

*Pakistan*

# PAKISTAN AND NATIONAL UNITY

THE COMMUNIST SOLUTION

1944

# **PAKISTAN AND NATIONAL UNITY**

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# NATIONAL UNITY NOW!

(Article from “*People’s War*” 8th August 1942, by G. Adhikari)

“Pakistan,” according to him (Jinnah), “in a nutshell, is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign state...”

“If Pakistan as defined above is an article of faith with him, indivisible India is equally an article of faith with me. *Hence there is stalemate*”

—Gandhiji in *Harijan*, 26-7-1942.

“I am told there is going to be a ‘big move.’ This threat and intimidation is intended to coerce a distressed and shaken Britain to accede to Gandhi’s demand. I can only say that Britain will be making the greatest blunder if she surrenders to the Congress in any manner which would be detrimental to the interests of Muslim India.”

—M. A. Jinnah in a press statement issued on 22-6-1942.

In these two recent utterances of the leaders of the two great parties of our country, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, is summed up the deadlock that faces us on the issue of national unity. Without national unity, without the broad unity of the masses—both Hindu and Muslim—freedom cannot be won, that was always axiomatic in our independence movement. It is more so to-day when the Japanese and German aggressors are preparing to pounce upon our Motherland. We need national unity not only to organise a national people’s resistance but also to win National Government, enjoying the confidence of the people and power to make that resistance really effective. This is, of course, self-evident. Unity was the first pre-requisite for striking for freedom. The imperialists knew it as well. That is just the reason why they always sought to disrupt that unity, to spread distrust between community and community. Did that, however, mean that unity could not be achieved before imperialist rule was ended? Not in the least. To say that, is to deny the possibility of freedom itself. We can and have to unite, despite imperialist rule, to defend our country and to win National Government. But this is just the truth which our national leadership has ceased to believe. This is the root cause of the deadlock. In other words, our national leaders admit defeat before the imperialist bureaucracy: we are powerless to unite our own people in the face of your disruptive influence. This is an admission of bankruptcy, of a complete lack of faith in the people and their healthy patriotic instincts.

At one time, with Gandhiji, communal unity was one of the four pillars of Swaraj. To-day he says communal unity will only come after the third party is removed “Unity will not precede but succeed freedom.” (*Harijan*, 7-6-42). The Wardha Resolution reiterates the same thought:

“The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide-and-rule.”

If you are incapable of counteracting the imperialist policy of divide and rule among your own people, you are obviously incapable of winning freedom. The policy implicit in

the Wardha Resolution is based on such a bankrupt supposition. For, it amounts to begging of the British Government to give you freedom first so that you may be able to unite and then form a National Government to defend your country and the world cause of freedom, in alliance with the United Nations, afterwards. If this is denied to you, you propose to launch a "struggle," which in the present situation, is National Harakiri. All this arises from the bankrupt thesis that communal unity is impossible until the British voluntarily withdraw.

How does it come about that the leadership of a national movement which has to its credit the achievement of the largest measure of unity of the Indian people during the last 20 years or so, now stands helpless before the question of Hindu-Muslim unity? How does it happen that Gandhiji says "India indivisible" is an article of faith with him and Jinnah says "Pakistan" is an article of faith with him, and there is stalemate and gaping disunity among our people? The Indian National Congress stands and has stood consistently for the complete independence of the country and for the democratic rights and liberties of the people. In the free India of Congress conception there will be religious freedom, the protection of culture for every section of the people. Why should not the Congress programme, which visualises free and democratic India, united and indivisible, attract the Muslims? Or rather, if it was adequate for so many years to unite the Hindus and Muslims in the common struggle for freedom, why does it appear to fail in recent years? In the mass nationalist upsurge which began with 1935 and continued to rise upto 1940, the Muslim masses too were drawn into the common flood. But how did it happen that the awakened Muslim masses, especially, during the period of Congress Ministries rallied to the banner of the Muslim League which now became a powerful Muslim organization? Why did the Hindu-Muslim tension begin to rise during this period? How did it happen that the breach between the Muslim masses and the national movement seemed to widen reaching its climax in the Pakistan Resolution passed by the Muslim League in March 1940? Also during this period, there has been a certain growth of Hindu Sabha influence inside the Congress. Unless we understand the peculiar nature of this accentuation of the communal problem and tension during the recent five years, we will not be able to see why the national leadership has failed to solve it, and why its failure has culminated in the bankruptcy which seeks to reverse the fundamental axiom of our national movement, viz., national unity for national freedom.

Why has there been an accentuation of the communal tension in the years that followed 1937? Apart from a general sharpening of Hindu-Muslim relations, there has been also a cropping-up of provincial jealousies and frictions, such as the Bengal-Bihar controversy, the question of a separate Andhra province and the question of "Samyukta" Karnatak and so on. The explanation given is that this is due to the competition between the bourgeoisie of these various communities and provinces for jobs and power which was brought to the surface by the new constitution. This is, of course, part of the truth. The cleavage brought about between the bourgeois sections of the various communities and provinces is only one aspect of the question. It is often stated that the masses have no communalism or provincialism. This is true in so far as the interests of the toiling masses all over the world and in the country are identical. But in actual practice, as the general

national anti-imperialist upsurge spreads deeper into the masses, it finds an echo in the growing up of sectional, communal, and provincial patriotism, which may not necessarily weaken or conflict with the larger national patriotism, but which is often used by the bourgeois leadership for accentuating national disunity.

The growing communal tension (Hindu-Muslim) as well as provincial jealousies and frictions which arose during the election period and in the period of the Congress Ministries were therefore a distorted expression of an otherwise healthy growth, viz., the masses of the individual nationalities awakening to all-India anti-imperialist national consequences. Let us look at these two aspects more carefully.

Firstly, in spite of imperialist hindrances, bourgeois economic (industrial) development of our country is proceeding apace horizontally if not vertically. The level of industrialisation is not rising but the same low level of industrialisation is spreading to every nook and corner of India. As a result there is a growing competition between the bourgeoisie of the different individual nationalities. The provincial autonomy under the new constitution tended to accentuate these frictions and we have in this period the Bengali-Bahari, Marathi-Karnataki, Andhra-Tamilnad questions, the Hindu-Muslim question in Bengal, in the U.P. and in the Punjab, cropping up. This is one aspect of the question—the bourgeois aspect—the disruptive aspect which imperialism and its agents use for their policy of divide and rule. This creates and mystifies the problem.

Secondly, we have the healthier aspect of the question. Side by side with the bourgeois development, the all-India national anti-imperialist movement is spreading to every nook and corner of India and bringing the peasant masses of the most backward nationalities and communities into its vortex. The All-India national movement for the country's emancipation is growing into a rich pattern of a multinational movement. The common goal of India's political and economic emancipation is being seen through the waking eyes of individual national consciousness. The Lingayat peasantry of Karnatak, for instance, wakes up to anti-imperialist consciousness and develops a natural yearning for a free Karnatak in a free India. So it is with the Andhras, Tamils and with the Sindhis, Punjabis and Pathans. Here is the progressive aspect of the accentuation of the communal and provincial jealousies, which our growing national democratic movement itself brings to the surface. Herein lies the key to the solution of the communal conflict in its new form which our national movement has to perceive and grasp as we shall presently show.

Here it will be asked: what has the Hindu-Muslim problem to do with this cropping up of provincial jealousies on the one hand, and the awakening of individual national consciousness? The Hindu-Muslim conflict arises out of the economic and other competition between the bourgeoisie or the upper class of the two communities while the imperialists are using the same to successfully divide the masses. If the Muslim masses are following the Muslim League in larger numbers, that has nothing to do with their growing nationalist sentiments either in the broad all-India sense or in the restricted sense of individual nationalities. It is just due to the spread of the influence of reactionary communalism among them, arising out of their political backwardness, and is due to nothing else. Such an analysis would not correspond to facts. It would mean that during 1936-42, when there was a general anti-imperialist mass upsurge, the Muslim masses

remained unaffected by it and the hold upon them of the so-called pro-imperialist reactionary leadership of the Muslim League increased. The reality is that the Muslim masses too shared in the general anti-imperialist upsurge; but this expressed itself in the bulk of the Muslim petty-bourgeois masses going under the influence of the League. There was also a rise in the Muslim followers of the Congress but not as sharp and striking as in the case of the Muslim League. The growing anti-imperialist sentiment among the Muslims expressed itself in the pressure it exerted on the Muslim League leadership. In 1938 the Muslim League accepted the complete independence of India as its goal. The Muslim League leadership can be said to have undergone a transformation during this period. It is no longer feudal-reactionary, no longer just a willing tool of imperialism. It is now an industrial bourgeois leadership, which is no more just an adjunct of imperialism but one which plays an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism.

