

# **CPI (ML) Polit Bureau Communique after its Patna Meeting**

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**CPI(ML) Polit Bureau met at Patna on May 17-18 to review the latest situation. We are reproducing here some excerpts from the main points which were discussed and decided in this meeting in lieu of Editorial. - ML Update Ed.**

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## **Assembly Election Results**

The results have been on more or less expected lines except that the scale of victory of the Left Front in West Bengal and the DMK-led DPA alliance in Tamil Nadu has come as a pleasant surprise even to LF/DPA supporters.

The grand scale of the Left's victory in West Bengal is attributable partly to the confused, divided and discredited state of the Congress/Trinamool led right opposition in West Bengal and more importantly to significant shifts among urban middle and affluent segments and the rural rich and well-to-do sections in favour of the Left Front. While the growing pro-rich pro-private thrust of the Left Front's policies is jubilantly welcomed by the corporate sector and the mainstream media, elections results have also shown that sections of the rural poor have also started moving away from the Left Front. In Kerala, the CPI(M) managed to improve its performance by rehabilitating the Achyutanandan faction that had earlier been marginalized in the party and by successfully making inroads in traditional Muslim League strongholds.

In Assam, the Congress has managed to return to power despite considerable popular anger against its misrule and acute alienation from its traditional Muslim voters. The party obviously benefited from divisions in the AGP and the erstwhile AGP-BJP alliance and the Gogoi government's shrewd handling of most tribal organizations and extremist outfits operating in the state. In Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK did significantly improve its position compared to the total rout it had suffered in the Lok Sabha elections two years ago, but the DMK led alliance won an emphatic victory with an attractive package of pro-poor poll promises.

Contrary to the Congress claims about the results vindicating the UPA and its policies, the election results indicate a growing popular disillusionment with the UPA's pro-imperialist economic and foreign policies. Even in West Bengal, one can discern a growing restlessness and resentment among large sections of the working people, especially amidst the rural poor, over the Left Front government's growing policy shift towards a pro-rich pro-private pattern of development.

On its part, the CPI(M) has promised increased intervention in national politics without in any way rocking the UPA boat. With the BJP facing a continuing organizational crisis and ideological-political confusion, conditions are of course becoming more and more favourable for a powerful assertion of

the Left. The CPI(M)-led Left Front cannot however foot the bill remain increasingly preoccupied with a faster and more comprehensive implementation of the UPA agenda of liberalization, privatization and globalisation in West Bengal and Kerala. While strengthening our oppositional role in the specific contexts of different states, we will have to make the best use of the developing situation to intensify mass struggles against the UPA's pro-rich pro-imperialist policies.

### **On the Victory of the Democracy Movement in Nepal**

Polit Bureau has congratulated the people of Nepal and the communist and other Left and democratic forces who led the people for winning major victories in the recent pro-democracy movement in Nepal. The mass upsurge on the streets of Kathmandu and in many other parts of Nepal that forced the US-backed autocratic monarch to beat a retreat and reconvene the very Parliament he had arrogantly dismissed holds inspiring lessons for popular revolutionary movements in many parts of the world and especially for us in India and South Asia. The parliamentary proclamation stripping the king of most of his existing powers derives its strength from the vigorous and vigilant assertion of people's power on the streets of Kathmandu.

By all means Nepal is poised for a democratic leap forward, and we will continue to extend our full support to the communists and progressive democratic forces of Nepal as they advance the cause of people's democracy through the present juncture of bourgeois-democratic reform. The Indian Government's pro-monarchy stand was widely criticized in Nepal and the government has subsequently adjusted its policy in keeping with the changing situation in Nepal. While supporting the popular struggle for a democratic republic in Nepal we must remain watchful about the US imperialist design on Nepal and any possible Indo-US partnership in this regard. The traditional people-to-people ties between India and Nepal must be strengthened further on the common basis of a shared anti-imperialist commitment and quest for genuine democracy and social transformation in both India and Nepal.

### **On the Issue of Reservation in Institutions of Higher Education**

The proposal of reservation for students of backward castes in medical colleges and some other institutions of higher and specialized education has evoked strong sentiments among medical students. While rejecting all arrogant elitist arguments that oppose any move to increase opportunities for students from socially and educationally backward sections in the name of respect for merit, the PB demands that the government supplement its proposal for reservation with creation of more seats at affordable fees.

