



# MIL Update

A CPI(ML) Weekly News Magazine

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## Party MLAs Abstain During Rabri's Confidence Motion in Bihar

The six Members of Legislative Assembly in Bihar abstained from voting in the house on 16 March when the Confidence motion was brought by Rabri government in the Assembly. During the debate our MLAs opposed the motion and declared that they would consistently play the role of Left opposition within the Assembly. Sensing their defeat, the NDA MLAs had walked out of the House. However, 4 MLAs of CPI chose to vote against the motion that was carried by 166-4.

Party General Secretary Com. Dipankar Bhattacharya said that CPI(ML) and CPI, while opposing the RJD-Congress government in Bihar, will work for strengthening "Left Opposition". He said that from the way this government has come into existence following a compromise between RJD and Congress, one can easily discern the pressure of feudal forces as well as signals from the World Bank. He said that Laloo Yadav has erected the edifice of RJD-Congress coalition government on the corpse of social justice, only after betraying the heritage of 1974 movement.

In a press conference held earlier at the Parliamentary Office of the CPI(ML), 20 Windsor Place in New Delhi on 15 March, Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya said, "the ongoing appeasement of Congress by RJD and nomination of notorious mafia dons like King Mahendra for Rajya Sabha mark the increasing formalisation of Laloo Prasad's heinous compromise with the forces of feudal reaction in  
..... *contd. on p.3*

## Denounce Imperialist Clinton and His Saffron Collaborators!

His days in the White House may be truly numbered. His own Senate may have refused to ratify his charter of nuclear hegemony known as the CTBT. His unabashed exhibition of superpower arrogance vis-a-vis countries like Iraq, Cuba and several other small and weak countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America may have earned him the title of the world's most hated policeman or number one terrorist. His venom against every non-Western civilisation and culture, especially Chinese, Asian or Islamic, may be soaked in the stinking solution of Western cultural imperialism. His policies of treacherous trade and plunderous globalisation may be creating havoc in large parts of planet Earth, evoking angry and loud protests even in his familiar Western turf from Seattle to Davos. But when he decided to make a five-day trip to India, his saffron hosts in Indraprasth started leaping in comprador ecstasy!

For the last few weeks, ordinary citizens of Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Agra and Hyderabad - centres included in the Clinton itinerary - and virtually the entire country have been hijacked by a Clintonised Indian administration. Beggars have been brutally evicted, jhuggis have been demolished in thousands and even entire roads and beaches and skies have been reserved for the Clinton entourage. Managers of the print and visual media have also been busy marketing this incredible craze for everything with even the remotest of connections with the Clintons. It is however not surprising that in their desperate bid to showcase India, the rulers have chosen the greatest care to insulate the guests from any close encounter with Indian democracy! Almost everywhere, public protests have virtually been banned by an overzealous administration and then neatly blacked out by its partners in the press.

What will be the upshot of the Clinton visit for his saffron hosts? Their best attempts to get Washington to declare Pakistan a terrorist state continued to end in utter failure. By including Pakistan in his South Asia itinerary, if only for a four-hour stopover, Clinton has put paid to the saffron plans for outmanoeuvring Pakistan with US assistance. The BJP's surrender on CTBT is now almost an open secret, care is only being taken to delink it from the Clinton visit. A suggestive Vajpayee made it abundantly clear only the other day when he said his government would not sign CTBT under pressure, laying special emphasis on the clause "under pressure". Don't we know that for allowing your arms to be freely twisted, the bully often rewards you with a patronising pat on your back?

Beyond CTBT and cross-border terrorism, the NDA government is actually hoping to emerge as the largest American client in Asia and also get a few dollars more of American investment in the process. What a grand vision of strategic partnership? The Sangh managers also hope to use the Clinton example for their own domestic agenda of constitutional review and introduction of a US-style presidential system and, more crucially, a "nationalist" political culture patterned on the American tradition of McCarthyism - rabid anti-communism

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## 8th March Observed with Working Women Rally at Guwahati

*Sadau Asom Pragatishil Nari Santha* (SAPNS) the Assam Unit of AIPWA observed International Women's Day by holding a women's rally at Guwahati. A procession of more than 1,200 women, most of them tea gardens workers, was brought out, which after covering the main route of Guwahati city ended in a mass meeting held at Dighali Pukhri Par. The meeting was addressed by Com. Kanaklata Dutta, Secretary of SAPNS, Com. Brij Pradhan, Secretary of Asom Sangrami Chah Sramik Sangh, Sonamoni Garh, Mira Tanti and Mamoni Ghatowar, all tea garden women activists, Rongdoi Terangpi of KNCA and Pankaj Das of CPI(ML).

