ?

Look at the number of buses that plied today! At least on bandh days ministers should come to work by public conveyance". Are the

SUCI Condemns

Abnormal Rise in Excise Duty

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement to the Press on 10-01-2002 condemning the Central Cabinet decision to promulgate an Ordinance amending the Central Excise Act for abnormally raising the excise duty :

"No word is strong enough to condemn the Cabinet decision of the BJP led Central Government to arm itself with powers to raise excise duty beyond twice the existing rate ahead of the budget through an ordinance amending the Central Excise Act, that gives emergency power for the purpose. The move of the government is ominous as it contemplates to abnormally raise the excise duty on all items imposing heavy burden on the people who are already back to the wall as a result of fiscal savagery. The finance ministry has already announced that the excise duty on petroleum products would be more than double and this will push up the oil pool deficit abnormally when the international price of crude is as low as 18 dollar, nearly, per barrel.

In the face of deepening economic crisis this government is trying to create a tense situation, centring round the 13th December attack on Parliament, between India and Pakistan to hoodwink the people and also in its futile attempt to get public sanction for imposing heavy fiscal burden is inciting national jingoism. The military regime in Pakistan is also following the same sinister course in the interest of the ruling class of Pakistan.

We demand of the BJP led government to refrain from imposing such fiscal savagery on the people and urge the President of India not to give his consent to this ordinance. We also appeal to the people of India and Pakistan to resist the sinister design of their respective government by maintaining solidarity between them."

ministers listening ?"

(*The Times of India*, 14-01-02)

The *Ananda Bazar Patrika* dated 14.01.02 in its *Kolkata Korcha* reports with a tale-telling photograph :

"... Altogether 26 boatmen ... this is the first time that they participated in the Bangla Bandh on last Thursday. 26 country boats were found stranded on the shore of the Ganges. ... One of them, Abdus Sattar satirically told : 'From the early morning I am waiting with fishing lines in the water but not a single fish could be caught. I think, they, too, are observing Bangla Bandh!' Mohammad Ismail from Darbhanga district of Bihar, aged 65, is engaged in plying countryboat on the Ganges for the last 30 years. He said : 'Every year, four to five bandhs are called but we are

member of no union. None forces us to 'stop plying our boats.' ... No, none came to persuade them not to ply their boats on the demands of revocation of hike in electricity charges, hospital charges and fee hike in education. They came to know the grounds of the Bangla Bandh from the conversations of the passengers. From the repeated conversations, they realized that the hike in electricity charges may not touch them but the other two must hit their pocket. These people who are to go to the health centres many a day for of their ailments, sends their sons and daughters to the schools, could easily see the omen of lurking danger. So, sacrificing their daily earnings of Rs.150 to 200, they joined the Bandh. Then how the government boasts of that toiling people discarded the Bandh?"



Police-infested deserted street near SUCI central office at Subodh Mallick Square at 10 a.m. on 10th January, 2002 — the Bangla Bandh Day

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