



# MIL Update

A CPI(ML) Weekly News Magazine

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## CPI(ML) Opposes BALCO Disinvestment, Demands Its Rollback

Strongly opposing the Govt.'s decision of disinvesting Bharat Aluminium Ltd. Company, Party demanded immediate rollback of the decision and also scrapping the Disinvestment Commission and Disinvestment Ministry. The Party said that "Vajpayee Govt. is squandering away all the vital national assets built over the years with the toil and talent of the country for a song. Such decision of the government amounts to national self-destruction." Party said that "experience has proved that disinvestment is yet another means of promoting corruption in economy and politics"..

It is to be noted that the government has announced to transfer 51% of its shares in BALCO to Sterlite for a little over Rs.550 crores, whereas the establishment cost of the company was estimated to be Rs.3,600 crores. The opposition has alleged opaqueness in methodology of the transfer and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Ajit Jogi has alleged that Rs.100 crores have been paid in kickbacks. The BALCO deal has raised a storm in Parliament as well.

Commenting on the Rail budget, CPI(ML) said that "nothing concrete is there for the upgradation of tracks and other safety and security measures, nor plan to meet the ever-increasing pressure of the passengers.. It is just an eye-wash because only after a few months the fares will be revised upwards."

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## The Reformed Communists of West Bengal

Ten years after the collapse of the Soviet model of socialism and the subsequent mushrooming of 'reformed' communist parties, West Bengal has just got its first party of 'reformed' communism. On February 21, a group of former CPI(M) leaders launched what they have christened as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS).

The new party, however, does not signal an end to the growing malady of dissidence in the West Bengal unit of CPI(M). Speculations are rife as to if and when the sulking strong man of CPI(M), Subhas Chakraborty, would formally decide to quit the party and what course he would adopt. The list of candidates released by the Left Front reportedly contains the names of more than a dozen dissidents known to be close to the PDS leadership or Subhas Chakraborty. The PDS is of course not an exclusive club of CPI(M) dissidents alone. Joining the new formation are dissidents and dropouts from other Left Front partners like CPI, RSP and Forward Bloc.

On a programmatic level, the PDS rejects the very imperative of bringing about a revolution through a violent structural overthrow of the hegemony of capital. In place of an open confrontation between classes, it advocates peaceful coexistence and competition between capital and labour, between the exploiter and the exploited. In the realm of immediate tactics, it advocates a consolidation of secular forces by allying with the Congress. Interestingly, while the PDS has gone only as far as advocating an alliance with the Congress, Subhas Chakraborty is reportedly ready to join hands with the Trinamul Congress. In this, he is 'ideologically' in the same boat as the renegade ML leader Ashim Chatterjee, who now finds the TMC an effective potential ally against communalism!

Whether the PDS would be able to carve out a stable slot for itself beyond the first flush of media glare is anybody's guess. Going by history, the CPI(M) has suffered several minor splits since the 1967-69 rupture between the CPI(M) and the CPI(ML). But from the point of view of the party's electoral strength, the damage has been rather inconsequential. In fact, in terms of their seniority in party hierarchy as well as mass influence and organisational network, the PDS leadership may not really count for much. But the party clearly finds itself much more helpless and handicapped in tackling this split than any other rift in recent times.

The split comes at a time when the CPI(M) is facing its toughest election in West Bengal in nearly three decades as popular resentment runs high against the Left Front government and Jyoti Basu is no longer at the helm. Moreover, over the period the CPI(M)'s official programme and tactical line have moved steadily to the right. So much so that the dissidents only look like forerunners of the current official position and the party's belated ideological outbursts against them ring completely hollow. In fact, all this time while the dissidents were questioning the party's 'conservative' approach, the CPI(M) leadership

... contd. on p.2

## **The Reformed communists of W.B. ...**

*... contd. from p.1*

were busy fighting the 'orthodox and dogmatic' sections who had been opposed to the rightist revision of the party's 1964 programme. Organisationally, the party can think of saving its unity only by maintaining a delicate factional equilibrium. No wonder, the dissidents appear to be more authentic products of the party machine except that they are currently in a minority.