While condemning the State Govt. for holding Budget session on 8 March, the meeting demanded that the Govt. must declare 8 March as holiday. The meeting also addressed to the most burning issues of tea garden women workers including wages, maternity leave, 33% reservation, legislation for agrarian workers and life term imprisonment to the rapist.

### Dharna at Dispur

A dharna was organised jointly by Karbi Nimso Chingthur Asong and Karbi Anglong Committee of AIPWA in Dispur on 8 March to protest against starting the Budget session of State legislature on International Women's Day. Leaders of the State Committee of Sadau Asom Pragatishil Nari Santha and KNCA leaders including Junu Bora, vice president of SAPNS addressed the demonstrators.

### Seminar at Diphu on Women's Rights

A seminar on women's rights organised by Karbi Anglong Committee of AISA was held at Diphu Club on 10 March. Comrade Naren Borah was the main speaker who dwelt on the subject matter and later several speakers also spoke, including Com Jotsna Katharpi of AIPWA, Pratima Inghipi, Gen. Secy of KNCA, Dibyojyoti Sarma, president of state AISA unit and Raju Ghosh of AICCTU.

## Clinton's Effigy Burnt at ITO

CPI(ML) supporters and activists burnt the effigy of Bill Clinton on 19 March at various places throughout the country. In New Delhi, the effigy was burnt at ITO crossing despite the massive deployment of police force there. The procession to oppose Clinton's India visit was led by Com. Ranjit Abhigyan, member of Central Secretariat, Kavita Krishnan and Sunil Yadav, president and general secretary of AISA, Jeeta Kaur of AIPWA, Himmat Singh of AICCTU, Ravindra Sharma, and other AISA leaders. Processionists were shouting, "Hobnobbing of BJP and Clinton is the instrument of national sell out", "imperialist pirate, go back".

In Lucknow, party supporters and activists burnt the effigy of Bill Clinton in front of Vidhan Sabha on 19 March.

### Denounce Imperialist Clinton

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and systematic witch-hunt of Leftists and progressive elements in every sphere of the state and civil society! Above all, the Sangh sees the Clinton visit as the single biggest legitimisation of India's saffron regime. All Indian compradors are bound to feel proud of the greatest international honour and recognition that they believe has now been bestowed on this independent nation of fifty years and the BJP will try and market it as an exclusively saffron success story! The saffronites may be the poorest defenders of swadeshi, but haven't they just proved to be the strongest seducers for the US!

Real patriots could have of course only felt offended by the reprehensible hype over the Clinton visit. If the visit itself has been detrimental to our national interests, the nauseating display of the Great Indian Colonial mindset has only added enormous insult to that injury. The anti-imperialist protests sponsored by the CPI(ML) and other Left organisations and patriotic citizens have only sought to save the nation's dignity and patriotic legacy from the imperialist marauders and their saffron collaborators.

## Jobless Growth

In the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, 16 March, Prime Minister Vajpayee agreed that joblessness had reached "really alarming" levels. In his usual fashion, Mr. Vajpayee blamed the rising population level and said that his government had a plan to create "one crore new jobs every year".

"How are they going to create these jobs? Can Vajpayee force the private sector to employ people? In the past too, governments have pretended to do something but nothing has happened", said Prof. BB Bhattacharya of Institute of Economic Growth. He observed that the employment situation is getting "explosive". "Jobless growth" has reached India in the right earnest.

Jayati Ghosh of JNU is equally dismissive of Vajpayee's claim. Unless public expenditure on the social sector and infrastructure in rural areas increases and policies hunting small scale industries are revised, she argues, employment will not increase.

According to the Planning Commission, the growth rate of employment in the organised sector has declined from 1.44% in 1991 to 0.46% in 1998. ILO economist Ajit K Ghosh ridiculed the official version of the national unemployment rate as 2-3% and argues that the effective rate of unemployment was around 12%. "One striking fact", he notes, "is that the incidence of poverty is far higher than the rate of unemployment, however measured" (In fact many of those counted as employed are engaged in very low productivity and low-income activities).

According to Jayati Ghosh, "the situation has got even worse. Non-agricultural employment in rural areas, which had earlier begun to increase, has now registered an absolute decline. In urban areas, she says, "the elasticity of employment is close to zero, i.e., 'higher output' is not leading to more jobs."