In fact, the Muslim League is to the Muslim petty-bourgeois mass what the Indian National Congress is to the Indian masses in general. This became quite clear in the imperialist phase of the war. The leadership of the Congress took to passive opposition to war and demanded recognition of complete independence and such present freedom which would give the Indian people effective power in the government of the country immediately. The Muslim League leadership too adopted the attitude of passive non-cooperation with the war and demanded Pakistan, which is complete independence to such territorial units in which the Muslims predominate. Immediately, they demanded political equality with the Congress in any settlement at the Centre or effective power at the Centre for the League, in case the Congress refused to accept the settlement. To the Muslim masses, therefore, it appears that the Muslim League leadership is fighting not only for the complete independence of India from imperialist rule but also for freedom and equality to territorial units which are predominantly Muslim and for the protection of the rights of Muslim minorities in other provinces in relation to culture, education and language. Thus the rise of the Muslim League influence cannot be regarded as a reactionary phenomenon. On the other hand, it is the expression or the growing anti-imperialist upsurge among the Muslim masses, of the growth of the individual national consciousness of the Sindhis, of Punjabi Muslims, of the Pathans and so on within the framework of the broader all-India nationalism.

To be able to arrive at a correct solution of the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity which is to-day urgently demanded by the perilous national situation, two things must be grasped: the character of the Muslim League leadership and the basis of its mass influence. To see nothing in the problem but religious and cultural differences, to ascribe the deadlock in Congress-Muslim League relations to some irrational, obscurantist and fanatical element in the Muslims, which Mr. Jinnah is in a position to exploit for opportunist ends, because of the presence of the British power, is not to understand the problem at all. In short, such an understanding leads to the bankrupt position that nothing could be done, no unity can be achieved until imperialist power disappears. But as soon as we realise that the leadership of the Muslim League is bourgeois in character and is playing an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism in a somewhat analogous way to the leadership of the Indian National Congress itself, as soon as we see the anti-imperialist

base of the rise of the Muslim. League influence, as soon as we grasp that behind the demand for Pakistan is the justified desire of the people of Muslim nationalities such as Sindhis, Baluchis, Punjabis (Muslims), Pathans to build their free national life within the greater unity of the all-Indian national freedom, we at once see there is a very simple solution to the communal problem in its new phase. There is no reason to give up the sound slogan of national unity first to achieve freedom. If we grasp the recent developments in national policies correctly, we can at once see the basis for achieving national unity.

It is the historic task and responsibility of the Indian National Congress, which has achieved such a large measure of national unity thus far, for achieving national freedom, to take the next forward step towards unity, which the new phase of the communal problem demands, at this most critical turning point of our nation. In uniting the various sections of the people for national freedom, that freedom itself has to be defined in terms of a programme of democratic rights and liberties. The Indian National Congress has to a large extent succeeded in putting such a programme before the nation and has achieved on the basis of that programme a very large measure of national unity. But that programme is no longer sufficient to solve the communal problem in its present form and to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity. It certainly says that in a free India there will be freedom of worship for every one and that the religious and cultural rights of minorities would be guaranteed. It pledges itself to abolish all inequalities based on caste, creed and origin (such as untouchability, etc.). But these declarations, essential as they are, for securing unity, are no longer enough.

The conception of India's unity was never a static one. It is a living and growing reality which is developing within its womb a host of individual nationalities which lived together on the Indian soil through centuries, and are now waking to new consciousness. Unequal economic development leads to friction and conflicts between communities and different national units. The growing sweep of the All-India people's movement tends to unite these communities and national units into one united national front for freedom. But imperialism deliberately promotes and fosters separatist tendencies to disrupt and paralyse the unity of national forces which is advancing towards freedom. The leadership of the National Congress instead of playing into the hands of the imperialist reactionaries by refusing to see the developing multi-national pattern of our national unity, has to recognise the just claim of the peoples of these individual nationalities to autonomous state existence within the framework of a free Indian union and their right to secession from the union, if they so desired. The National Congress, of course, dimly sees that the free India of the future would be a family of a number of nationalities, each having a territorial unit to which it is attached by historic tradition as its homeland, each having its own language, culture, common economic life, etc. The division of Congress Provinces linguistically reflects this realisation. In the resolution of the Working Committee on the rejection of the Cripps proposals, this idea was expressed more explicitly. The Congress came very near to recognising the right of self-determination of such national territorial units. But in the Allahabad A.I.C.C. there was a relapse again. Lala Jagat Narain's resolution was passed, by which the Congress virtually denied the right of self-



determination to any nationality inasmuch as it refused to recognise the right of separation to any territorial unit. The result is that in the name of unity and indivisibility of India, separatist disruptionism of the communalists gains strength. The party that profits by it is that of the imperialist bureaucrats.

Thus the National Congress has so far failed to discharge its historic responsibility of coming forward as the unifier of the country on the basis of a programme guaranteeing self-determination, equality and freedom from oppression to every individual nationality in free India. The guaranteeing of autonomous state existence, with the right of political separation, to individual nationalities having their own territorial units to which they are bound by history, having a common language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up, can never lead to the vivisection of the motherland. On the other hand, by dispelling the distrust and suspicions which exist to-day among the people of the various nationalities, the Congress would be laying the foundation of a greater unity or action now and a greater unity of India visualised as a fraternal union of free nationalities, afterwards. Those who say recognition of the right of separation for individual nationalities would lead to the disintegration of the country, really lack faith in their own people. A clear-throated declaration of the type we have printed elsewhere, if made by the Congress will provide a real basis for Congress-League unity just because it clearly grants the rational kernel of the Pakistan demand. For according to it, nationalities such as Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans and Punjabi Muslims will have the right to secede if they so desire. But it must be borne in mind that the recognition of the right of nationalities to separation, is the recognition of their equality and freedom from oppression in a free India. This would lay the basis not for separation but for joint fight for freedom against the aggressors and for the creation of an Indian Union based on voluntary co-operation of free nationalities.

By taking such a position, the National Congress would be building unity rather than encouraging separatist forces for it would be conceding straightaway what is just and right in the Pakistan demand. Wherever people of Muslim faith living together in a territorial unit, form a nationality in the sense defined above, they certainly have the right to autonomous state existence, just like the other nationalities in India, like the Andhras, Karnatakis, Marauds, Bengalis etc. Wherever there are interspersed Muslim minorities within other autonomous states, their rights regarding culture, education and language would be guaranteed. Such a position would fully satisfy the demands of the awakened Muslim masses and guarantee them complete equality and freedom from oppression in a free India. If the Congress makes such a declaration, proclaims it as a part of its own programme of freedom, and calls upon the Muslim masses and the League to join with the Congress in a joint effort to win National Government, Jinnah's last argument against unity would have been knocked out. He will have to agree to unite. What would result then would be a period of the most gigantic joint, effort of the Indian people for the defence of the country and for their freedom. under the leadership of their National Government. Out of this joint effort, of the united people of India, no separate Pakistan and no Hindudom can ever rise but a happy family of free and autonomous states of various nationalities united in an Indian Union.

Where do we differ from Sjt. Rajagopalachari's proposal for Congress-Muslim League unity for achieving National Government by conceding Pakistan as Jinnah demands it? Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari turns to the Muslim League leadership and concedes to them their demand for Pakistan as a political expediency. By taking this position, Rajaji concedes the "two nations" theory of Jinnah and appears to nourish instead of laying the ghost of separatism. He, of course, does not mean it. But by the fact that he has chosen the diplomatic short-cut of just accepting Jinnah's Pakistan as a lesser evil, he is taken by Congressmen as an advocate of separation rather than of higher unity. Rajaji being the first big Congress leader to have the boldness and the vision to go in wholeheartedly for Congress-League unity, evokes a lot of support among the Muslim masses. But just for that reason, he is looked upon by the bulk of the Congressmen as an advocate of separatism. The Gandhites and the Hindu Mahasabhaites attack him as such and condemn his bold and well-meant campaign for Congress-League unity as disruptionist. The weakness of Rajaji's position on Pakistan is that it is in the nature of a top settlement—which does not show to the bulk of Congress rank and file how justice to the Muslim masses is combined with the preservation and strengthening of Indian unity and integrity.

