

ML Update: 14-20 August 2007

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Scrap the 123 agreement! 'No' to the Status of Dominated Partner of America!

If we had anything to celebrate this 15th August, it should be the 60th anniversary of achieving dominion status, for to be specific that's what our old and new rulers agreed to give us in 1947. Lord Mountbatten remained head of state (Governor General) while British heads of the three services, most British governors and the overwhelming majority of British civilian and military officials continued in office. Anyway, following formal independence India had a stint with nominal non-alignment, built up a diversified industrial base and developed a measure of bargaining capacity vis-à-vis different foreign powers. But beneath all this, old class relations and old ties of economic dependence on imperialism went on reproducing themselves, as did the dominant ideological and socio-cultural trends. The net result after 60 years lies before us.

On the development side, affluent India is certainly shining. Shining like a multi-colour laser show that creates the illusion of virtual reality, against the pitch-dark background of hunger and joblessness, suicides and starvation deaths, ignorance and cultural degradation, resurgence of mediaeval practices and growing class and social oppressions. If this is an inevitable fallout of the neoliberal growth model purchased from the WTO-IMF-WB, that model also has a politico-strategic dimension: the growing integration of the Indian state with the US war machine and the consequent blows to our independence and integrity. The latest instance of such sellout of our vital national interests comes in the shape of the 123 agreement between India and USA. Read in the context of the Hyde Act of the USA, to which this agreement is inextricably linked, the grave economic and strategic implications will be clear. For instance, the provisions of the said Act could be used to terminate the 123 agreement not only if India conducted a nuclear test but also if she failed to conform to the US foreign policy. Moreover, in the 123 agreement the acceptance on India's part of safeguards in perpetuity has been clearly spelt out, but this has not been linked to a guarantee of fuel supply in perpetuity. The threat of a nuclear isolation thus looms large on India.

Combined with other treaties like the June 2005 Defence Framework Agreement and acts of closer diplomatic and military collaboration with the USA — such as the US-sponsored vote against Iran in the IAEA, the impending joint naval exercises with the participation of killer machines like USA Nimitz — the nuclear deal purports to take us back to a new, and worse, dominion status of sorts, this time under American domination. Under the glittering billboard of strategic partnership, India is actually sought to be turned into a dominated partner of the US warmongers.

But this is an eventuality we Indians will resolutely resist. CPI(ML) workers are already on the streets, along with other left, democratic and patriotic forces, protesting against this stinking gift of a treacherous government on the eve of Independence Day. The parliamentary Left has also voiced its opposition to the Nuke Deal. But if they mean it, if they are really to fight to safeguard the nation's independence, they must first win political independence for themselves by breaking the shackles of strategic partnership with the Congress, the architect of the scandalous nuclear deal. It is clear that the Prime Minister has reneged on the promises he had made to the nation in this regard on the floor of the parliament; to continue to support him will be a treachery to the nation.

Masquerading as liberators, the Congress leadership in 1947 hijacked the hard-won harvest of people's prolonged battles to foist on us a semi-colonial state with inbuilt tendencies towards deeper integration with imperialism. We must not allow it to play the dirty game again and redouble our efforts to carry to consummation the great struggle for swaraj and socialism, as Bhagat Singh used to say.

CPI(ML) Call for Protest Against Indo-US Nuke Deal

123 Agreement: A document of modern slavery

Left Parties must withdraw support from Manmohan Singh Govt.

The CPI (ML) Politburo has termed the 123 Agreement a document of modern slavery that is extremely dangerous for national security and sovereignty, and has called for a struggle against it till it is completely scrapped. The fact that this international treaty between India and US is guided by a national Act of the United States, the Hyde Act, has added a new chapter to international politics.

Successive central governments have pushed the country relentlessly into the strategic stranglehold of the biggest enemy of the world's people - the US imperialism. The Indo-US nuclear deal is designed to mortgage the country's strategic autonomy and international role to growing American control while India's integration with the US-led global war will make India and her neighbourhood increasingly insecure. The implications are quite clear. After Afghanistan and Iraq, the US war machine is now headed towards Pakistan, and India has certainly enough reasons to feel alarmed. It is explicitly clear that the people of the country are against this Agreement. Manmohan Singh is working under the US dictate and his continuing in power even for a moment is not in national interest. Democratic norms demand that he should respect public opinion or quit, so that the country could be saved from further damage.

The Party Politburo has appealed to all left parties to accept the challenge of withdrawing support from Manmohan Singh government, who has misled the country and the parliament regarding this deal, and reply to his arrogance in a befitting manner. And at the same time also expose the BJP's hypocrisy, who is another major exponent of pro-Americanism.

CPI(ML) Politburo member Swadesh Bhattacharya has called upon all left, democratic and patriotic forces to unite against this Agreement. The Party has invited all such parties, organisations and individuals to participate in nationwide protests on August 14.

