

# India: Condemn the killings of CPI(M) activists, stand up for democratic rights for all

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Pradip Ta and Kamal Gayen, two Burdwan district CPI(M) leaders, the former an ex-Member of the Legislative Assembly, were killed as the result of an armed attack by Trinamul Congress forces, in a clear case of mob lynching. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has immediately announced (it is her habit to announce immediately, without waiting for investigations by her own police force) that the real issue was factional conflicts in the CPI(M). She has also let us know that there were many criminal cases against Ta.

Revolutionaries have to take a clear stand on this. We say this because a number of arguments will be trotted out.

First, it will be said that the CPI(M) in its day (years, actually) had also killed opponents. This is quite true. But in a bourgeois democracy, the worst victims of violations of law as well as of the bias in the law are the toiling people. While we admit that bourgeois democracy is inadequate, indeed while we make our best efforts to explain to working people that bourgeois democracy is primarily democracy for the bourgeoisie and an instrument to exercise bourgeois hegemony over toilers, workers, agricultural labourers and poor peasants, we do not say or act in any way that suggests that presence and absence of bourgeois democracy does not matter to us. And if we demand implementation of the promises of democratic rights made by bourgeois democracy we cannot say that it should be implemented selectively, for those we like.

Second, it has been said, by the CM, and will be repeated by her acolytes, that not the TMC but internal conflicts of the CPI(M) are responsible. This does not matter at all, apart from being an evident untruth. If it was an internal conflict, why did the police not intervene till people died?

Third, it will be argued that we are taking up the issue because district level leaders have been killed. Our response is, we for our part have taken up issues, whenever they have come up. We have rejected the violence, including killings, on Maoist party members and sympathisers. But we reject any argument that says till you prove that you had condemned every case of violence you have no right to condemn one case.

So rightwing is the present government, so anti-people its policies, including attacks on trade union rights, attacks on campus democracy, economic policies that have contributed to a crisis among peasants, that less than a year after being thoroughly annihilated, the CPI(M) has started regaining many of its supporters. We have no illusion in the CPI(M). But nor do we agree with the false and pernicious theory of social fascism, according to which the CPI(M) is a fascist party and so worse than the TMC and others. It is an unfortunate reality that even now it commands much support among the working class. Attacks on the CPI(M) on the eve of an all India general strike have to be taken as parts of an attack on the general strike itself. It is in the class interest of every class conscious worker to defend the CPI(M) against such attacks, not because we want the CPI(M) restored to its pre 2007 position, but because we want the rights of all workers. In a workers'

democracy, it is the working people who will extend democracy, and who will decide by their freely given vote which parties will be allowed in a workers' democracy.

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