And finally, there has been a big increase in casual labour and a fall in the labour force participation rate.

Is this not a growth of unemployment, poverty and national sell-out!

*(Based on a TOI report, 18-3-2000)*

## Yankee Worshipers of the World, Unite!

The left parties' decision to stage demonstration against the US President Bill Clinton's India visit and boycott of his address to the joint session of Parliament has earned scathing remarks from both Congress and BJP. While the Congress has called it "regrettable, reprehensive and irresponsible", the BJP vice president JP Mathur has termed it as "improper".

Thanks to Mr. Clinton, the unity of US worshippers has got unmasked once again. It is the Congress which had fallen in line with America's 'New World Order' in the 90s and introduced globalisation and liberalisation. It is this rightward shift of Indian economy which prepared the soil for the rise of BJP. And now, the Swadeshi-type Yankee worshippers have beaten the Congress in their own game.

Indian working class and democratic intelligentsia have a long-standing tradition of fighting imperialism, particularly US imperialism, the number one enemy of the world people today. CPI(ML) has a glorious history of leading people in their anti-US, anti-imperialist movement and in the past, neither bullets nor bayonets of Congress regimes could stop them. Along with other Left parties as well as democratic organisations, Party will continue to lead this movement with a renewed vigour braving saffron fascist attacks.

### Party MLAs Abstain ...

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Bihar. He said that while playing a role of consistent opposition within Bihar Assembly, CPI(ML) will intensify all round democratic struggles around the assertion of the poor and advancement of Bihar. He also declared that there was no CPI(ML) nominee in the ongoing Rajya Sabha election and our MLAs would not cast their vote in favour of any candidate.

He also said that following the retreat of BJP in Bihar and on the RSS issue in Gujarat, Party calls upon all the democratic forces to mount pressure on the government for rolling back budget hikes in fertilizer and PDS prices.

## Struggle Against Attack on Dalits in Tamil Nadu

In Eriyodu of Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu, Party branch organised a fast on 15 February against attack on Dalits in the area, in which about 2500 people participated from 30 villages. In this area Nadars, an economically powerful middle caste business community, are trying to instigate attacks on Pallars (Dalit) with the help of an aggressive middle caste fascist organisation, Mukkualthore, powerful in Southern districts. Its head, Rajendran, a local rowdy, has declared to attack Pallars of Meenakshipuram village of Eriyodu, which has been our traditional stronghold. Rajendran with his gang attacked the fasting comrades. His attempt to disrupt the protest was thwarted by the people. Then Rajendran went to attack Pallars in Meenakshipuram. Our people fought back there too and repulsed the attack.

Subsequently Rajendran was arrested because of people's pressure. A four-member team of our party met the Collector and demanded that normalcy be restored by punishing the culprits. The threat still persists and we have made proper security arrangements to defend dalit people in Meenakshipuram.

## AIPWA Convention on Capital Punishment to Rapists

AIPWA organised a Convention on Capital Punishment for Rapist on March 11 in Chennai, in which representatives of NFIW, Women Struggle Committee and rural women movement participated.

Com. Shanthakumari of NFIW emphasised that there should be no capital punishment for Rapist as it may lead to under reporting of rape cases as well as killing of rape victims. Com. Palayam of Women Struggle Committee demanded that special courts should be constituted to try rape cases. Janani, a student of Stella Mary's College, who got the first prize in the essay competition conducted by *Sooryodaya* (A discussion forum organised by AIPWA), said though that the rapist should not be punished with capital punishment, he must be awarded an exemplary punishment that

would make him realize the pain a victim suffers everyday.

Com. Bhuvana, AIPWA State Organizer, stressed that nowadays rape is utilised as a political tool by the state machinery to suppress women's participation in the struggle for their emancipation and in general democratic struggles. It is used to force women back to the four walls of the house and remind them of "their place".

Addressing the gathering Com. Kumarasamy, CC member, dealt on the ongoing debates on this topic the world over. Com. Usha, Chennai District Secretary presided over the convention.

In Komarapalayam, a hall meeting was held on 'Women in Politics' in which powerloom women workers participated. Com. Rajeswari, District President of AIPWA presided over the meet. Com. Bhuvana, Com. Thenmozhi and Com. Govindaraj addressed the gathering. Women belonging to Dravidar Kazhagam also attended the meeting. In Thiruvallur district, a demonstration was held demanding passage of Women's reservation bill, prevention of violence on women, state oppression on fighting women, ban on illicit liquor and against price rise.

