

CPI(ML) Condemns Repression on Kashmiri People's Movement

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The CPI(ML) condemns the police firing on the ongoing people's movement in Kashmir. The people are on the streets again in Kashmir against the rape and murder of two young women in Shopian, Kashmir. The rape, murder and subsequent repression has once again exposed the empty boasts of the NC and the Congress-UPA Governments at State and centre, that the Kashmiri people, by voting, have 'rejected' their struggle against the Indian State's repressive policies. The people suspected security forces of having a hand in the rape and murder – a suspicion strengthened by the fact that the police denied the possibility of rape entirely. A week-long movement forced a fresh forensic report to be conducted - which vindicated the movement by confirming rape.

The Government then belatedly ordered an enquiry – which however commands no confidence among the people. The struggle, reminiscent of the Manipuri women's movement after Thangjam Manorama's rape and murder by Assam Rifles personnel soon after the last Manmohan Singh Govt took office, now demands withdrawal of army from Kashmir and scrapping of the AFSPA – necessary preconditions for any freedom and democracy for the Kashmiri people.

The CPI(ML) expresses whole-hearted solidarity with this struggle.

AIPWA's Dharna & Nationwide Programmes to Demand

Release of Arrested Rural Poor in Punjab

Supports Kashmiri Women's Struggle against AFSPA

The All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA) held a dharna at Parliament Street in New Delhi on 9th June, 2009, to protest against the severe repression and mass arrest of Dalit agricultural labourers, women and children in Punjab.

The protesting women from various parts of Delhi were joined by Comrade Bant Singh and some of the women who have been released after several weeks in Punjab's prisons. Bant Singh, the agricultural labour activist from Punjab who survived a murderous assault by rich farmers with three limbs chopped off, said, "The Parliament, led by Mr. Manmohan Singh, boasts of a Dalit woman Speaker. Will this same Parliament and the UPA Government remain silent when Dalit rural poor including women and even children are jailed for demanding basic rights of housing and jobs ? Be it a Congress or BJP Government in Punjab, the struggles of the rural poor have always been answered in the language of repression and mass arrests. The former Congress State Government protected the attackers who disabled me in 2006 ; in 2005 the same Congress Government jailed 2500 poor peasants fighting against usurious extortion."

Manisha Sethi, Assistant Professor, Jamia Millia Islamia, who recently visited Punjab as part of a

women's team to meet the jailed workers also addressed the dharna. and said that "the Punjab government acting at the behest of upper caste landlords, who habitually occupy common land, has acted with vengeance on the Dalit, rural poor who demanded to live in dignity."

A number of women from Punjab villages spoke at the dharna, describing their struggle and their stay in jail, who were separated from young children, and were not even informed where their arrested children were being held. They also said that the AIPWA National Council Member Jasbir Kaur Nat is still being held in Naba jail, and in violation of her rights as a political prisoner, she is being confined along with hardened criminals who are harassing her. AIPWA, in solidarity of the Kashmiri women's struggle, also demanded scrapping of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and withdrawal of the armed forces from Kashmir.

Several other programmes were held by AIPWA in different parts of the country.

Punjab : In Punjab the protest demonstration was held at 15 major places of the State including Jalandhar, Nawashahar, Ludhiyana, Sangrur, Bhatinda, Mansa, Fatehgarh Sahib and Moga. Highlight of the day was a rally and demonstration by three hundred women in Mansa overcoming the intense climate of terror and fear created by the Administration and the Police. However, there was no repressive measure adopted by the Govt. today indicating the movement's growing political status. Meanwhile, the High Court responding to habeas corpus writ filed by us has served notices to the State's Home Secretary and the DC and SP of Sangrur and Mansa. The Dy. CM Mr. Sukhbir Badal while in Noormahal for byelection campaign indicated the Govt. is opening up for dialogue on this whole episode.

Protest was also held in Patna, Bihar jointly by AIPWA and Bihar Mahila Samaj. The organisations also demanded implementation of the 35 percent quota for women and lambasted SP President Mulayam Singh Yadav for his patriarchal and anti-women statement.

P.S.

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