The formation of PDS and other related developments in West Bengal politics cannot but mark a happy augury for rightwing forces, especially the forces of anti-communist propaganda. All sincere activists and well-wishers of the Left movement in the country will also have to draw their own lessons. While rejecting the collaborationist line and defeatist theoretical positions of the PDS leadership, we cannot ignore the conditions underlying the emergence of this phenomenon. The PDS ideologues may have their own fancy theories regarding globalisation and socialism, but if they are able to draw some response it is because their clamour for democracy, transparency and change strikes a responsive chord in a stifling climate of bureaucracy, terror and corruption. In fact, the PDS leaders have started questioning the CPI(M)'s bureaucratic culture and terror tactics only when they have found themselves at the receiving end, and even now they are rather tightlipped about the broader question of political democracy in West Bengal and the terror unleashed by the CPI(M) on revolutionary communists. Just as the PDS amplifies and accelerates the growing rightward tilt of the CPI(M) leadership, it also articulates the mute anguish and rage within CPI(M) against the party's steady degeneration.

## **Anti-Globalisation Forum Launched in Rajasthan**

A meeting of CPI(ML), CPI(M), Samajwadi Party, Samajwadi Jan Kranti Manch, Sarvodaya Party, Bandhuwa Mukti Morcha, etc. was held in Jaipur on 25 February. All the participants decided to launch movement against Centre's agricultural policy. The meeting held that the movement will target the policies of both central and state governments which have resulted in the paradox that on the one hand all FCI godowns are full and on the other people are dying of hunger in this famine-stricken state. The meeting decided to form a coordination committee to carry forward the movement against globalisation, targeting the entry of multinationals. It will mobilise peasants, workers, students and unemployed youth to gherao production centres of MNCs and organise boycott of their products. The committee included Com. Srilata Swaminathan, Than Singh Jatav, ex-MP, Sawai Singh, and others.

### **Fast Against Police Brutality in U.P.**

CPI(ML) State Secretary Com. Akhileendra Pratap Singh began his 72-hour fast at Robertsganj on 26 February to protest the killing of Gulab, a popular left leader in the dalit-tribal dominated region of Sonebhadra-Mirzapur-Chandauli districts, on 8 February in a fake encounter. Meanwhile, a Party State Committee delegation met the Principal Home Secretary and handed over a memorandum, demanding judicial probe into the fake encounter and also unconditional release of AISA state president Rakesh Singh, who was arrested in Lucknow University campus 13 days back while protesting against fee hike and other undemocratic decisions of the administration.

### **'Kamdhenu' staged by Hirawal in Patna**

Hirawal, Patna-based performance team of Jan Sanskriti Manch, staged "Kamdhenu" at Safdar Rangbhumi, Gandhi Maidan in Patna on 25-26 February to collect relief for Gujarat earthquake victims. The play portrays the miseries of people under the dead-weight of nexus of corrupt political class and bureaucracy.

## **AICCTU Wins President Post in ITC Union**

Com. Yogeshwar Gope, veteran Party and AICCTU leader, won the post of president in ITC workers union elections held on 19 February in Munger of Bihar. Com. Gope defeated his nearest rival, Subodh Roy, M.P. of CPI(M) from Bhagalpur, by a margin of more than 600 votes. Other defeated contestants include Ramdev Singh, ex-minister of RJD, and it is significant that the notorious criminal MP of RJD, Md. Shahabuddin had also come to propagate for the RJD candidate.

### **Initiatives in Patna- Jahanabad Belt**

Demanding registration of case under Sec.302 against the killers belonging to Virendra Singh gang for murdering a woman, hundreds of Party activists and sympathisers held a demonstration before Jahanabad Police Station and held street corner meetings at various points in the town. Following this demonstration, police was compelled to start taking action on the FIR.

People encircled the police contingent that had arrested two dalit Party activists near Sorangpur in Pali Police Station of Patna, and freed the activists.

### **JNU AISA Conference**

Held on 25 February, the 7th Unit Conference of AISA discussed the scope of revival of JNU as an ideological-political centre of the student movement with live links with the movements of worker, peasants and other oppressed strata. The conference noted that the AISA will have to redouble its effort to fulfil the expectations of common students of the campus that they have on AISA.

The conference elected Manisha Sethi as President, Anurag Ranjan and Inteshar Ahmed as Vice Presidents, Dhruv as Secretary, Mahendra, Vetrivel and Komalika as Joint Secretaries.

### **AICCTU March in Delhi**

Under the month-long AICCTU campaign from 15 Feb.-15 Mar., a march was taken out and mass meeting was held at Viswas nagar area of Shahdara in Delhi against closure of industries. The march was led by Com. BKS Gautam, Himmat Singh, Shashi Bhushan and Ram Abhilash.

