

6 CPI(M)
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Defeat the
Communal Forces,
Unite against
Terrorism



DEFEAT THE COMMUNAL FORCES, UNITE AGAINST TERRORISM

The mandate of the Lok Sabha elections in 2004 was clearly against the communal politics of the BJP-led NDA government. While the communal BJP-led government was removed from power, the experience of the last five years has shown that communalism led by the Sangh Parivar continues to be a serious danger to the Indian polity under the active political patronage of the BJP.

In recent years there has been an intensified threat to the security of the country and its citizens by various terrorist forces and groups who have taken a huge toll on the lives of the common people by their heinous terrorist attacks. It is essential to mobilize the Indian people and strengthen their unity as a political counter to these forces, apart from the administrative and other measures to be taken.

The CPI(M) holds that any forces which try to weaken this unity by communal slogans and dividing the people in the name of religion are guilty of weakening the struggle against terrorism and terrorist groups. In this context the fight against communalism and terrorism are interlinked.

AGAINST COMMUNALISM

Although the BJP is the biggest opposition party in the country, it singularly failed to raise any people's issues over the last five years and instead tried to polarize society on communal lines. In accordance with this line, the BJP has tried to fuel communal tension and violence in the country with active support from the RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal. Particularly, in states where the BJP has been in power, as in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, or a coalition partner in the government such as in Orissa, the communal situation has invariably deteriorated. Every effort is made to utilize the levers of power to push forward sectarian policies, often backed by violence that targets minorities.

The communal poison which continues to be fed to students in highly toxic textbooks in the BJP states is a case in point. Even in sensitive border states like Assam in the north-east and Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar have pushed their communal hate driven agenda. The BJP and its RSS cohorts orchestrated and participated in communal violence targeted at the minorities, both Christian and Muslim.

On the eve of the elections the BJP has once more reverted to its openly divisive platform based on mandir politics. The hate speeches of Varun Gandhi, the BJP candidate from Pilibhit, expose the utterly opportunist and hypocritical stand of the BJP. When the Election Commission gave notice to Varun Gandhi and to the BJP, the party, in fear of losing its symbol, immediately disassociated itself from the contents of the speech. But when the Election Commission condemned the speech and advised the BJP to withdraw his candidature, the BJP, confident that its symbol was safe, insisted on retaining him as a candidate.

Clearly Varun Gandhi's condemnable words vilifying the minorities are in tune with what the BJP leadership actually believes. Any party with a modicum of respect for the Indian Constitution would have cancelled his candidature. Such a party has no right to ask for our votes.

The Hindutva project with its hatred of minorities as the core also attacks other sections.

Women have also been targets of attack by the Hindutva forces. An independent minded woman capable of making her own choices in life is anathema to the Hindutva project which includes as its core the so-called Hindutva family with the subordinate woman obedient to the male members of the family as determined by the *Manusmriti*.

Similarly the anti-dalit programme of the Sangh Parivar is reflected in its promotion of the caste system and practices of untouchability enshrined in many texts used by the Sangh Parivar in its Hindutva propaganda.

Academic institutions, writers and artistes have been a special

target of attack. Over the last five years, RSS-Bajrang Dal men also attacked painting exhibitions at the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University, exhibitions of M.F. Hussain's paintings, etc., in the name of protecting Indian culture. Academic institutions have been attacked and writings of eminent authors who do not accept the Sangh Parivar's distorted and perverted reading of history have been burnt. Recently these goons even objected to a statue of Charlie Chaplin, loved and respected all over the world, being put up! Such obscurantist and reactionary forces need to be completely isolated and defeated.

ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

~ The killing of a Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Laxamananda Saraswati by a Maoist squad in Orissa became the pretext for a large-scale attack against the Christian community in Kandhamal district, where more than 32 people were killed, over 2,000 houses destroyed and over 140 churches and prayer halls attacked and desecrated. In a cowardly act the Hindutva goondas attacked nuns and priests. A young nun was brutally raped. The BJP utilized its powers in the state government to offer protection and patronage to these criminals.

~ Following the Orissa events, the Bajrang Dal and other Hindutva organisations attacked churches in large parts of Karnataka. In Karnataka on the basis of wholly concocted charges of false conversions, the Sangh Parivar unleashed terror and violence against the Christian community in Mangalore and other places. Churches were vandalized, statues considered sacred and holy by the community were broken, prayer books were torn and burnt. The police looked on as spectators. But when some members of the community came forward to defend their places of worship the BJP government actually used its police force to brutally assault them and foisted false cases on them. It is a matter of shame

that instead of controlling the violence against the Christian community in Mangalore, the BJP state government was providing patronage to the criminals of the Bajrang Dal.