Nationwide Protests Against Indo-US Nuke Deal

On August 14, CPI(ML) held protests across the nation demanding scrapping of the Indo-US Nuke Deal. In Delhi, CPI(ML) burnt the effigy of the Nuke Deal at Parliament Street and held a Protest Meeting that was addressed by Comrade Swadesh Bhattacharya, PB member CPI(ML), Swapan Mukherjee, General Secretary of AICCTU, Kumudini Pati, General Secretary of AIPWA and Ravi Rai, General Secretary of AISA.

Effigy burnings, street corner meetings, and protest marches were held at Patna and in all major cities of Bihar including Arwal, Aurangabad, Jehanabad, Ara and Gaya; at Ranchi, Bokaro, Bagodar, Dhanbad and other centres in Jharkhand; Mansa and Ludhiana at Punjab; Gwalior and Bhind at MP; Karnal in Haryana, Jhunjhunu, Jaipur and Udaipur in Rajasthan; Bhilai in Chhattisgarh; Moradabad, Allahabad, Sonbhadra, Kanpur, Varanasi, Ambedkar Nagar in UP, and also a dharna at the Vidhan Sabha at Lucknow.

Protests Against Mass Carnage in Karbi Anglong

Terming the spree of targeted killings of Hindi-speaking people in hill districts of Assam as genocide, CPI(ML) held a March in Assam's state capital Guwahati on August 13, led by Comrade Jayanta Rongpi and Comrade Rubul Sarma. A memorandum was submitted to the Governor demanding urgent measures to end the violence.

On August 13, CPI(M) also took out a protest procession at Guwahati which was attended by CPI(ML) leaders Rubul Sarma, Pankaj Das and Naren Borah.

On August 13 the joint platform of 12 parties (including CPI(ML)), joined by CPI(M) and SUCI, also met the Governor and submitted a memorandum demanding a judicial enquiry into the Karbi Anglong mass killing.

A total 12-hour bandh was successfully observed on August 14 all over the state on the call of the 12-party platform and supported by CPI(M). The 12-party platform has declared that a state-wide Protest Day will be observed on August 16 with protest programmes like dharnas and processions being held in district HQs across the state.

CPI(ML) held protests in Bihar against the genocide of Hindi-speaking labourers, demanding a guarantee of their security in Assam.

Excerpts from CPI(ML) Memorandum to Home Minister on Serial Genocide in Karbi Anglong

Within a fortnight, more than twenty five persons have been killed and almost equal number injured in separate incidences committed reportedly by armed groups. There seem to be a clear design in choosing mainly Hindi speaking people as target this time. This is not the first time that such mass killing of a targeted community has taken place in the district. During two successive tenures of Cong(I) Government led by Sri Tarun Gogoi, the present incumbent Chief Minister, altogether five episodes of genocide of singled-out communities have been committed. The heap of dead bodies of Karbi and Kuki villagers in 2001, that of Hindi-speaking and Adivasi people in 2002, Dimasa and Hmar people in 2003 and of old men, women and children belonging to Karbi and Dimasa tribes in 2005 are still fresh in the minds of people. More than 500 persons were butchered, one and half lakh people rendered homeless and compelled to flee their villages and properties worth of several hundred crores were damaged and the back bone of already fragile rural tribal economy was destroyed beyond repair during these planned and selective mass killings. Every such carnage is invariably followed by communal tension and clash, inter-tribal inter-communal rivalry and of course long lasting socio-economic instability which is very much detrimental to peace, unity and progress - factors so essential for building a strong nation.

The most serious disservice the Tarun Gogoi Government has done to the nation is that it has not drawn any lesson from any of the above-mentioned incidences. Rather by its unpardonable acts of omission and commission Gogoi Government has contributed to the present state of affairs in Karbi Anglong. Lack of any serious effort on the part of Government to bring KLNLF - the organization reportedly claimed by Government to be responsible for last week carnage - to the negotiating table and the directionless so-called peace talks with UPDS and DHD (the militant organizations who are under cease fire agreement) are two main factors which any Government with sense of responsibility could have avoided. The open secret of ruling parties taking help of militant outfits (both underground as well as those under cease-fire agreement) in the elections has made the matter very much complicated. Some such groups are used by ruling party even to physically eliminate political rivals. Brutal killing of popular CPI(ML) leader Langtuk Phangcho is one such example. The fact that

Cong(I) got record number of votes in polling booths located in the areas that are known strong holds of these militant outfits makes the picture very clear that the present dispensation at Diphu and Dispur have developed vested interests in continuation of present state of affairs at the cost of lives of innocent citizens.

That is why the Gogoi Government has shied away even from holding any judicial enquiry into any of the massacres. The Justice Phukan Commission constituted in the wake of the Karbi Dimasa massacre after mounting public pressure was soon rendered inactive (it is yet to start any work even after two years of its constitution). The CBI enquiry that was promised by Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi in his meeting with NGOs and students' organizations in 2005 has remained a hollow promise.