### **Romila Thapar Lambasts Govt. on Education**

BJP and Congress hooligans tried to disturb and sabotage the 78th Annual Convocation of Delhi University on 24 February, which was then being addressed by noted historian Prof. Romila Thapar as chief guest. Members of BJP's teachers' front NDTF and its student wing ABVP also joined the vandals, and later even Congress-led NSUI Union office bearers joined in. They were "protesting" against Prof. Romila Thapar's speech, in which she had stressed the need to forge a link between democracy, education and acquisition of knowledge. She called for bridging the growing divide between the literates and non-literates, that has been accelerated by the technical requirements of education. Unless these disparities are removed, making Indian society democratic would remain a utopian dream, she said. She also denounced the claim of authorities that the education sector was facing a financial crunch. "We have donated a vast sum of money to Oxford University for establishing a chair on Indian History; we have ample funds for financing nuclear bombs, then why don't we have for setting up schools?", she asked". Putting the blame squarely on the government she said that the govt. is reluctant to finance education because it fears an educated and conscious electorate, which would expect accountability from the rulers. She also criticised the advocates of saffron school who are trying to reconstruct history without looking into the more relevant questions.

Almost all the sections of democratic academic community in Delhi have condemned the vandalism by Cong-BJP elements. Party, AISA and Left and Democratic Teachers' Forum (LDTF) deplored the incident terming it an "act of sabotaging academic independence and intellectual freedom."

### **Party Unit in Pondicherry**

A cadre convention was held in Pondicherry on 15 February. It was attended by Polit Bureau member Com. B. Sivaraman, incharge of the state. The convention discussed the tasks in the light of the current political situation and elected a 7-member Leading Team, with Com. Balasubramaniam as its secretary.

### **District Party Conference in Hooghly and Howrah**

7th Hooghly District Conference of CPI(ML) in West Bengal was held on 24th-25th Feb. at Guptipara, Hooghly. Before the conference a well-decorated procession was organised from Behula to Guptipara where it culminated in a mass meeting addressed by com. Animesh Chakraborty, state committee member, Prabir Halder, district secretary, and others. The conference hall was named after Ramshankar Bannerjee, a martyr of 70's in the locality. The conference stressed on three tasks of revitalising the mass work, increasing party intervention in the changing political situation of the district and strengthening the leading role of the party. It also adopted a set of programmes and targets for the coming year and elected a 7 member committee, which re-elected Com. Prabir Halder as secretary.

4th Howrah District Cadre Convention was held at IMA Hall in Howrah town. The conference was inaugurated by Com. Kartick Pal, state secretary, SC member and district in-charge Com. Sudarshan Bose was present in the conference. While discussing the draft document placed by the outgoing committee, delegates came up with various problems on developing mass organisations and mass movements in Workers, Women and Youth front and put forward a number of suggestions. The conference took resolutions to launch a wider propaganda campaign against TMC-BJP combine and the ruling L.F. govt. The convention elected a 7-member leading team with Com. Debabrata Bhakta as Secretary.

### **Party Workshop in Mansa**

A district-level Party cadre workshop was held in Mansa of Punjab on 24-25 February. It was attended by 42 cadres from among peasants, agrarian and urban unorganised labourers and students-youth. Main speaker Com. BB Pandey dealt on Basic tenets of Marxism, Party history, Party line and policies, and present political situation and our tasks. A lively discussion took place after presentation of the ideas. The workshop was conducted by Com. Sukhdarshan Natt.

### **Political Campaign in Necessary for People's Autonomy and Prosperity**

Party has been working in the island territory of Andaman for the past decade among employees and other toiling people. AICCTU has been taking up significant initiatives, particularly in the employees struggle against Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) administration and its autocratic director. Andaman Sanskritik Manch has linked cultural activities to people's struggle through its creative endeavours. Now the Party has taken up a campaign to impart these initiatives a clear political orientation. In this course Com. Swadesh Bhattacharya, who visited Andaman last week, addressed meetings with Party activists and sympathisers on 15-17 February and also addressed a public meeting on 17 February at Port Blair. He emphasised that even after 50 years of freedom, people's autonomy and prosperity is still evading Andaman and Nikobar islands, which continue to remain isolated from the mainland till date in this era of globalisation. Consequently it is the rulers in Delhi who decide the fate of people dwelling in Andaman, and the people here have not been given the right to elect their council. He therefore called for a vigorous political battle for genuine autonomy. It was also necessary to develop a self-sustaining economy in Andaman by making efficient use of natural resources. Industries based on marine and forest resources as well as tourism could flourish here and consequently big number of casual workers can be given regular employment. But to do that a pro-people planning and establishment is necessary. He asserted that CPI(ML) is prepared to lead this political campaign and asked people to unite under its banner. The meetings were also addressed by local Party leaders Com. M Sadasivan, Com. NKP Nair, Com. N. Gopal, and P.R. Karuppaiah and others.