Our position on the other hand, is based on the just right of nationalities to equality and freedom within a free India, and therefore, concedes to the Muslims the essence of the Pakistan demand. On this basis, Jinnah cannot refuse to unite. Similarly, the bulk of Congressmen can be made to see in the proposals a bid for all-round unity and not a move for disintegration. To the Muslim masses, we would point out that the Congress stands for the freedom, equality and autonomous state existence of every nationality as defined above. Thus autonomous state existence of Muslim nationalities and rights of Muslims in other provinces regarding culture, language and education would be guaranteed. But the free India which guarantees you all that can be won by a joint fight, through Congress-League unity. Hence get the League to unite with the Congress, on the basis of the general right of self-determination to all nationalities so that the nation may march towards freedom. To the Hindus, we would say: the Congress stands for unity and the territorial integrity of India. But this can be secured and India freed only on the basis of free and voluntary co-operation of the peoples of all nationalities and communities in common struggle. The freedom and unity of India can be won and preserved only by recognising the freedom and equality of the various nationalities of which India is composed. Hence, let us generously recognise this right and build a stable unity based on goodwill and mutual co-operation. Sound political instinct and patriotism led Rajaji to see the urgency and importance of Congress-League unity. The same good qualities will lead him sooner or later to base his advocacy on the above principles.

Gandhiji says that the unity and indivisibility of India is an article of faith with him. How does he defend this article of faith of his? How does he propose to fight Pakistan? By ignoring the just demand that is behind it, by denying to the Muslim nationalities the right of autonomous state existence. This will lead only to further bitterness and conflict. How does Jinnah propose to fight for his Pakistan? How does he propose to fight for Muslim independence? By inculcating separatism among the Muslim masses and by

driving the wedge firmer between the Congress and the League. This too only leads to further bitterness and further conflict.

Neither the path of Gandhiji nor that of Jinnah can lead the nation forward at this critical juncture. A brutal enemy threatens our land. The bureaucracy sits tight on top of our nation and holds the people down, prevents them from putting up a total people's resistance which alone can save us from the fate of Burma. Our national leaders blamed the bureaucrats and sat quiet. Now as a result of the obduracy of the bureaucrats and of national frustration born of inactivity, they are proceeding to take the blind step of launching a non-violent "struggle" to force the British Government to concede them that present freedom which would render successful people's resistance against the aggressor possible. The aim is sound but the path chosen does not lead to it but away from it. "Non-violent struggle" in the given situation is not a weapon of bringing the bureaucracy to its senses, but a wedge which divides our nation still further, which cuts us off from the support of the progressive forces of the world. This path leads the nation not to unity but to disruption, not a forcing the bureaucrats but to their strengthening vis-a-vis the nation. It is the interests of the British and the Indian peoples which are being sacrificed while the fascists smile on.

The calamity can yet be averted, if the Congress forges national unity, i.e., a Congress-League agreement by adopting even at this eleventh hour, the Declaration on Pakistan and Unity of India. National Unity is realisable on the basis of this declaration. It is the only path which will take our nation forward to freedom, in alliance with the freedom-loving peoples of the world. There is no other way.

# DECLARATION ON PAKISTAN AND UNITY OF INDIA

*(To be adopted by the Indian National Congress)*

The Congress had been wedded to Indian freedom and any break in that unity whether in the present urgent situation or in the future when it would be needed more than ever for maintaining the gains of freedom, would be Injurious to all concerned.

Nevertheless the Congress cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any individual nationality inhabiting a given territorial unit to which it is attached by historical tradition, having its own language, culture, and psychological make-up and common economic life, to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will.

The Congress recognises that the people of every one of such individual nationalities which have lived together on the soil of India developing their own individual national life as well as a common fraternal bond with the broader unity through centuries, must have in free India the right of autonomous state existence on its own territory as an equal and free member of the future Indian Union or Federation accompanied by the unconditional right to political secession.

It must, however, be clearly understood that the territorial units thus visualised by no means coincide with the present provinces. In fact, the national territorial units based on individual Indian nationalities as defined above are today cut up by the artificially-created boundaries of states and provinces which hinder the healthy growth of individual nationalities as well as their common national union.

The rights of other interspersed minorities in the newly-formed autonomous states regarding their culture, language, education and schools will be guaranteed by statute. Similarly, all privileges and discriminations based on caste, race, and community will be abolished by statute\*

If from among the autonomous states which will come into existence in a free India, one or several states having Muslim or any other faith, wish to secede from the Union in accordance with the freely expressed wish of the people of those states, they will, of course, be free to do so. But it would be the constant endeavour of the Congress to persuade the peoples of all Indian nationalities to remain in the united Indian union, to build on the secure basis of freedom from foreign rule, of democracy, of perfect equality of nationalities, common interest and goodwill, a greater and more lasting unity of India than our history has ever seen.

# ON PAKISTAN & NATIONAL UNITY

*(Resolution passed by the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India on the 19th September 1942, and confirmed by the First Congress of the Communist of India in May, 1943.)*

All-In national unity based on communal harmony and Congress-League joint front is today an urgent and pressing necessity to solve the present national crisis, to win National Government from the hands of the British imperialist bureaucracy and to defend our Motherland against the fascist aggressor. This has brought the controversy of Pakistan versus the unity of India sharply to the forefront. The Communist Party, therefore, lays down the main principles of the Communist policy on this issue.

1. The Communist Party draws together the toilers of all castes, communities and nationalities in common class organisations (Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas, etc.). It unites them politically as the vanguard of the United national front for achieving the freedom of our country and democracy. This is the cornerstone of the policy of achieving communal unity.

2. To build the united national front of the peoples of the various communities and nationalities that inhabit India, for the defence and freedom of our country, it is however necessary to dispel the mutual distrust and suspicion that exists among them. This is a remnant of memories of past historical oppression and of present social inequalities arising out of the feudal imperialist exploitation. For this purpose, the basic rights of the communities and nationalities must be made an essential part of the programme of the united national front.

3. The programme of the U.N.F. must declare that in Free India, there will be perfect equality between nationalities and communities that live together in India. There will be no oppression of one nationality by another. There will be no inequalities or disabilities based on caste or community. To ensure this the national movement must recognise the following rights as part of its programme for national unity.

(a) Every section of the Indian people which has a contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make-up and common economic life would be recognised as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state within the free Indian union or federation and will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are homelands of such nationalities and which today are split up by the artificial boundaries of the present British provinces and of the so-called "Indian States" would be re-united and restored to them in free India. Thus free India of tomorrow would be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as Pathans, Western Punjabis (dominantly Muslims), Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindustanis, Rajasthanis, Gujeratis, Bengalis, Assamese, Beharis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Karnatakis, Maharashtrians, Keralas, etc.

(b) If there are interspersed minorities in the new states thus formed their rights regarding their culture, language, education, etc., would be guaranteed by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

(c) All disabilities, privileges and discriminations based on caste, race or community

(such, as untouchability and allied wrongs) would be abolished by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

4. Such a declaration of rights inasmuch as it concedes to every nationality as defined above, and therefore, to nationalities having Muslim faith, the right of autonomous state existence and of secession, can form the basis for unity between the National Congress and the League. For this would give to the Muslims wherever they are in an overwhelming majority in a contiguous territory which is their homeland, the right to form their autonomous states and even to separate if they so desire. In the case of the Bengali Muslims of the Eastern and Northern Districts of Bengal where they form an overwhelming majority, they may form themselves into an autonomous region—the state of Bengal or may form a separate state. Such a declaration therefore concedes the just essence of the Pakistan demand and has nothing in common with the separatist theory of dividing India into two nations on the basis of religion.

5. But the recognition of the right of separation in this form need not necessarily lead to actual separation. On the other hand, by dispelling the mutual suspicions, it brings about unity of action today and lays the basis for a greater unity in the free India of tomorrow. National unity forged on the basis of such a declaration and strengthened in the course of joint struggle in the defence of our motherland is bound to convince the peoples of all Indian nationalities of the urgent need to stick together and to form a free Indian Union or Federation in which each National State would be a free and equal member with right to secede. They will thus see this as the only path of protecting the freedom and democracy achieved and building on that secure basis a greater and grander unity of India than our country has ever seen.