~ The attacks on Christians are being perpetrated in the name of preventing “forcible conversions to Christianity”. The falsity of the claim of conversion is seen in the Census figures which show that the percentage of Christians in the population has actually gone down from 2.59 in 1971 to 2.45 in 1981, to 2.32 in 1991 and 2.3 per cent in 2001. The anti-conversion laws in the BJP-ruled states have been used to harass and attack Christian religious functionaries.

~ Even as the violence in Orissa and Karnataka continued unabated, the Central Government did not have the political will or initiative to uphold the rights of minorities, refusing to use the constitutional provisions available to it and direct the state government to take action against the guilty. Why did the Central Government refuse to take any stern action, even though there was more than ample evidence against the Bajrang Dal for the attacks on the Christians in Orissa and Karnataka? Why did the Congress leadership not ban these organizations using provisions of the Prevention of Unlawful Activities Act in spite of a widespread demand including from its own allies?

~ Throughout the country the BJP-RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal tried to create communal tensions and provoke riots. Numerous cases of communal violence against the Muslims were orchestrated by the RSS-BJP in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat. The number of communal incidents during 2008 has been documented by organizations. There was not a single month when a communal attack or clash did not take place in 2008 engineered by the Hindutva brigade. The attacks included provocative slogans, attacks on mosques, on individuals, on shops, including arson. In a most terrible incident in August, a family of six Muslims was burnt in Adilabad, Andhra

Pradesh. In Maharashtra in Dhule there was large scale violence in which Muslim houses were burnt, at least 10 people killed and over 100 injured.

NO JUSTICE FOR GUJARAT VICTIMS

~ Even after seven years of the Gujarat carnage in 2002, the riot victims are yet to get justice. The murderers of Muslims in Gujarat are roaming around freely, while the victims are still afraid to go back to their erstwhile homes. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Supreme Court to investigate these cases has directly accused Gujarat Minister Maya Kodnani for leading the rioters in the Naroda Patia massacre, thereby proving the complicity of the Modi government in the pogrom against the Muslims. It is shameful that the Congress-led government did not take any concrete steps to ensure that the perpetrators of the Gujarat genocide are brought to book.

~ The official death toll in the post-Godhra communal riots rose from 952 to 1,180, since the 228 missing persons have been declared dead as this year completes seven years of their disappearance. In any case, the official death toll is much lower than the actual number of deaths in Gujarat.

MORAL POLICING AND VIGILANTISM

The Hindutva brigade in the country did not only orchestrate riots but practiced the worst form of reactionary obscurantist vigilantism and moral policing in the country.

~ The anti-woman face of the Hindutva brigade was completely exposed in the outrageous attack on young women in a pub in Mangalore by a self-styled outfit called Sri Ram Sene (SRS) where women were brutally beaten up in the full glare of the media. Even after this, the SRS continued to run

amok in Karnataka, where they kidnapped one girl for talking with a Muslim friend. While such incidents are continuing, the BJP government in Karnataka remains a mute spectator.

INCITING COMMUNAL PASSION

~ The RSS-BJP spared no effort to incite communal passion in the country and divide the people on religious lines. The dispute over the Amarnath Shrine land transfer, which was illegal to begin with, created a huge communal divide in Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP and the Sangh Parivar deliberately communalized the issue. In Jammu, the RSS-BJP ran an aggressive campaign to the extent of economic blockade of the Kashmir Valley which drove the entire state to the edge. This was done solely for political and electoral gains. In the ensuing turmoil, many lives were lost.

~ The BJP also tried to incite communal passions on the Setu Samudram project. While it was the BJP which first gave the green signal to the project, it did an about turn as it suddenly realized that the setu issue could fuel its communal agenda. Shamefully the Congress-led government vacillated on the issue helping the BJP keep the issue alive. The BJP tried to run a high-pitched communal campaign in the name of Ram but to its dismay found that the people did not respond to its politics of communal polarization.

“APPEASEMENT” LIE NAILED

The BJP, true to its communal nature, has come out openly against the recommendations of the Sachar Committee report seeking to ameliorate the condition of the Muslim community, which is one of the most marginalized section of the country. While the Sachar Committee has conclusively demolished the RSS-BJP campaign of minority appeasement, the stance of the BJP against the upliftment of a large number of people only exposes the complete apathy of

the BJP towards any steps towards social justice. Under pressure from the BJP, the Congress-led government did not implement the key recommendations of the Sachar Committee which was formed by the Congress-led government itself. This only exposes the absence of any political will on the part of the Congress to implement the report.