### **CSW Signature Campaign**

Centre of Steel workers in Bhilai has launched a signature campaign against anti-worker wage related policies of NJCS. The charter of demand with signatures will be submitted to Chairman of NJCS and strike will be launched if the management does not meet the demands.

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#### **AISA National Executive Meet**

The National Executive of All India Students Association (AISA) met on 21-22 February at Delhi in which AISA leaders from Assam, UP, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Punjab, Tamilnadu and Delhi, as well as Dimasa Students Union, a federal constituent of AISA, took part. It was also attended by members of the Advisory Board of AISA, comrades Akhilendra Pratap Singh, Dharendra Jha, Kumudini Pati and Pranay. The Executive decided to hold AISA's fourth national conference at Allahabad in August 2001. Towards the conference, AISA will intensify its agitation against fee hikes, privatisation and saffronisation, and will aim to achieve a membership target of 1,00,000.

In order to equip the organisation to prepare for the conference the Executive reorganised AISA's National Council and Executive, and elected Com. Yogesh Pandey, President of Uttarakhand Unit of AISA, as All-India Vice President. A resolution was passed in the meeting demanding that the CBI declare its progress and findings of the enquiry into the killing of Com. Chandrashekhar. A decision was taken that on 31 March this year protests will be organised all over the country and students from Delhi and neighbouring states will protest before the CBI headquarters in Delhi. It was also decided to mobilise students to participate in People's Conference Against Globalisation being held in Delhi on 21-23 March.

#### **State-Level Cadre Meet of AIPWA**

A state-level cadre meet was organised by AIPWA at Chennai on 25 February in which 54 cadres from 7 districts participated. Com. Bhuvana presented a paper titled "Onslaught of globalisation and communal fascism on women: challenges ahead" and Com. Mary on "Organising working women". In the course of preparation towards AIPWA's national conference to be held in Patna on 17-18 March, a convention against liquor will be held at Thiruvalluvar and conventions against violence on women will be held at Madurai, Sivagangai and Pudukottai, conventions on working women will be held in Chennai and Salem. □

In **Rajasthan**, AIPWA state body met on 27 February and discussed the main issue before the conference "Onslaughts of globalisation and communal fascism on women: challenges ahead" and decided to continue its fight against oppression on women and for safeguarding their rights in association with other democratic women's organisations.

#### **Gujarat Earthquake Relief Fund**

##### **Raised by CPI(ML) and its Mass Organisations.**

<b>State</b>	<b>Money (Rs.)</b>	<b>Particulars</b>
Bihar	1,38,336	Handed over to Red Cross Society at Patna
Tamilnadu	20,355	To Relief Agencies at local level
U.P.	11,000	To Red Cross Society at Lucknow
Delhi	2,200	For Sending Team to Bhuj
<b>Central</b>	<b>1,35,092</b>	
<i>West Bengal</i>	<i>36,000</i>	
<i>Bihar salary</i>	<i>44,510</i>	<i>(includes one month's of our Party MLAs)</i>
<i>Delhi</i>	<i>27,470</i>	
<i>Andhra</i>	<i>19,722</i>	
<i>U.P.</i>	<i>7,390</i>	

These apart, our Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) have asked for diversion of Rs. 10,00,000 each from their development funds towards the relief operations in Gujarat

#### **CPI(ML) Paid Homage to Quake victims, Criticised Govt. Callousness and Demanded CM's Resignation**

Paying homage to the memory of people killed in the enormous disaster in the wake of earthquake in Gujarat, CPI(ML) held a condolence meeting in front of District Panchayat Bhawan, Ahmedabad on 26 February. Party Polit Bureau member Com. Swadesh Bhattacharya, Com. Ranjan Ganguli, HJ Pagare, veteran communist Dr. J.D. Vora, Kantilal Dabhi and AISA leader Srikant addressed the condolence meeting. The meeting also expressed anguish over the callousness displayed by the Government in relief and rehabilitation work and demanded resignation of the chief minister of Gujarat. Speakers also demanded a white paper from the government on the relief and rehabilitation work carried out till date and asked the government to institute cases against the notorious builders under Sec.304. In this meeting the Party announced to donate Rs. 1,34,094 towards treatment of quake victims in Bhuj and elsewhere in Gujarat.

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