

In defense of Dipankar Bhattacharya and his comrades

India: Appeal for solidarity meets widespread support

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There has been a wave of support within India and internationally to an the appeal for solidarity by the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist Liberation) against the recent persecution of its general secretary, Dipankar Bhattacharya, and four other members, which include the charge of attempted murder for their participation in peaceful protests in 2001.

In Bihar state, five parties - including the Communist Party of India, the CPI (Marxist) and CPI (Marxist-Leninist) - sent a joint protest letter in defence of the five accused. A three-day protest against the charges began on June 13 in Ranchi, Jharkhand state, attended by many well-known personalities from across the political spectrum. It was preceded by protests in many localities in the week before.

On June 15, a public meeting was held in Delhi where many prominent pro-democracy personalities spoke, including writer Arundhati Roy. She remarked: "The concept of the Indian democracy is the biggest publicity scam of this century. Holding elections every five years doesn't necessarily mean that our country enjoys a democracy."

Similar protest meetings were also held in Patna (Bihar) and Kolkata (West Bengal) on June 15, followed by more protest meetings on June 26.

Leaders from All-India Trade Union Congress, the Trade Union Coordination Committee, the Confederation of Indian Trade Unions sent letters in support of the accused.

Hundreds of individuals and left-wing parties outside India also lent their support. These included the Labour Party Pakistan, the People's Democratic Party in Indonesia, the Revolutionary Communist League in France, the socialist youth organisation Resistance and the Democratic Socialist Perspective in Australia, the International Socialist Organization in the US, the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, and Europe Solidaire Sans Frontieres.

P.S.

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