In spite of the apparent conflict and seemingly insoluble difficulties, the burning desire for unity is taking firmer hold of the people who today follow the Congress or the League. Under the stress of the growing menace of fascist invasion and of the present national crisis, the leadership of the two organisations also have moved closer together and in the direction of the very solution given in this resolution. There is no room whatsoever for defeatism on the question of unity. The Communist Party calls upon all patriots to join hands with it in popularising the principles laid down herein and thus speed up the realisation of Congress-League Unity, which is today the only path of national salvation for our Motherland in the hour of her gravest peril.

# PAKISTAN AND NATIONAL UNITY

*(Report by G. Adhikari on the foregoing Resolution before the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India in 1942.)*

## I. THREE PERIODS—THREE APPROACHES

The question of national unity, of Hindu-Muslim unity, has evolved and gone through different phases of development, side by side with, and as part of, the different phases through which our national movement itself has passed. The problem, therefore, has to be studied in a historical way if we are to understand it properly in its present phase.

Failure to study the problem in this historical-dynamical way leads to old ways of looking at it; old solutions continue to persist in our understanding long after they have become outmoded. Such tendencies, and such modes of thinking, which are really derived from a past phase of our national movement, and no more correspond to the present phase, have to be nailed down not only in terms of principle, but also in terms of historical evolution; otherwise, their sources cannot be properly grasped and they cannot be completely rooted out.

That is why a historical-political review is necessary here, a review of how the question of Hindu-Muslim unity has developed from the past to to-day. Only in this way can we understand the significance of Pakistan and of the demand for the self-determination of nationalities; only in this way can we understand exactly why these demands have arisen now at this time and not before.

If we look back and examine the evolution of the problem, we find three distinct approaches to the problem in three distinct periods, each one corresponding to a particular phase of our national movement.

In the first and earliest period, it was the fundamental axiom of the national movement (which was itself in its earliest period) that India is one nation; “the difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is only one of religion; the stronger the nationalist urge among the masses of both religions grows, the sooner this difference will go off. and Hindus and Muslims will grow together as one”—this is how the Liberals, who were the earliest nationalists argued.

At this period, propaganda for unity on the basis of nationalism against imperialism, propaganda for social reform as a means of doing away with “religious backwardness,” was considered an adequate solution of the problem. Such propaganda was carried on by the Liberals in the earliest period of the national movement and the Liberals at that period were the leaders of the incipient national movement. Their simple argument was: “What is needed to solve the problem is nationalist consciousness.”

The second period which lasts up to about 1934, brings the further development of the nationalist movement, and with it a further development of the Hindu-Muslim problem too, side by side with, and as an integral part of, the former. In this period, the nationalist bourgeoisie grows, gets consolidated as the leader of the nationalist movement, in place of the earlier loyalists and Liberal reformists. Alongside with this growth, we find, on the one hand, clashes and conflicts between the bourgeoisie of the two sections; on the other,

side by side with this, as the other side of the very same process, the united class movement of the workers and the kisans grow up. Thus we have two simultaneous aspects: one—clashes and conflicts among the vested interests; the other—growing unity among the rising movement of the kisans and the working class.

The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity was, therefore, posed by the Leftists in this period thus:

“The whole conflict between the two sections is confined to the bourgeoisie and the vested interests; the masses of either section have nothing to do with this conflict. Unite the masses of both sections on economic issues, on common struggles for economic demands; side by side, grant the Muslims their cultural rights—and the problem will be solved.”

The third period begins from about 1934, from the time of the advent of the New Constitution. In this period two things take place simultaneously. On the one hand, the nationalist movement takes the biggest sweep forward and penetrates into the Indian countryside far and wide. On the other hand, with the developing offensive of Fascism on a world scale, with the sharpening; of the war crisis and of the crisis of World Imperialism,, the question of winning power from Imperialism comes to the forefront. The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, under the influence of these two factors, sharply comes on the agenda, but in a new form. At this time, the demand of the national movement no more becomes one for constitutional concessions, or for communal versus joint electorates, etc., but one for power. The war-crisis points sharply before the Indian people the problem of winning power.

It is at this time that the Muslim League comes out with its demand for a separate State or States for Muslims. The grievances and demands of the Muslims as “oppressed nationalities” are brought more and more into political controversies. The Hindu-Muslim problem appears in this new form now, the demand of the Muslims for their own State. With the outbreak of war, the Congress demands independence, the League demands Pakistan. The controversy of “Pakistan versus the Unity and Independence of India” begins.

It is in this period, as we shall see in detail subsequently. that the real nature of the communal problem becomes clear—as a problem of growing nationalities.

It is when we see the problem in such a historical-political perspective that we are able to distinguish three different approaches to the problem, corresponding to three different phases of our national movement. Thus only can we see how each of these three approaches arises from and fits a particular phase of development of our national movement. We are able to understand the significance of the new development of the present period and the corresponding necessity for the working-class Party to make a new approach to the problem to suit this development.

Let us now take each of these periods separately and in detail.

## **II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMMUNAL QUESTION**

The first period is the one in which our national movement is at the lowest phase of its development. The upper layers of the “intellectuals” and the professional middle class are



alone in the movement and are its leaders. These Liberal intellectuals, who drank deep at the fountain of Victorian Liberalism, see in Britain an example for India to emulate. For them the ideal becomes: "India must unite and be a nation like Great Britain." They do not see the specific differences between Great Britain and India, they do not see the different features that characterise Indian development. They see religious differences in India, they regard these differences as the only obstacle standing in the path of India's developing into a single nation just like Britain. Their propaganda, therefore, is for social reform, in order to convince people that religion is an "irrelevant" issue, as far as "politics" is concerned. The whole problem is looked upon as one of chucking out religion from politics. "Religion does not bother the British people, why should it bother us?"—this is how they argue.

This is how the problem is seen by the narrow politics of the Liberals of those days, who see in British development the "ideal" path of development for India too.

As the nationalist movement develops, two things emerge. The one is the rising imperialist challenge which says: "India is not even a nation, how can she govern herself?" As against this, as an answer to this insolent challenge, the new nationalist movement of 1906-18 asserts that India *is* a nation, and, therefore, *can* govern herself.

This assertion becomes the banner of the rising nationalist movement at this period. "We are a nation exactly as much as Great Britain is," so declares the nationalist of this period. The demands of the national movement at this period, correspondingly, are for the same parliamentary democratic institutions that Britain has, because "India is a nation as much as Britain is." The basis of the national movement at that time, as opposed to the imperialist challenge, is the assertion that India *is* a nation.

In this period, also with the rising nationalist movement, grow up certain prejudices, arising from the historical fact that the nationalist movement grew up among the educated Hindu middle-class first. It is these prejudices which, carried over into the further period, act as a hindrance to the development of national unity. The national movement at that time was dominantly Hindu in colour, it was led by the Hindu middle class leaders. The nationalism of that period, therefore, expressed itself in the garb of Hindu ideology. The idea that India is one nation thus became inextricably interwoven with ideas depicting the oneness of India in Hindu religious and cultural imagery.

Born thus, this religious imagery and these associations remain in popular consciousness long after that stage is passed. The dominance of Hindu leadership at this earliest period of the national movement, left a special Hindu cultural impress upon the nationalist movement. The idea that India is one became connected with the idea that the cultural unity of India is a Hindu cultural unity—an association that becomes a great drag and hindrance later on, as we shall see.

In 1920-21, the industrial bourgeoisie, consolidated and strengthened during the war, begins to come to the forefront of the nationalist movement. The question of Hindu-Muslim unity, which was till then purely one of joining together for "petitioning" the British Government (the Lucknow Pact of 1936) appears in the new form. The Hindu and Muslim masses are stirred up by the post-war upsurge. It was a time when the Muslim masses were rising up. The Muslim countries of the Middle East were rising against

British imperialism, the dismemberment of the old Turkish Empire by British Imperialism stirs up Muslims throughout the world.

The Khilafat movement was a reflection of this upsurge of the Muslim nationalities in the East. The Khilafat movement and the rising nationalist wave in India join hands. Both the sections—Hindus and Muslims—unite for struggle against British Imperialism. But even in this struggle, the issues are not yet clarified and sharpened. Though the struggle is a mass struggle, the basis of the demands is yet liberal, it is only the form that is revolutionary.

