

Proletarian Era

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People's Overwhelming Involvement

Total Bangla Bandh on February 3 A New Vista of Mass Movement

Life came to a standstill on 3rd February, '98, when people observed total 'Bangla Bandh' demanding, inter alia, introduction of English and Pass-fail system from Class I. A bandh on demands of education is unique and unique is the overwhelming response of the people, to whom our party has extended hearty congratulations.

This "Bandh" is a great social event which has in its background a movement of 21 years' history. Since 1977 our party, SUCI, gradually had been building up movements against the disastrous language and education policy of the CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' Government.

In post-independent India such a movement on one single issue is unprecedented. Its one great feature is that to men of all walks, from highly educated to the poorest of poor, this bandh was their bandh on the issue of education and culture. This bandh was truly a people's bandh.

This exemplary determination of millions did not build up automatically. The dedication and ceaseless toil of the SUCI organisers and activists, who went from door to door, from institution to institution and faced assaults of party and administration, ultimately made this bandh possible.

We then predicted that the education policy, which the CPI(M) was going to introduce in West Bengal, would bring disaster to education. Our party explained that it would destroy the base of

education and jeopardize the future of crores of students while creating two classes of citizens — one knowing English and another — the great majority — not knowing English. The party also highlighted the disastrous effects that lack of

access to and interaction with the thoughts of a developed language — such as English, would inevitably have.

Sustained movement went on for years and

(Contd. on page 3)

Transform People's Support into Organised Force — Nihar Mukherjee

After the total success of 3rd February Bangla Bandh Comrade Nihar Mukherjee sent the following message at the party workers' meeting held on 8th Feb. '98 at the Nazrul Mancha, Calcutta