This time also CM Tarun Gogoi has visited Karbi Anglong after the massacre of Hindi-speaking people and repeated the same hollow assurances which he has been uttering during the last six years after each and every such incident. Going by past experiences nothing will be done decisively and concretely and the situation will remain same until the next massacre claims its toll with, may be, a change in the name of the targeted community and probably a change in the place of occurrence.

Karbi Anglong being administered under the provisions of Sixth Schedule of the constitution, where the Governor has been entrusted with special power and responsibility in regards to such areas, we urge upon you to respond to the following specific demands in the interest of peace and amity in the region.

1. To ensure constitution of a Judicial Commission headed by a sitting High Court Judge to enquire into the mass killings of Karbi Anglong to unearth the real culprits as well as the conspiracy behind.
2. To ensure security of life and property of common people including the Hindi-speaking people of Karbi Anglong.
3. Immediate relief and rehabilitation package for the affected families.
4. Initiative on the part of the Government to bring KLNLF to the discussion table for a lasting political solution.
5. To stop ruling parties from using militants under cease-fire agreements for electoral gain and to make a sincere effort for a successful political solution in the peace talks with such cease fire militant groups.

[Signed by Swadesh Bhattacharya, PB Member, CPI(ML), Swapan Mukerjee, General Secretary AICCTU and Central Committee Member, CPI(ML) and Kumudini Pati, General Secretary AIPWA and Central Committee Member CPI(ML)]

AIPWA Condemns Assault on Taslima; AISA Protests at Allahabad In Favour of Freedom of Expression

had burnt her effigy on 10 August. AISA organised and led a citizens' protest march in Allahabad University against the Hyderabad attack on Taslima. 250 people participated in this march -including students as well as teachers and intellectuals like Profs. Rajendra Kumar, Anita Gopesh, Ranjana Kakkad, Lalsa Yadav, Kalpana Dwivedi, Suryanarayan, Deepika Varghese, Anshu Malaviya and others. The March was followed by a Mass Meeting on the campus against the attacks on freedom of expression. When the fanatics held an abusive procession in reaction to the citizens' protest, AISA also burnt an effigy representing patriarchy.

The VC of Allahabad University, who had originally declared that Taliban-like forces would not be allowed to disrupt Taslima's programme, eventually cancelled the events citing security issues. AISA expressed protest against this craven act of allowing fundamentalist forces to silence freedom of expression in the University.

60 Years of Indian Independence - What has it given India's Poor and Unorganised Labourers?

An NSSO survey on Unorganised Labour has revealed that 77% of Indians are "poor and vulnerable" and live on Rs. 20 per capita per day. Of this, 6.4% live on less than Rs. 9 a day. The ultimate irony is that these people are not officially recognised as "poor" since they fall above the "poverty line", and the government boasts that there are fewer people beneath the poverty line. The NSSO report found that 90% of the poor were casual workers while only 10% of the higher income group were casual workers. This mass of "poor and vulnerable" unorganised labourers coincides with 88% of the SC/STs, 80% of the OBCs and 84% of the Muslims. So much for the hollow slogans of 'Garibi Hatao' and social justice!

Battling Floods and the Nitish Government's Callousness

As people in large parts of Bihar are battered by floods, the callous Nitish regime has unleashed police firing and lathicharge on them at several places - including Madhubani, Bettiah and even the CM's own constituency of Nalanda.

On August 8 CPI(ML) activists held a Protest March in Patna to protest against the police assault on the flood victims at Nalanda. The flood-affected, led by CPI(ML) and AIALA, had been peacefully demonstrating to demand flood relief in Tharthari block of Nalanda, the home district of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, when they were met with a brutal lathicharge. Protesters in Patna burnt the effigy of Nitish Kumar and demanded stern action against the responsible policemen, SHO, BDO etc.

CPI(ML) launched a campaign against the Nitish Govt.'s betrayal of its promises of flood relief, BPL lists, rural employment, land reform, curbing of crime and of violence on children and women. This campaign, launched on August 9 will go on till August 31. Thousands of party activists held a militant protest at the Collectorate in Patna and also in the district HQs all over the state - at Ara, Darbhanga, Sasaram, Siwan, Arwal, Jehanabad, Betia and many other places.

Construction Workers' Demonstration in Jaipur

On August 13, a 2000-strong demonstration of unorganized sector construction workers, under the banner of Rajasthan Nirman Mazdoor Sangathan, marched through the streets of Jaipur and submitted a memorandum to the ADM. Traffic was completely paralysed on the Collectorate Road. Speakers raised the issue of abduction and harassment of a labour contractor and worker two months back. Despite the medical report confirming the accusation, the named culprit was not arrested. Leaders gave an ultimatum to gherao the Police Station on August 20 if the accused was not arrested. The main speakers at the protest were Comrades Mahendra Chaudhary, Harkesh Bugalia, Phul Chand Dhewa, Dr. Pavan Surana, ex-Chairman Women's Commission, Kavita Srivastava of PUCL and others.

P.S.

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