The whole question of unity is posed as unity on the basis of nationalist sentiment of asserting national freedom, against British imperialism. The whole movement is yet restricted to the middle classes. The issues have not yet gone down to the masses. The demands are not clarified as their demands. On the part of Muslim masses, their participation in the struggle expresses the freedom urge of Muslim nationalities which was given a religious turn. The concrete democratic demands of the masses were not brought forward to unite the Hindu and Muslim masses in the struggle. It was a pure top agreement between the Khilafatists and the Swarajists, based on the demands of the top leadership. The unity thus achieved had no solid foundation in the masses and therefore collapsed as soon as the struggle collapsed, as soon as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms came.

The collapse of this unity marks a definite watershed demarcating the period before from the one after. From this time on, we see on the one hand the slow, though thwarted and distorted, development of the industrial bourgeoisie, in conflict with imperialism and the conflict within its own ranks amongst its own different sections; on the other hand, the rising working-class movement, through which the Hindu and Muslim masses united together.

Under the impact of the characteristics of the period there was a strong tendency to look upon the communal problem as a mere middle-class problem of conflict between the two bourgeoisie. “Only the workers can come together in common struggle. And the basis of this common struggle can only be economic”—so runs the argument. The communal problem was sought to be solved through the economic end.

The defect with this view point is not that it is completely wrong, but that it represents only a partial aspect of the matter—that the solution to the problem of the conflict of the bourgeoisie is to be found in the coming together of the masses of the proletarians and the semi-proletarians. This “class” explanation is put in a vulgar economic way—that the problem is merely one of middle class rivalry and the solution to it is common economic struggles of the masses. It is this outlook which made the Leftists put forward the “practical” solution of the communal problem—“Give cultural rights to the Muslims and the problem will be solved”—this “practical” solution amounted to the “practical” policy of the dominant section of the bourgeoisie itself.

The latter part of this second period, which followed the collapse of the glorious unity of 1910-22, was marked by bitter clash and conflict between the two sections of our people. The days of joint struggle were followed by days of tug-of-war in the Montford Councils. There was no effective joint front between the Congress and the League against

the Simon Commission. Later in 1928 (December) when the All-Parties' Convention met to deliver India's counter-challenge to the imperialist challenge of Simon Commission and attempted to put forth an agreed constitution, it was a failure. The constitution was rejected by the Muslim League because the National Congress and the other parties, notably Hindu Sabha, refused to concede the League demand that the federation of free India should be such that the residual powers should not be vested in the Centre but in the federating units: thus ensuring them the largest measure of autonomy.

The result was that when the Congress started the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-32. the League did not join it. A section of Muslim leadership joined but the bulk of the Muslim masses were not drawn into the struggle as in 1920-22. The League itself disintegrated and continued to be weak during the years of 1924-30. At the Round Table Conference too, there was no settlement between the Congress and the League.

The period of disunity was marked by the bloody trail of communal riots. These were engineered by goondas in the pay of the dark forces of reaction which wanted to take advantage of the disunity to destroy the militant national movement and the growing workers' and peasants' movement.

The weakening of the League during this period, which was due partly to the splitting away of a section of the patriotic Muslim leaders, and to the influx of opportunist feudal leaders, created the illusion in the ranks of the National Congress that Hindu-Muslim unity could be achieved by crushing the League and by ensuring the protection of cultural and religious demands of the Muslims. The Leftists made this illusion into a theory: the Muslim League is a communal and reactionary organisation. When the Congress begins to fight for the economic demands of the masses and guarantees protection of cultural and religious demands of the Muslims, the Muslim masses will all leave the League and join the Congress and thus the communal problem will be solved.

The collapse of the second Civil Disobedience movement was followed by a new upsurge of the working class and kisan movement, a resurgence of the national movement. The developments which came in the wake of this upsurge, proved not only the bankruptcy of this disastrous theory but also shed light on the real nature of the communal problem and its solution.

The rise of the organised working-class and kisan movements, the sweeping political activity and upsurge that takes place all over the country preparatory to, and following upon, the Congress elections—these mark off the beginning of this period.

Three things happen now.

Firstly, the spurt of industrial development which followed the end of the first World War and which was mainly restricted to centres in advanced provinces now begins to spread to the other parts of the country. After the crisis and depression of the years 1926-32, capital from older centres of industry begins to flow and penetrate into backward regions and provinces. New industries like sugar and cement flower forth. The spread of industries to backward provinces, creation of new centres of industries in them brings in questions of acute competition and rivalries between different sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. These get accentuated in the period of ministries under 1935 Constitution.

Secondly, comes the fact that the nationalist movement penetrates into the

countryside, it enters the kisan masses all over the land, at a rate and tempo never seen before. The masses of the working class and the peasantry, in the hitherto “advanced” as in the hitherto “backward” provinces, are swept into the current of the nationalist movement.

Thirdly, with the coming into operation of the New Constitution, the various political parties and bourgeois sections are called upon to take up clear political positions vis-a-vis the question of power, the question of independence and democracy.

Let us take each of these features in turn.

For the first time during the time of the Congress elections of 1937 and during the period of the Congress Ministries, we find inter-provincial “jealousies” beginning to appear on the scene—frictions, competitions, etc., between different sections of the bourgeoisie, between the bourgeoisie of the different provinces, of different parts of India. Where industrial development spreads to provinces, which till then were relatively “backward,” there arises competition between the bourgeoisie of these provinces and the bourgeoisie of the “advanced” provinces who are economically and politically more powerful.

The Karnataki-Maharashtrian rivalry and the demand of the Karnatakis for a “Samyukta Karnatak”; the Tamil-Andhra rivalries and the demand of the Andhras for a separate province; the demand of the Oriyas for their rights; the friction between the Bengalis and the Beharis—all these began to come to the fore.

So deep is this friction that it finds reflection inside the Congress organisation itself. In the Karnatak Congress, for instance, the factional dispute between Kannad Lingayat and Maharashtra Brahmins sharpened and assumed a very acute form during the elections of 1937 and after. This division reflected in fact the conflict between the Maharashtrian Brahmin (landlord) money-lending group which had dominated the political and economic life of Karnatak till then and the rising Kannad middle-class (merchants) and the bulk of the Kannad peasantry both of which belonged to the Lingayat community, and who had begun awakening to political consciousness especially after the second phase of national struggle of 1930-32.

But the basis behind all these conflicts and demands is much deeper than mere top rivalry between sections of the bourgeoisie. The conflict among the bourgeoisie is only one aspect of the matter. There is another aspect of it, an aspect formed by the second characteristic of this period mentioned in the foregoing.

Take the Karnatak example above. Behind it in addition to the Maharashtra-Karnatak rivalry was the fact that the Lingayat (Kannad) peasantry was for the first time, roused to political life and entered the nationalist movement and this peasantry with this newly roused political consciousness, supported the Lingayat candidate as against the Maharashtrian candidate in the 1937 elections. The same way, we find that in the Andhra-Tamil instance, in the Bengali-Behari instance, etc., among the newly political-awakened peasantry and masses of the people of Behar, Andhra, etc., this movement for a separate province and rights, etc., finds eager response. Movements like the “Samyukta Karnatak” or, the one for a separate Andhra province etc., become deeply rooted in the masses of the peasantry and the people—and this at a time when the peasantry is being

roused to political consciousness by the spread of the national movement.

It is this latter aspect that assumes greater and greater importance during this period and gives a radically revolutionary turn to the whole problem of communal unity and national unity. And it is to this aspect that we have now to devote detailed attention.

As the national movement grows wider, the conflict between the top sections of the bourgeoisie begins to assume new forms. What are these new forms, what is their content? It is this which needs investigation, if one is to grasp the essence of the problem of national unity in this period.

### **III. A PROBLEM OF GROWING NATIONALITIES**

As the national movement spreads from the lower middle-class to the peasantry, the national question which till then was a simple question of conflict between the Indian people as a whole and British Imperialism, now becomes more complicated and takes on new forms. The broad framework of this fundamental conflict, of course, remains. But within this framework arise problems of various dormant nationalities for the first time waking up to life, problems that demand urgent solution as a preparatory step to the winning of Indian freedom from British Imperialism.

During the 1935-39 period, the national movement really becomes broader and sweeps over every nook and corner of the country hitherto left comparatively untouched. It goes deep down into the masses; the broad masses of the peasantry and the people for the first time wake up to active political and national consciousness. The peasantry in most provinces advance from their own narrow sectional consciousness to all-India consciousness, but they make this advance to all-India consciousness in terms of their own newly-awakened national consciousness.

