

UPA Government must either scrap the Deal with the US or quit the Government!"

Pay tribute to Bhagat Singh's memory by intensifying the struggle against imperialist policies of Nuke Deal and SEZs

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CPI(ML)'s Anti-Imperialism March to Parliament against the Nuke Deal was a novel way of paying tribute to Bhagat Singh on the 100th anniversary of his birth. This spirited March had students and youth from all over the country raising Bhagat Singh's trademark slogan of 'Down with Imperialism', and waving colourful placards and banners saying "Scrap the Nuke Deal!" and "No Partnership with US Imperialism". The whole spectacle was marked in contrast to the ritual Centenary celebrations being held jointly by the Prime Minister and various BJP-NDA leaders at Amritsar, which maintained careful silence about Bhagat Singh's revolutionary character and scathing critique of the Indian ruling class leaders whom he called 'brown Britishers'.

At noon, thousands of students and youth – from UP, Bihar, Punjab, Bengal, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi – gathered at Ferozeshah Kotla Grounds. They garlanded the statue of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. Jan Sanskriti Manch's cultural team from Patna, Hirawal, sang rousing revolutionary songs. National President of the Revolutionary Youth Association Mohd. Salim led the assembled students and youth in taking a pledge to uphold the revolutionary anti-imperialist legacy of Bhagat Singh and the martyrs of the 1857 War of Independence and to nurture and cherish the fighting unity of the people of India against communalism, imperialist economic policies and the growing unity of India's rulers with imperialist forces. Following this, the March was flagged off by veteran human rights activist Justice Rajinder Sachar, who reminded that Ferozeshah Kotla was the spot where Bhagat Singh and his comrades had launched their revolutionary organisation – the HSRA. Justice Sachar exhorted young Indians to struggle for a democratic India truly free from exploitation in keeping with Bhagat Singh's dreams.

The March then proceeded towards Parliament Street, ending with a mass meeting at Jantar Mantar. The main speaker at the mass meeting was CPI(ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya. Addressing the gathering Comrade Dipankar said that for Bhagat Singh, freedom did not mean an exchange of white rulers for brown ones. Rather he had called upon Indians to resist imperialism and every kind of exploitation and repression – whether it was inflicted directly by colonial rule or by agents of imperialism in the Indian ruling class. This great martyr who gave up his life to struggle in the freedom struggle, believed true freedom required a revolution. And the sword of revolution, he said, was sharpened on the whetting stone of ideas. Bhagat Singh sharpened his revolutionary determination on the whetting stone of Marx's and Lenin's ideas. Those parties – be they Congress or BJP – which are betraying Bhagat Singh's vision by shackling India's freedom to US imperialism have no right to take the name of Bhagat Singh, he said.

Today, the sun has set on the British empire but the US imperialists have taken their place. Their East India companies of today are demanding land, concessions, water and special zones where Indian laws will not apply. They are once more asking Indian soldiers to fight colonial wars for them;

they want India to be an outpost of their empire in South Asia. It is all too clear that the Nuke Deal will not solve India's energy needs. In the name of the Nuke Deal, the US is actually seeking to make India dependent on it for fuel, and to bind India to its strategic and military design. Any Government interested in defending India's self-respect, security and sovereignty ought to reject the Nuke Deal. The UPA Government, instead, is acting as the spokesperson of the US within India, and is deliberately misleading Indians about the content and character of the Deal. The BJP too is restricting itself to some minor criticisms of the Deal while approving of the overall strategic embrace of the US. Shamefully, the UPA Government is arguing that the Deal does not require ratification by Parliament.

By now, Comrade Dipankar said, there are no grounds for any illusion that the Government is 'pausing' the Deal to please the Left. Rather, Pranab Mukherjee has just yesterday met with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. In this meeting, and at the IAEA meet too, is all too clear that the Government is taking all the steps to clinch the Nuke Deal. No inheritor of Bhagat Singh's legacy can allow a Government which is forcing such a slavish Deal on the Indian people to continue for a single day longer. The UPA Government must pass the test of Bhagat Singh's anti-imperialist nationalism and must scrap the Nuke Deal - or else must quit the seat of power, said Comrade Dipankar. He ended with a rousing call to the people of India to pay true tribute to Bhagat Singh by intensifying their battle against the concrete manifestations of imperialism today: starvation deaths and suicides of peasants, Jallianwala Baghs against peasantry at Kalinganagar, Nandigram, Khammam to make way for SEZs; witch-hunting of today's Bhagat Singhs as 'terrorists'; and the growing intervention and control of the US in the sub-continent and in India in particular.

The mass meeting was conducted by the National President of AISA Indresh Maikhuri; other speakers included the General Secretary of RYA Kamlesh Sharma, Jan Sanskriti Manch leader Madan Kashyap, AICCTU General Secretary Swapan Mukherjee, and AIPWA General Secretary Kumudini Pati.

P.S.

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