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## Anti-imperialist Day to be Observed in Rajasthan

On 23 March, Bhagat Singh's Martyrdom Day, Rajasthan unit of CPI(ML) will observe Anti-Imperialist Day at Jaipur jointly with CPI, CPI(M), MCPI and various other democratic mass organisations. The day long programme will be held at Shahid Smarak where cultural programmes, including several street plays, will be performed.

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### Petro Price Hike

Petroleum Minister Ram Naik on Friday said a decision on the hike in prices of kerosine and LPG will be taken in a week. Naik said a decision would have been taken during the Parliament session itself but had to be deferred as both houses were being repeatedly adjourned and Prime Minister Vajpayee was also out of station for some time.

### Cultural Meet Against Fascist Attack on Culture

A large number of intellectuals and social activists gathered in Chandigarh on 4 February to protest against Sangh fascist attack on the set of Film *Water* in Varanasi. Demonstrators were carrying placards with anti-fascist slogans. They formed a human chain for two hours to express their solidarity with struggling cultural workers. The public meeting was addressed by renowned cultural personalities Gurusharan Singh, Dr. Sahib Singh, Dr. MS Randhawa, Gen. Secy. of Janwadi Chetana Manch, Ms Poonam Sumit, editor of *Preet lari*, Dr. Harjinder Singh Lekhi, secretary of Punjab University Teachers Association, Sardara Singh Cheema, convenor of *Sahit Chintan* and Prof. HS Mehta. The rally called upon the conscious citizens to rise in defence of democracy, secularism and right to freedom of expression and isolate the forces of communalism, fundamentalism, fascism and right reaction and demanded the government to take stern action against these reactionary elements and provide

***The next, i.e., 29 March issue of ML Update will not be published. Inconvenience regretted.***

### March in Solidarity with Sweatshop Workers

Labor rights advocates demonstrated on March 4 in New York to celebrate the week of International Women's Day and build support for women workers' struggles to organize against sweatshop conditions.

The protesters rallied at The Gap, Old Navy, and the New York University bookstore, which sell products made in sweatshops. The march ended with a rally at Greene and Washington Place, the site of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in which nearly 150 women garment workers lost their lives.

The Gap has refused to accept responsibility for ensuring that workers are paid the necessary living wage. In Saipan, a U.S. territory replete with sweatshops, Gap does the most business of any company on the island over \$200 million a year, contracting in six factories. These companies import without tariff or quota restrictions and label their clothes "Made in the USA," but do not adhere to U.S. labor laws.

Gap factory workers are subjected to forced pregnancy tests, forced overtime, exceedingly high production goals, locked bathrooms, and wages of \$4 a day, which only meet one-third of their basic needs. If workers try to organize a union or even become more informed of their rights, they are fired.

At the final stop on the march route, participants saluted NYU's March 2 announcement that it would join the Worker's Rights Consortium, a non-profit organization that supports and verifies licensee compliance with production codes of conduct. These codes have been developed by colleges

and universities across the country to ensure that goods are produced under conditions that respect the basic rights of workers.

In 1911, a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company killed 146 garment workers in New York City. It became a catalyst that helped to end the commonplace abuse of workers in the United States. Days after the fire, over 80,000 people took part in the funeral procession up Fifth Avenue. Eventually, the groundswell of support led to safer workplaces.

### L'affaire Gurudas

"The decision not to renominate Gurudas Dasgupta to the Rajya Sabha despite his proven competence as an effective parliamentarian in the Upper House would deprive Parliament of the services of a highly articulate champion of the toiling masses....

It is for the two communist parties to resolve the problems which this development has caused in the relations between CPI and CPI(M). But that the Left as a whole has suffered as a result of the West Bengal Left Front's failure to renominate Mr. Dasgupta is beyond dispute.

However, an ominous dimension to this episode has been added by the press reports indicating the hyperactive role a prominent business house played in preventing Mr. Dasgupta's reentry into the Rajya Sabha on account of his tireless exposure of its wrongdoing. These reports, if found to be true, are a matter of serious concern as they testify to the growing links between business and politics even within the Left. Hence these reports demand a comprehensive investigation.

-- Sumit Chakravarty, Anil Nauria,  
Ravi M. Bakaya, Suhas Borker