For example, taking the Karnatak example given above, the Lingayat peasantry really achieve all-India anti-imperialist consciousness, but they proceed to, and understand, this all-India consciousness through, in terms of their own Kannad language and Kannad national consciousness. The idea of a Free India for them becomes concrete as “Samyukta Karnatak”—a united and free Karnatak.

The Indian National Congress itself recognised this basic feature in the step it took of forming linguistic provinces.

What happens, therefore, during this period is this: The national movement, led by the Congress, as it spreads over each province, takes on the national colour of that particular province. To put it in a picturesque though rough way, the all-India national movement resembles a stream which while it flows through the soil of each nationality naturally takes on the colour of the soil of that nationality. The stream becomes a multi-colour stream though it still remains one stream flowing in one direction. The problem of achieving National Unity in this period becomes complex. It becomes a problem of achieving multinational unity. In other words, in order to unite the entire people of India for the common task of achieving independence and democracy, it becomes necessary to take into account the pride and love the different sections of the people have for their own language and their own homeland, to take into account their aspiration to build and live their own free life in their own homeland. To ignore this pride and love, this aspiration,

of the various sections of our people, to brush them aside saying these are provincial prejudices or communal demands, is to ignore a growing reality. To ignore these sentiments is to repudiate the task of building National Unity.

These sentiments about a homeland and about language—these aspirations, are not reactionary. They are not, they need not be in conflict with the sentiments of All-India National movement. On the other hand, the growth of these sentiments and aspirations of the people belonging to different Nationalities has followed in the wake of the spread of the anti-imperialist consciousness among the masses. In actual fact, as we have seen, this takes place as the anti-imperialist, i.e., nationalist, movement spreads and penetrates deep into the peasant masses.

The peasant wakes up to general anti-imperialist consciousness—to the yearning for freedom and democracy for the whole of India. But this awakening; takes the form of the yearning for freedom and democracy in terms of his own homeland, his own language, etc. Anti-imperialist consciousness awakens “national” consciousness—national in the specific sense of the nationalities that make up India. You cannot separate the one from the other.

Such a development takes place only when the anti-imperialist movement goes down to the peasant masses. That is why Stalin says: “The national problem is dominantly a peasant problem.”

This close interlinking between the rising all-India political consciousness of the masses on the one hand and the waking up to life of a multi-national pattern on the other, each reacting on, and in its turn helping, the other—it is this which forms the progressive content of the rivalries and conflicts of this period- The other part of it, the husk, is of course manifested in competitions among the top bourgeoisie, such as the Bengal-Bihar competition, etc.

This shows the real maturity of the national movement, the real maturity of this multi-national consciousness. It is this same maturity which brings out into the forefront the fact that the problem is no more a mere problem of cultural separation and cultural freedom. The real basis is the full-throated urge of every nationality within this multi-national pattern for its fullest and freest development, free from all oppression and hindrances. The demand is for full and unfettered political and economic existence, as the only way of full and free development under the new conditions. The demand for freedom from British imperialism gets crystallised in the case of each waking nationality. In this demand for full and unfettered political and economic existence, the former problem cannot be solved separate from, in opposition to, the latter. It can only be solved through the latter.

This is the demand which we call: the demand of every nationality for self-determination. This demand becomes the progressive lever by means of which alone the various nationalities can be rallied and mobilised to fight shoulder to shoulder, for India’s freedom. This demand becomes the progressive lever for the richest and the highest flowering and development of every individual nationality itself. Diversity becomes the lever for strengthening unity, for enriching and developing that very unity.

To the Communists, this development is already becoming quite clear. But to the

ordinary patriot, this new aspect of the communal problem, as a problem of multi-national consciousness, has not yet become patent. We, the Communists, are able to see our way into the future by means of our theory and our ideology. By means of this, we are able to quickly see these elements in the present which are bound to develop in the future. The slogans of our national movement should not be slogans which are counterposed to, which stand in the way of the stages of future development but should be such as will take us on along with the stream of future historical development and will assist such development.

That is why we say that a basic understanding of this new turn in the development of the “communal problem,” of this new phase, is urgent and vital.

The Party itself has been groping its way towards this new understanding for a long period. Our resolution at Mantavaripallam (1938) took the first step forward in this direction. We were the only people at that time to see that Congress-League unity is the key to national unity. We were the only people at that time to urge negotiations between the Congress and the League. We were the only people at that time to see the transformation and change coming over the Muslim masses. The C. S. P. and other parties did not recognise any new turn in the situation; they still saw the problem in the old way—“the Muslim masses will come over to us and the League leadership will get isolated.”

What are the developments in the Muslim League during this time? At the time of the Congress elections, a section of the Muslim intelligentsia came over to the Congress and supported it. The radical election platform of the Congress was the main reason. The League leadership, however, put its own house in order and consolidated its strength to fight the elections. The League’s opposition to the Muslim Congress candidates however was not very successful.

But after the elections, the failure of the Congress to forge coalition ministries, the acts of commission and omission of the Congress Ministries in some of the provinces, created a resentment among the Muslim masses. This was seized upon by the League leadership to give an anti-Congress twist to the rising anti-imperialist upsurge among the Muslim masses, who were now rallying in ever-growing numbers round the Muslim League. The most radical section of the national leadership was blind to the new developments spreading among the Muslim masses. It saw in the growing League influence only the rise of “communalism.” They explained that the “reactionary” League leadership was exploiting the “backwardness” of the Muslim masses. As a solution they put forward the programme of “Muslim mass contact”—which was rightly considered by the Muslim Leaguers as a move to destroy their organisation.

We, Communists, saw in this development not only the growing rivalry between the bourgeoisie of both the sections but also the other, the progressive development too. We saw in the situation, looking forward to the future, not the “backwardness” of the Muslim masses, but their forwardness, their advancing political consciousness.

We saw in the growth of the Muslim League not the growth of communalism but the rise of anti-imperialist nationalist consciousness among the Muslim masses. We saw this as a forward step. By bringing together the Congress and the League and joining them on

common democratic demands, we knew that we could give a progressive expression to this upsurge of the Muslim masses and of the Muslim nationalities, we could weld this into firm anti-imperialist unity.

We put forward the slogan of Congress-League unity, we saw that the League leadership was playing the same oppositional role vis-a-vis British Imperialism as the Congress leadership was doing. We saw that the unity of both on the basis of a United National Front programme of democratic demands had to be forged to further Indian struggle for freedom. But we did not then discover the real democratic basis for Congress-League unity, for a lasting unity of Hindu and Muslim masses.

Congress was opposed to imperialist federation as the 1935 Constitution offered. So was the Muslim League. But united front to oppose the imperialist federation could be forged only when the two organisations agreed on the shape of the federation of independent India. The Congress conception of federation was defined in Nehru Constitution (in 1928) as one in which the residual powers were vested in the Centre and not in the federating units. Muslim League had opposed this conception vigorously then. Their conception of the federation for free India was a federation of autonomous and sovereign states. Why? Because the Muslim League wanted autonomy for regions in which Muslim nationalities like Sindhis, Pathans, Punjabis, Eastern Bengal Muslims lived. It was a just democratic demand. This really is the crux and kernel of all the various so-called “communal” demands raised by the Muslim League right from its inception upto the present time when they have been finally crystallised into the demand for Pakistan.

In 1938 we did not understand the real nature of the communal problem which was becoming clear in the process of national, political and economic development. We were groping towards it. It became crystal clear to us when in March 1940, the Muslim League adopted the Pakistan Resolution. In 1938, we were yet wrapped up in the theory, like the rest of the nationalists, that India was one nation and that the Muslims were just a religious-cultural minority and that Congress-League united front could be forged by conceding “protection of cultural and religious rights and demands.” We stood on the same basis as the Congress leadership, and were guilty of the charge of denying the peoples of the Muslim nationalities their just right to autonomy in free India.

Since 1940, the Party began to see that the so-called communal problem—especially Hindu-Muslim problem in India was really a problem of growing nationalities and that it could only be solved on the basis of the recognition of the right of self-determination, to the point of political secession, of the Muslim nationalities, as in fact of all nationalities which have India as their common motherland. In these days many comrades were shocked by the formulation that India was not one nation and its development was in the direction of a multi-national unity. Some of these doubts were cleared in the Party Letter of May 1941.