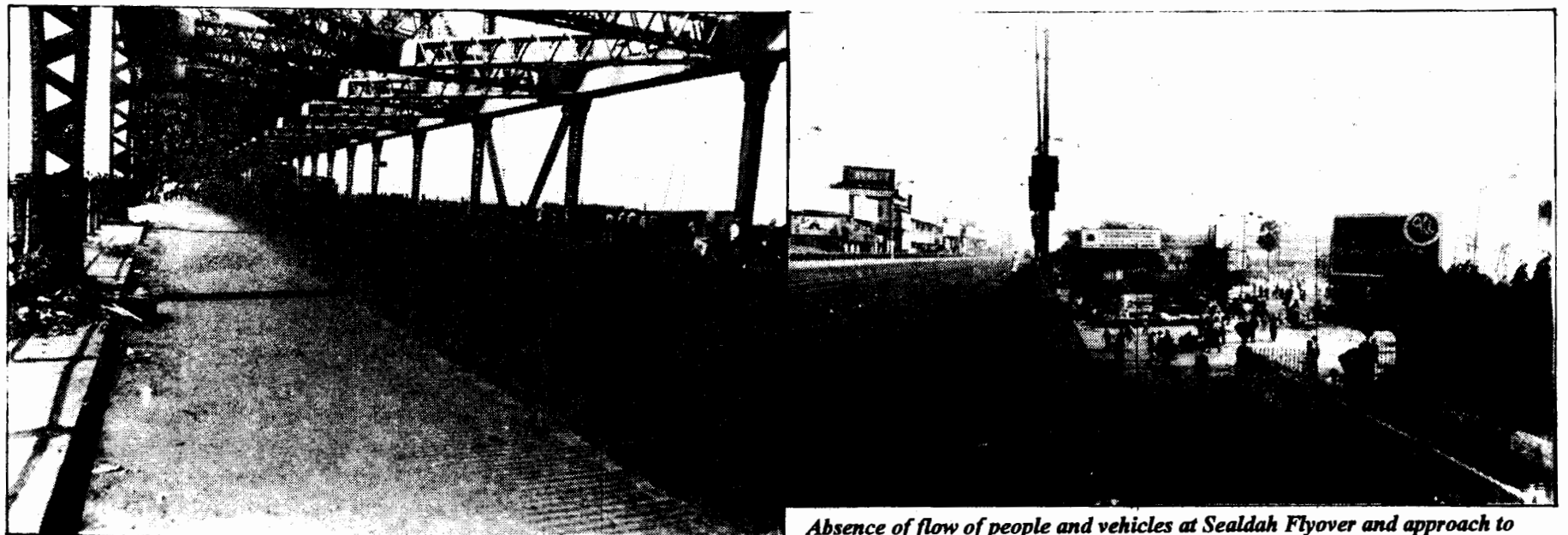
Comrades,

The 3rd February Bangla Bandh called by the West Bengal State Committee of the party on demands concerning education, has been crowned with unprecedented success. The main reason for this unprecedented success is undoubtedly the sympathy of all sections of the people starting from leading intellectuals, litterature, artists, sports stars of the society to employees, workers, peasants - even unstinted and unbelievable support of thousands of common workers and supporters of all political parties. This unprecedented mass support ultimately frustrated all heinous attempts of the leadership of the ruling and all bourgeois

parties and administration to foil the Bandh. For that I convey my greetings to all sections of the people.

This mass support caught unaware all parties of the vested interests, terrified them and united them against us. The utter self contradictory and opportunist pre-Bandh stand of the Congress, the Trinamul Congress, the BJP, the Chhatra Parishad, the SFI proves this. The news coverage by the TV, the radio and the newspapers in terming the total success of the Bandh as 'partial' in order to project it in a diminutive form is also a part of this conspiracy. The united class conspiracy of all the

(Contd. on page 4)



Deserted look of Howrah Bridge at 12 noon on 3rd February

Absence of flow of people and vehicles at Sealdah Flyover and approach to Sealdah Station at 10 AM on Bandh day

Lessons of the 80th Anniversary of the October Revolution

Declaration of Leningrad International Conference

[The Leningrad Conference, held from November 6-7, 1997 adopted an important declaration signed by 25 communist and workers' parties of Yugoslavia, Belgium, Turkey, Greece, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Rumania, Spain, Egypt, Slovakia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Tajekistan, Belorussia, Estonia, Latvia, Kirgizia, Georgia, Ukraine along with our Party. The contents of the declaration is given below.]

The great October, 1917 revolution has confirmed the validity of Marxist-Leninist theory concerning the necessity of socialist revolution, the only path leading to the victory of the working class in its struggle against capital, and of the construction of socialism and communism — a society where all can develop freely. All the other paths of progressive reform inevitably lead to the strengthening of social inequality and the perfecting of the different forms of exploitation.

The path to socialism, that the Paris Commune was the first to follow openly, is a path of pioneers. The theory of scientific socialism and the experience of the construction of socialism during the 20th century have convincingly demonstrated that the power established after the socialist revolution can only be, essentially, the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the working class.

The different forms of working class power, the working class being the most revolutionary and organized core of the proletariat, are always and everywhere essentially in accordance with the practical measures taken by the Paris Commune, which aimed to make the workers' society's leading force. The Russian working class demonstrated that the most adequate form, corresponding to the dictatorship of the proletariat, are the soviets.

Both in their conception and their functioning the soviets are rooted in objective reality; the workers' organisation in the process of social production. The soviets, that are elected by the working-class collectivities and unify society in one network, guarantee the proletarian character of power, of control and leadership by the working masses.

The experience of the Paris Commune and especially of the USSR has shown the essential role of a revolutionary workers' party as the main and leading force in the building of a new society. Lenin's theory concerning the party is still fully significant; "There can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary party."

Stalin's and Lenin's Bolshevik party was such

a party. Under its leadership, the USSR succeeded in solving many fundamental problems. No capitalist country has ever been able and never will be able to do the same. This has been demonstrated by the experience of the communist parties of the socialist community.

Notably, the problems of full employment, of free education and medical care, of access to science and culture have been solved. In the USSR, housing, social services and public transport were practically free. It is also important to stress that socialism protected human life. No capitalist country has ever given its people the security guaranteed by the Soviet Union during the socialist regime.

The USSR's experience has also convincingly demonstrated that the economic grounds for the realization, the consolidation and development of soviet power as an expression of the dictatorship of proletariat is the collective ownership of the means of production and the planned production of goods for the direct benefit of society. This is the production of consumer goods in view of satisfying the workers' materials and cultural needs.