The growing commercialization of higher education - the exorbitant hikes in fees and provision of admission in private colleges and institutes by payment of huge capitation fees - is already excluding many meritorious students from all castes. In other words, the present system perpetuates social injustice and inequality and rewards money and influence and not merit as is wrongly argued by anti-reservation ideologues. The answer therefore lies in reservation and other measures of affirmative action for all underprivileged and disadvantaged sections, including immediate creation of more affordable opportunities to accommodate aspiring students from all backgrounds.

The PB strongly condemns incidents of brutal police crackdown on agitating students - whether for or against reservation, in Mumbai, Delhi and Patna. Instead of making piecemeal announcements according to political convenience the government must come up with a holistic policy and comprehensive package in consultation with all concerned sections.

### **On the Prevention of Disqualification (Amendment) Bill**

The UPA government has come up with an amendment to the Act under which Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan had recently lost her Rajya Sabha membership for simultaneously holding an office of profit. The proposed amendment retrospectively exempts a large number of posts from being treated as offices of profit for the purpose of the Act, thereby saving all the MPs across the political spectrum who had been charged with violating the existing Act. While Parliament has every right to make and amend laws, such retrospective legislation aimed at saving lawmakers charged with violation of existing laws sets a dangerous precedent and makes a mockery of the whole notion of legal equality. The PB therefore expresses strong objection to this opportunist piece of legislation.

### **On Supreme Court Verdicts on Narmada and Slum Demolition in Delhi**

The PB has described recent Supreme Court verdicts on the Narmada rehabilitation and Delhi slum demolition issues as two major blows at people's right to livelihood and human dignity. By allowing dam construction work to proceed even as government's own reports testified to near absence of rehabilitation for the people already displaced by the project, the apex court has gone back on its earlier insistence on providing rehabilitation before causing any further displacement. The SC verdict would clearly embolden governments to go-ahead with large-scale displacement campaigns without bothering about any kind of rehabilitation. In the eyes of the apex court, the displaced people have now been reduced to a dispensable lot. Similarly, in another obnoxious verdict, the SC has described slum-dwellers as illegal encroachers who need to be thrown out by all means. The democratic opinion in the country must challenge such verdicts that run counter to the basic parameters of natural and social justice and the inalienable right to livelihood and human dignity.

### **On Reinstatement of Justice Amir Das Commission**

The PB has strongly condemned the Nitish Kumar government's decision to abandon the Amir Das Commission set up in the wake of the infamous Laxmanpur-Bathe massacre (December 1997) to probe the political links of the feudal private army Ranvir Sena. The commission had served notice to several top leaders of the BJP, JD(U), RJD and Congress. While Nitish Kumar has sought to dismiss the demand for restoration of the Commission as an emotive issue for the CPI(ML), Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Modi has described the formation of the Commission as a politically motivated and flawed move. The PB appeals to democratic forces in Bihar and all over the country to mount pressure on the Nitish Kumar government to restore the Commission and ensure an early publication of the Commission's report.

### **Resisting Jharkhand Government's Witch-hunt against CPI(ML) Leaders**

In March 2001 the Jharkhand Committee of the CPI(ML) had organized a protest demonstration before the newly formed Jharkhand Assembly demanding action against guilty police officials who had killed eight tribal protesters opposing the NDA government's move to resume the controversial Koel Karo project. The protest demonstration was led by Party General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya. Jharkhand police not only ill-treated and arrested Comrade Dipankar and other leaders and resorted to brutal lathicharge to disperse the protesters but also slapped a false case on six persons including Comrade Dipankar leveling a host of criminal charges including charges of attempted murder!

In spite of countrywide protests, the case has not been dropped even as the NDA government has withdrawn all cases pertaining to the Ram Janambhoomi campaign and the Jharkhand movement. And now the case has been transferred to a fast track court in Ranchi and charges have been framed under several sections including Section 307 and Section 17 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

This is not only a continuation of the Jharkhand government's sinister witch-hunt against the

CPI(ML) and its leadership, but it marks a brutal authoritarian assault on the very right to protest. The CBI team probing Comrade Mahendra Singh's assassination has found the police guilty of violating all standard norms after the assassination even as Dipak Varma, the erstwhile Giridih SP and one of the prime accused in the murder case, continues to be protected by the Jharkhand government from any punitive legal or administrative action. Now if the Jharkhand government and its police are allowed to get away with this fascistic experiment of framing leaders and activists of the democratic movement, there will be no democratic means left to oppose even police brutalities like the Topkara and Kalinganagar massacres. The PB calls upon the entire Party and all progressive democratic organizations and individuals to rise in protest against this vindictive and autocratic attitude of the BJP-led Jharkhand government and demand immediate and unconditional withdrawal of this false case.

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