#### **IV. MARXIST-LENINIST TEACHING ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION**

From what has been said so far it is clear that the communal problem in India has entered a new phase. It is no more a problem of racial and religious differences. It is



emerging as a problem of many nationalities that are growing in India. The question of uniting the people of India in a single camp for achieving independence and democracy, cannot be solved unless we take note of the just and the democratic aspirations of the people of these nationalities to build their own free life in a free India, unless these demands and aspirations find place in our platform for United National Front. For the solution of the communal problem in India therefore we must turn to the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the national question, to its Stalinist application to Russia.

Stalin has given a pithy but pregnant definition of a Nation :

“A nation is a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.”

But this definition must not be understood as a static enumeration of a number of features, the co-existence of which determines whether a given group of people are a nation or not. This definition in fact describes the process of a people growing into a nation. In order to apply Stalin’s teaching to India we must understand this process of growth of nations and then apply that knowledge to our country.

A nation is not a static entity which has been in existence from time immemorial. Nations and national consciousness arise at a definite stage of social development. This is what Marxism-Leninism teaches us. This is how Comrade Stalin puts it—

“Modern nations are a product of a definite epoch of rising capitalism. The process of the abolition of feudalism and the development of capitalism was also the process of the development of peoples into nations. The British, the French, the Germans and the Italians formed into nations during the victorious march of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.”

There were feudal kingdoms and empires before the birth of capitalism. Some of them consisted of peoples speaking a single language, having the same culture. Others consisted of peoples or tribes speaking different languages and having different cultures. But these kingdoms and empires could not be called nations. Their transformation to nationhood, to national states, came about with the break-up of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. It came about when decentralised feudal economy based on village communities broke down, when its place was taken by commodity economy, when capitalist market and manufacture of goods for this market began to unify whole areas under one common economy. Formation of such national states furthered capitalist development and capitalist development in its turn promoted the formation of national states.

The earliest and the most classic examples of the formation of peoples into nations are to be seen in the cases of Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany. In all these cases, the unification of people into a nation resulted in a homogeneous unit with a single language, and with common historical and cultural traditions. Our liberal forefathers of the last century admired the process of the unification of England, Scotland and Wales into a single nation—Great Britain—which took place in the hey day of bourgeois revolution in the first half of the last century. They fondly imagined that the unification of the Indian people into a free national state would follow the same pattern. Since then this idea has become deeply rooted in the nationalist mind and is today the cause of a lot of confusion on the question of national unity.

But apart from this classic pattern of unification of peoples into nations, there is another pattern. During the second period of rising capitalism another type of national state arose in Eastern Europe. Here for historical reasons, a centralised state had already come into existence before the elimination of feudal disunity, before the rise of capitalism. “Mixed states made up of several nationalities which had not yet formed themselves into nations were already united into a common state”—this is how Stalin described such a centralised state. The Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Czarist empire were examples of such feudal centralised states.

With the development of capitalism these mixed states developed into “multi-national states with the more developed nation at the head and the remaining less developed nations in a state of political and economic subjection to the dominant nation” (Stalin). For instance, in the pre-war Czarist empire, it was the Great-Russian nation, the bourgeoisie of which was powerful in the Czarist state, which dominated and oppressed the less developed nationalities such as the Ukrainians, Georgians, Letts, Poles and Finns, etc. These nationalities too were developing towards nationhood but their growth was being thwarted, giving rise to the national movement and the national problem in Russia.

The Russian movement which was heading the struggle for democracy and Socialism had to tackle this problem. We have to learn a great deal from the manner in which the Russian Bolsheviks solved the question of uniting the people of different nationalities in a common struggle for democracy.

In Russia of the pre-revolutionary days we have a classical example of what happens inside a multi-national state—as capitalist development spreads and national unrest grows up among the people of the suppressed nationalities. Rapid industrial development took place in Russia between the years 1908 and 1917.

The Great Russian bourgeoisie acquired hold over the markets and the raw materials of the border regions. Growth of market and trade in these border regions gave birth to the national bourgeoisie in these regions whose interest thus came into conflict with those of the dominant Russian bourgeoisie.

At the same time a vast popular democratic upsurge was beginning to spread from one end of the Czarist empire to another. People throughout Russia including the border regions were demanding the end of Czarist autocracy, the abolition of landlordism, a democratic republic and an 8-hour day.

In this situation, separatist movements arose in the border regions, led by the national bourgeoisie of those respective regions. These raised the slogan of independence and separation from the Czarist empire—and sought to take advantage of the democratic national sentiment that was growing among the people of the respective nationalities. But they refused to organise and unite the people of their nationality for their own democratic demands in common with the rest of the Russian people.

The result of such movements was in practice to disrupt the unity of the peoples of Russia as a whole against Czarism, to take the masses of the people of that nationality away from the common struggle, to divide the ranks of the working class and peasantry. The slogan of independence and separatism in the mouth of the national bourgeoisie of the border regions did not create conditions for the real liberation of the peoples of these

regions from the Czarist yoke but was for them a means of bargaining with the great Russian bourgeoisie for a share of power.

The political parties of the Great Russian bourgeoisie raised the slogan of “Russia one and indivisible” and paid lip sympathy to the democratic demands of the surging popular movement. Their “Russia one and indivisible” did not mean revolutionary unification of the democratic popular movement for the overthrow of Czarism. Their lip sympathy to democratisation did not include even complete political autonomy to the peoples of the border regions. In essence their policy amounted to imperialist domination of the Russian bourgeoisie over the economy of the whole of Russia including the border regions.

How did the Russian Bolsheviks go about to solve the problem of nationalities? The corner stone of their policy was the drawing together of the toiling people of all nationalities and races in a joint revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the Czarist autocracy and of the bourgeoisie. In uniting the people of entire Russia for the common struggle against Czarist-imperialist autocracy, the Bolsheviks clearly defined the common objective.

This was “a consistently democratic republican structure”—in which “the right of all the nations forming part of Russia to freely secede and form independent states” was to be recognised. Thus the two key slogans of the national policy of the Bolsheviks were:

(1) Unity of the workers and peasants, of the common people, for revolutionary struggle for democracy.

(2) Recognition of the right of all nationalities to self-determination—to the point of secession.

The Bolsheviks were able to unite the overwhelming majority of the Russian peoples for the struggle against Czarism because they were the revolutionary party of the working class and thus proved themselves in practice the most implacable champions in the fight for democracy, for the abolition of landlordism, for a democratic republic, for the 8-hour day. They were able to smash the separatist moves of the bourgeoisie because they came out as the best champions of the oppressed nationalities in their fight for equality and self-determination.

The policy which the Mensheviks, the reformist leadership in the Russian labour movement, pursued, failed on both these points. In their struggle for democracy they relied upon the Russian bourgeoisie and not on the proletariat with the result that they capitulated at every stage to the former and betrayed the revolutionary struggle. Secondly, they refused to recognise the right of self-determination of the nationalities. They repeated the bourgeois slogan—“Russia one and indivisible” and offered to the nationalities only cultural rights. Their policy in practice amounted to supporting the oppression of the people of the border regions by the dominant Great Russian nationality. Their policy thus played into the hands of the bourgeois separatists of the border nationalities and only led to disruption of the joint people’s front against Czarism.

The Russian toiling masses rejected the policy of the Mensheviks and rallied round the slogans of the Bolsheviks. We see the result in the Soviet Union, a shining example for us of a model solution of the problem of nationalities in a country with some 200 nationalities.

## V. APPLICATION TO INDIA

Let us now apply these principles to the new phase of the communal problem in our country. To begin with it is quite clear that India was not a nation in the modern sense from times immemorial, from the days of Ashoka and Akbar. Nation-building in India begins, as in the case of all countries, with the advent of capitalism. This takes place in India with the British conquest. It is true that even before the British conquest, large feudal imperial states had come into existence which extended their sway over almost the whole of India. But these states did not develop into multi-nation states as in the case of the Eastern European states. They had already disappeared before the advent of capitalism. The process of nation-building in India begins under the British state in India, under conditions of struggle against imperialist exploitation. What form does it take?

Our nineteenth and early twentieth century liberal forefathers thought that the British conquest had laid the basis for the unification of India into a single nation and that the process had begun. All that was needed was effort to speed up political education and social reform among the people. India would then become a full-fledged single unified nation and be thus fit for self-government. In those days imperialists and their apologists based their denial of self-rule to India on the ground that India was not unified as a nation. While the liberals however, looked up to the imperialists to weld India into a nation, the militant nationalists of 1907-8 asserted that India was a nation, that she had been a nation since times immemorial—from the times of Ashoka and Akbar. This was their answer to the imperialist challenge.