The aim of socialist production is not the increase of value as such, not surplus value, but well-being and full development for all members of society. To reject this aim and steer towards market economy leads to the destruction of socialism, because, by principle, the market economy cannot be the basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Market economy is the basis of capitalism, the basis of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Marxist-Leninist theory does not propose detailed plans or ideal models for the future society. Marx and Engels wrote that communism was not a state that was to be installed, not an ideal ready to be put into practice. They saw communism as a dynamic force able to destroy the present state of things based on injustice and acting as an obstacle to social development.

The working class needs a State to eliminate its class enemies. The revolution can seize only when the communists have reached their objective

of classless society, where the State progressively withers away, where the building of communism is carried out, where the danger of capitalism, coming both from the outside and from within, disappears.

Bureaucracy and political and ideological degeneration at the head of the State and Party apparatus, the revision of Marxism-Leninism carried out from the 20th and 22nd congresses of the CPSU on and brought

to a climax by perestroika, the rejection, in theory and in practice, of the fundamental communist principles, have led to counter-revolution and, with the help of international imperialism, the overthrow of socialism in the USSR.

Taking this into consideration, we communists declare revolution must never stop. Behind the counter-revolution, the revolution is already surging upwards!

The financial oligarchy and transnational companies, whose assault troops are American imperialism and international Zionism, under the banners of deceit and "World Democracy" exert increasing pressure in order to instore a world order, striving to halt the objective historical process and to impose industrial slavery on humanity, based on an unfair international division of labour and a system of indebtedment.

Their ideology is neo-liberalism as well as the social-democratic theories of social partnership, civil peace and the liquidation of all revolutionary potential. This ideology is further developed through the revisionist and opportunist ideas spread by the bourgeoisie and acting as sources of infection amongst the communist international movement. And when these tactics fail, the military machinery of the United States and Nato set forth.

But humanity cannot further its development on the basis of production dominated by private property. The life and development of a human being cannot be limited by the criteria of private property or by the will of a handful of individuals seeking to dominate the world and to maintain all the others in slavery. The international communist movement purifies itself of social traitors and reinforces itself by acquiring renewed valour in the course of struggle.

To counter the bourgeois slogan of "World Democracy", we communists declare to the world: only the struggle against imperialism in view of building socialism and communism, only the road taken by the communists with the October revolution, is the path for humanity, leading towards freedom, equality, fraternity and happiness for all peoples.

The reorganisation of the international communist movement, the end of the actual crisis, the rejection of capitulation, the development of a common strategy based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, these are the urgent tasks that the struggle against international capital sets forth for us.

The communist movement must now lead an international struggle against imperialism and war. One of our main tasks is to fight revisionism under all its forms, without compromise, stressing that it is the main danger which threatens us.

The potential of revolution know no limits. It is not imposed by the will of its leaders and parties but is the expression of the dauntless will of the avant-garde class and the exploited and oppressed peoples to invest the results of their labour in the development of society's means of production and to create ideological values for all.

May the idea and the cause of the great October revolution live through the centuries to come! Workers and exploited and oppressed peoples, fight on! Long live the soviet socialist revolution! Workers of the world, unite!"

Leningrad, November 7, 1997



Tram with negligible passengers at Shyambazar 5-point crossing at 10 AM

Spontaneous Mass Support to Bandh Call

(Contd. from page 1)

years. In 1992, under the initiative of SUCI and led by the educationists was built up the Primary Education Development Board. Since then, the Board has been holding primary final examinations at Class IV level in English and other subjects as an alternative, getting lakhs of students every year.

On 17th December 1996 a massive demonstration of one lakh people marched the streets of Calcutta and submitted to the Chief Minister a memorandum on these demands with signatures of 1 crore 12 lakh citizens. It was led

every person. Yet the call reached almost every person. For men talked and discussed Bandh. Whether in organised or unorganised areas, people came forward, many worked even like party activists, and they donated generously. Even CPI(M) supporters openly extended support. Emotion of whole society was roused.