The experience over the last five years has been that the communal BJP-RSS combine still poses a grave threat to the secular fabric of India. It is therefore essential to defeat the communal forces. Even though the Congress-led government came to power on a mandate against the communal forces, it refused to take stringent action against them. Moreover, the pursuance of neo-liberal policies by the UPA has had an adverse impact on the livelihood and the living conditions of the people and this is bound to generate discontent and becomes fertile breeding grounds for their communal politics. It is therefore essential to defeat the Congress and rally behind an alternative set of policies under the Left.

AGAINST TERRORISM

~ The CPI(M) has lost many cadre in its fight against terrorist groups. In Kashmir scores of our young cadre fighting the extremist threat have been brutally gunned down and even today CPI(M) leaders in Kashmir are on the terrorist hit-list but still courageously continue their political work. In Tripura the party has lost over 300 cadre to terrorist attacks. Earlier, in the fight against the extremist Khalistani groups, scores of our cadre had sacrificed their lives. In this experience it is very clear that the fight against terror is as much political as it is an administrative one, because it is essential to unite the people in this fight.

~ In the tenure of the Congress-led government, the country faced a spate of terrorist attacks, starting from the serial bomb blasts in Delhi in October 2005 till the gruesome Mumbai

attacks in November 2008. The series of terrorist attacks in the country shows that the Congress-led government has failed to revitalize the intelligence agencies and the security set-up to track down the terror networks. Instead of strengthening these basic requirements, the government went for the option of strengthening the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and included most of the provisions in earlier anti-terror laws including POTA. The provisions of increasing the period of detention without bail to 180 days or the provision that one is guilty unless he proves himself to be innocent in case of terrorist attacks are draconian in nature. It should be remembered that even when a draconian law like the POTA was in place, terrorist attacks took place in the Parliament, Akshardham temple and other places. Clearly then implementing draconian laws is not an answer to the problem of terrorism.

~ While a federal investigative agency, as has been proposed by the Congress-led government, is needed in the country, it cannot undermine the federal content of the Indian Constitution. The federal investigative agency has to be formed without infringing on the powers of the states.

~ It is a fact that the terror attack in Mumbai originated from Pakistan. It is not negotiable that any foreign land can be used to launch terrorist attacks on India. It is therefore imperative to mount international pressure on Pakistan to neutralize the terrorist infrastructure in the country. In this regard, solely relying on the USA, as has been done by the UPA, will not help. What is needed is to mount multi-lateral pressure on Pakistan through the United Nations.

NO DOUBLE STANDARDS ON TERRORISM

It has been the hallmark of the RSS-BJP brand of communal politics to communalize every terrorist attack and brand the entire Muslim community as terrorists. In India, the problem of terrorism has diverse origins. We have terrorism sponsored by extremist elements

within the Muslim community, by various terrorist groups like the ULFA in the North-East, by LTTE and also by Hindu fundamentalist elements as has been proved in the Malegaon blast case. To straitjacket one community as terrorist as has been done by the RSS-BJP is a sure recipe to strengthen the terrorist elements.

The investigations in the Malegaon blast case have demolished the myth, propagated by RSS-BJP, that terrorism is to be equated with the Muslim community. In the Malegaon blast case members of a Hindutva outfit called Abhinav Bharat, including a serving colonel in the Indian Army, have been chargesheeted. This group was rabidly communal with their ultimate aim of converting India into a Hindu Rashtra, which would ensure that India was rid of anyone opposed to the idea of a Hindu Rashtra. This is not the first time that evidence has been found against the Hindu fundamentalist organizations like the Bajrang Dal in cases of terrorist violence. In spite of clinching evidence of Bajrang Dal's involvement in terrorist activities, the Congress-led government refused to take any strict action against them.

The BJP has always tried to take the high moral ground by claiming the mantle of a strong anti-terrorist party. But their double face stands completely exposed today by their unseemly and contradictory behaviour towards Hemant Karkare, the deceased Maharashtra ATS Chief. As the BJP went into denial mode (despite firm evidence) on the involvement of Hindutva organizations in the Malegaon blasts, they launched a vicious attack against Hemant Karkare. After he fell prey to terrorist bullets in Mumbai, the same BJP displayed its hypocrisy as did a U turn, showered praise on him and even announced compensation!

The fight against terrorism cannot be won by such double standards. What is needed is people's unity against every brand of terrorism. At the same time the state must ensure proper reforms of the security and intelligence apparatus in the country to prevent terrorist attacks. Moreover, there is a need to create an atmosphere in our country where communalism cannot feed terrorism and

terrorism cannot be used as an instrument for communal polarisation for political ends.

The CPI(M) calls on the people to defeat the communal forces. The fight against terrorism requires the secular unity of the people.

The Congress-led government has failed to provide the security for our people.

Vote CPI(M)

**Strengthen the Left and Democratic Forces to
Ensure an Alternative Secular Government
at the Centre**

Vote CPI(M)



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