Apprehending the situation, attempts started from different quarters to foil the Bandh. To confuse the people, Congress, Trinamul Congress, and BJP leaders said that they supported the issue, but bandh cannot be supported before election.

The CPI(M) tried to confuse people by issuing a press statement 3 days before Bandh that doors of discussion on the issue of education lies open. It appealed to our party to withdraw the Bandh. But people could not be confused. So lastly through some newspapers threats were made raising questions of legality of Bandh to frighten people.

But when it was felt that this attempt

was going to fail, extensive police arrangements were declared for 3rd February. Accordingly, in Calcutta alone, 7000 police and RAF personnel were deployed. Almost everywhere police arrested SUCI activists who campaigned on the Bandh day.

Male police and RAF personnel barbarously outraged women activists in the name of arresting, something which a civilized man could not even imagine. Some were undressed, clothes of some were torn, police and RAF did not hesitate to crudely molest them and hit them at their delicate parts, while beating them all along. Such were the heinous molestations

that our party moved the West Bengal Human Rights Commission in this context.

Countless incidents of people's support will inspire us always. We like to refer one or two. At Ghatal of Midnapore district when our comrades, a handful only, were arrested and taken to police lockup, they found some boys were already kept there arrested who had campaigned on their own initiative for the Bandh. In North 24 Parganas an aged freedom fighter on Bandh day emotionally hugged our comrades and said that he could not sleep last night in anxiety and that day he was the happiest to see the successful Bandh.

Everywhere people were jubilant as if something precious, long lost, has been found. Many people demanded of our comrades sweets as a celebration. Many people offered sweets themselves. All these made the vested interests angry, and after the Bandh they started a new campaign against our party through some newspapers. They are even forgetting propriety of language and making contradictory comments. When other parties call bandh even on trivial issues, these newspapers do not get angry. Their wrath and apprehension are against mass movement, mass uprising that could shake the base of exploitative system.

3rd February Bandh has proved that people's power is most important. Our party always upheld the necessity of people's power and this time also has appealed to people to organize conventions and meetings concerning issues in all spheres of life and evolve next programmes, build up people's committees, form volunteer corps. When people will thus be able to develop their own power, it will become invincible, which no oppressive and cunning ruler can destroy.

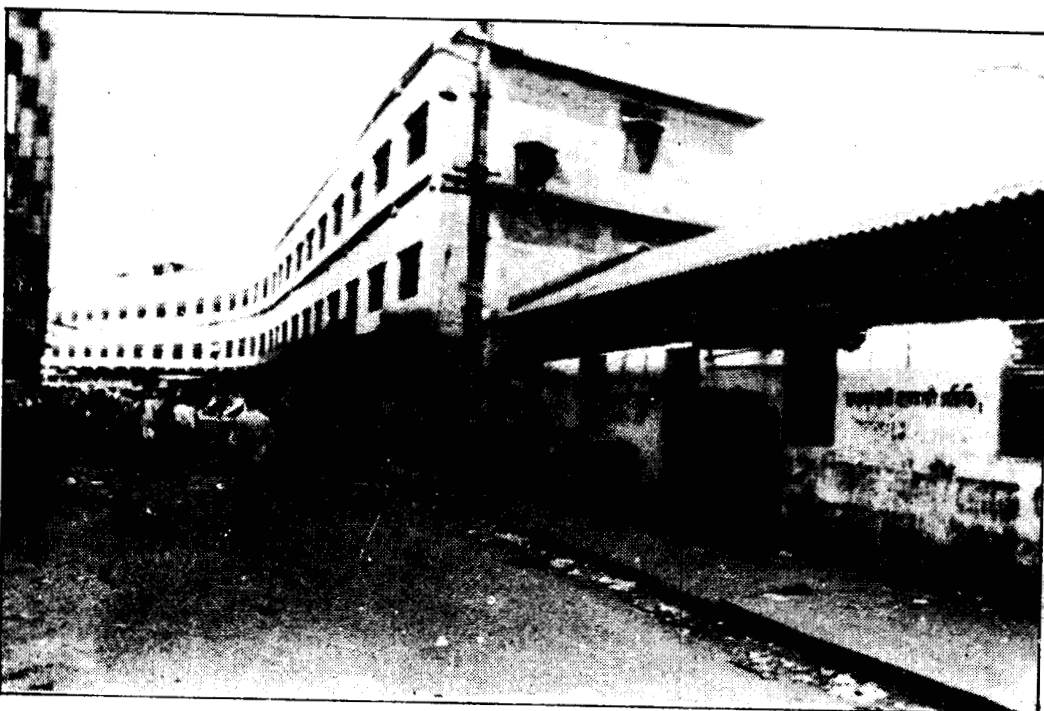


Hill Court Road in Siliguri at 11-30 AM completely deserted

by Dr Sushil Kr Mukherjee, former Vice-chancellor, Calcutta University, Dr Arabindanath Basu, former Vice-chancellor, Jadavpur University, Prof. Sunanda Sanyal and other educationists.

Since the government did not respond to it even in an year, our party served it with an ultimatum, ignoring which led to the Bangla Bandh call.

Propaganda of Bandh was intensive and extensive. Our activists reached people everywhere with the Bandh appeal. On streets, on village paths, at markets, at houses, at offices, schools and colleges, at clubs, at workers' union offices, and where not. Yet our organisational strength is not that strong by which we can reach



Mangalahaat in Howrah, one of the biggest cloth market in Asia at 12-15 PM



A female comrade tortured by police on Bandh Day

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Message

(Contd. from page 1)

reactionary forces clearly shows the profound political significance of this Bandh. The vested interests and the reactionary forces know it too well that if the movement against the conspiracy to loot the country by keeping the people blind in the darkness of ignorance takes the form of mass upheaval then their existence will be at stake. So they are against real education. This is why this message is to be conveyed to all sections of the people - "Save education, Save the country". It is because of this message conveyed through the 3rd February Bandh that this attack of the ruling class is launched.

In the decades of last fifties and sixties Calcutta was a city of nightmares and city of processions in the eye of Nehru. The 3rd February Bandh has transformed the entire state of West Bengal into a state of nightmares to the ruling class.

But despite all these the spontaneous jubilation and self confidence everywhere of all sections of the people can not be dampened after the Bandh. Because they have seen this success with their own eyes. These are some of the remarkable aspects of the 3rd February Bangla Bandh.

But this success could not have been achieved if the members, the applicant members and the supporters at every level did not ceaselessly and untiringly endeavour and work for the last two months to carry the appeal of the Party to all actions of the people by responding to the call of the West Bengal State Committee of the Party. You as the able disciples of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat have set an unprecedented example of propaganda campaign - and through which many workers have shown commendable organisational initiative and skill; for that I convey revolutionary greetings to you. At the same time I must point out that by being inspired by success we must not lose that realization regarding the source of our real strength. The thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, his invaluable teachings on communist culture and values and the revolutionary party built with his own hand are our source of strength. The invincible strength of these has created this trust, support and respect in the mind of the people toward us through long process. At no time we must forget this.

At the same time we must be aware and conscious of our limitations too. This Bandh has shown them. I am mentioning only some important

aspects of them. The workers have succeeded through untiring and sincere work to transform the sympathy of the people into powerful and all out support. But they were not able to give an organised shape to this support in the form of volunteers corps, and people's committees at different levels. And herein lies our main limitation.

The reasons are :

1. We have gone to the people to convey the message of the party - but we have not yet acquired the habit of staying with the people as one of them.

2. We have not been able to give an active shape to the enthusiasm of the people. Because the actual concept and experience of how to make each one active by properly engaging them have not yet developed among our leaders and cadres.

3. In many cases people spontaneously came forward, but we could not give a proper organisational shape by uniting them. Because the lack of the experience and art of making the people active has stood as an obstacle before us.

In a word we have not yet been able to acquire the special art, experience and practice of how to transform the spontaneous mass support into organised participation. Certainly, that the cadres at every level were not trained and experienced for this revolutionary style of work is mainly due to the limitation of the leadership in training them in that way. But still, every conscious revolutionary worker must initiate struggle at his own initiative in his own respective field to overcome this limitation. In this matter as the leaders will have to always help the workers so also the workers will have to acquire the technique of winning over all sections of the people by doggedly remaining with them, by sharing the joys and sorrows of them and by establishing deep-rooted relationship with them.

By reconciling the experience of the past two months with this lesson you can yourself realize that only on rapidly acquiring this practice and style depends the transformation of spontaneous support to organised force - the lack of which is the main limitation of this movement. But in order to carry this movement to the next higher stage you have to rapidly overcome this limitation. So the future depends on you - on your more developed style of work - and above all, on collectively linking in an orderly way at each level the attempt of the party in acquiring this style of work, on the part of the state leadership.

For that the following steps are to be

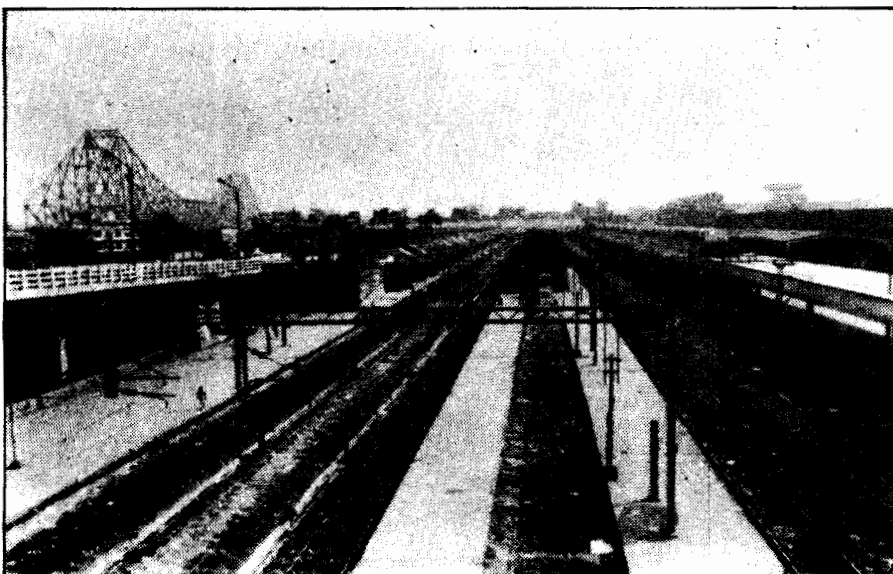
immediately adopted:

1. You have to immediately submit to the state leadership in writing your comments, criticism, self-criticism and advice on the basis of your own realization and experience on our success, failure, defects, limitations and prospects in the matter of organizing this bandh, so that the leadership after meticulously assessing both the defects and the prospects can properly help in the struggle to free ourselves from the defects.

2. Every care is to be taken to involve everyone of those who showed special interest in this movement, and with whom close contact has been established, in each mass movement starting from the language and education movement.

3. In fine, I like to draw your attention to another important subject. It is to be remembered that only by the direction of the leadership the organisational ability of the cadres cannot develop unless ideological standard is constantly raised. So the party tradition of constant cult, discussion, questioning and debates among the cadres, among the cadres and leaders at each level, in each party office and party centre, on the daily experience in implementing the party programme, on political events of the country and abroad, on science and epistemology and on the experience of the internal party life has got to be immediately strengthened. As complementary to the daily political programme, ideological-political cult, study class, school of politics etc. are to be regularly conducted in a living way at every level at the individual and collective initiative. Along with this the leaders and cadres will have to attempt with all cares to draw nearer the inactive workers and supporters through close contact, love and respect. Side by side attempt is to be made to involve the rank and file member of other political parties, in whom some sense of values is still there, but who have reservation about the role of the leadership of their respective party, in the mass movement by developing close contact with them.

But it is to be remembered that the ultimate aim of each of all these organisational steps is to acquire that revolutionary initiative by which we can quickly have the skill to transform the people's support into organised force. Only on your rapid advancement in this struggle depends the future of not only language and education movement, but other movements of West Bengal also. I have this firm conviction that you will embark with full initiative in this determined, ceaseless and conscious struggle. The future is in your hand.



Deserted Platform at Howrah Station at 12 noon



Police tortures a female comrade on Bandh Day

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