They said self-rule was India's birth right as a nation. 'India is a nation', this slogan became the banner of the rising tide of the patriotic middle class movement of those days. From the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, one people, one nation, one language, one state. These became the slogans which inspired and unified the nationalist movement. Who said that India was not a single nation, that it could not have a single language, that it could not build its own free state? Only the imperialists. Thus ran the nationalist argument. Since those days India, a single nation, has become a tacitly accepted axiom of the nationalist movement.

Not only this. The nationalist movement of the early days was restricted to the advanced provinces of Bengal and Maharashtra—Hindu provinces with a common Hindu cultural background and languages allied to Hindi. The result was that the one nation idea got draped in Hindu cultural imagery with Hindi as the national language.

This one nation—one language idea, draped in Hindu imagery, has been carried over from the past into the consciousness of our modern nationalist movement. It persists even today at a time when the reality of our national development has become quite different; at a time when this development is taking the form more and more clearly of a multi-national pattern.

This conflict between an old and wrong conception still prevailing among the bulk of our nationalist movement and the unfolding reality of a multi-national development is one of the biggest hindrances to the solution of the communal problem. Marxist-Leninist teaching as applied to this reality enables us not only to understand it but to solve the

problem as well. The proletariat armed with this advanced theory knows that within the womb of the Indian national movement now preparing the ground for a free and democratic India, are throbbing not one but many baby nations. Comrade Stalin spoke of such a development as early as 1925:

"Who could have imagined that old Czarist Russia consisted of no less than fifty nationalities and ethnic groups? However, by breaking old chains and bringing a number of forgotten peoples and nationalities on the scene, the October Revolution gave them new life and new development. Now-a-days India is spoken of as a single whole. Yet there can be hardly any doubt that in the case of a revolutionary upheaval In India many hitherto unknown nationalities each with Its own language and its own distinctive culture will emerge on the scene."

In 1925 when this was written, it was a brilliant prophecy, proving the remarkable acumen of vision that Marxism alone can give. Today when the whole world including India is on the threshold of a great upheaval, this has become a growing reality. In spite of all the hindrances which imperialism places in the way of the normal development of India, in spite of the fact that the homeland areas of the different nationalities are cut up by arbitrary boundaries of states and provinces, these units are growing as nations economically and politically.

Each of these areas is now having its own Chamber of Commerce—for instance, Andhra, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab, etc. What does this show? It shows that the indigenous bourgeoisie in each area is attempting to consolidate its own market in its own homeland. Besides, in each of these areas there is development of their own language, culture and literature. Not only this, in some of these areas where one nation has been cut up into different provinces, the demand for unification of the nation into a single province has been put forward as a democratic demand. As mentioned above there is the demand for "Samyukta Karnatak," for separation of Andhra, for united Maharashtra. The demand for Pakistan, if we look at its progressive essence, is in reality the demand for the self-determination and separation of the areas of Muslim nationalities of the Punjab, N. W. Frontier, Sind, Baluchistan and of the eastern districts of Bengal.

It is this development which gives a new turn in this period to the communal and the national problem. The problem of uniting all these nationalities for the common problem of communal and national unity thus becomes a task of defending the country against fascist aggression, for winning freedom.

## **VI. SELF-DETERMINATION AND SEPARATION**

The starting point of the solution of the communal problem put forward by our Party is the urgent need for revolutionary unity of the peoples of our land to win national government and to defend the land from fascism. Our Party keeps in the forefront of our attention the fact that no nationality can have freedom and scope for free development until and unless all imperialist and feudal fetters are shattered, until and unless fascism is beaten back from the borders of our land and crushed.

We explain to the people two things:

(1) The problem of nationalities can only be solved in a firm and lasting manner under

Socialism when the disuniting factor of the bourgeoisie disappears:

But at the same time, a partial solution is possible under capitalism, but only under conditions of complete and full democracy.

The solution which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.), put forward in 1917 was one of a radical democratic revolution, of attaining complete democracy.

This is what demarcates our policy, as a revolutionary policy, from the constitutional and administrative ‘scheme-making’ in which Liberals and bourgeois-reformists indulge under the plea of solving the problem of Pakistan. To wander off into such constitution-mongering and boundary-making pastimes is to stray from the revolutionary path into the path of reformism. The problem before us today is not one of drawing maps and boundaries, of trying to partition India off under British rule—but of forging the revolutionary unity of action of all sections of our people to win national government, to win the common war of liberation against fascism and to secure the common freedom of all. This and this alone is the precondition to our people being able to remake boundaries in a democratic way, freed from all imperialist-feudal fetters.

This is what is stressed in para 1 of our Party’s resolution on “Pakistan and National Unity.” There we underline the point that the cornerstone of our policy is the unity of the masses as the vanguard of the national-movement.

But developments have to be taken into account in their actual reality, not in abstraction. Hence the nationalities and their national urges have to be taken as they are; this should be the starting point. How can we unify those various nationalist strivings in terms of our all-India national struggle? How can we give these various nationalist urges the dominant impress of all-India national consciousness? This is the problem.

All the present and past historical forms of oppression of the masses of the various nationalities have to be concretely taken into account. The imminent danger threatening all our peoples from the Fascist menace must be concretely stressed. Our national movement has to place before all our peoples a concrete, real picture of what it means to get rid of all this imperialist-feudal oppression and of what it means to win National Government and successfully crush the fascists. It is such a picture which should inspire them for united action today.

To bring together all the peoples, to bring together the urge of the various nationalities for freedom, on to a common platform, the platform of the United National Front—this is our task.

Our policy with respect to the communal problem fits into this general framework. The granting of the right of self-determination (including the right of secession) to all nationalities, including the Muslim nationalities, would forge revolutionary Hindu-Muslim unity as the core of national unity.

It must be clearly recognised, as has been pointed out in the foregoing, that uneven development under Imperialist rule has created a basis in our political life for inequality and the fear of domination between various nationalities.

In our land, the dominant national oppression is, of course, the imperialist oppression. But inside the national movement itself, because of the unequal development of the various nationalities, certain sections are more developed and more powerful, certain

others less developed and weaker. The factor breeds mutual distrust and suspicion inside the national movement.

The Muslim masses fear that they will be oppressed and exploited by “Hindu India.” Has this fear and suspicion any basis? To find an answer to this, we have to look not into the subjective intentions of parties and groups, but into objective developing reality. The uneven bourgeois development itself creates conditions wherein one dominant nationality may be in a position to stifle the growth of less developed and weaker nationalities in a free India. We saw tiny germs of this even during the period of the Congress Ministries. That is why we say that such a fear is quite an understandable fear.

Conditions must be created so that this inequality and uneven development should be used not against the people, but in favour of the people. The inequality should not become a factor retarding unity against imperialism and fascist invasion. The bourgeoisie uses it for disunity. The proletariat, on the other hand, (as in the case of the Soviet Union) uses the advanced technique of the forward nationalities to help the backward nationalities and to bring them up quicker and more easily to the level of the advanced ones.

Thus the demand for self-determination of the nationalities has to be looked upon as a just demand. The essence of this demand is equality and freedom from oppression. To refuse this demand means to sanction national inequality and oppression.

To the Congress patriot, who proudly looks back upon our entire past national movement and its achievements in unifying the Indian people, we have to explain that still greater and more glorious unity will result from the grant of self-determination to all nationalities. We have to explain to him how this policy creates revolutionary national unity today for national defence and national government, how the experience of common struggle in defending the country from the fascists will be the biggest cementing bond; how the removal of all causes of mutual distrust and suspicion alone will ensure the free and voluntary co-operation of all the nationalities in a free Indian Union; how the need for winning freedom, as well as the need to defend that freedom after it is won, will both act as a mighty unifying factor, once the fear of mutual domination is removed.

We have to put before him a picture of a multi-national India in which the problem of Indian unity is solved in a higher and more lasting manner. We have to show him concretely that we Communists are not dividers, but unifiers; that our solution leads to a higher unity on a higher plane, a unity the like of which India has not seen in her history.

We have to explain to him how the National Congress itself in its resolution passed by the Working Committee at its Delhi Session (March, 1942) did recognise a diversity inside India’s unity and did declare that no territorial unit would be coerced into joining the Indian Union against its will. This together with Congress formation of provinces on a linguistic basis, national songs like Tagore’s well-known song, etc., show that in the mind of the Congress patriot itself, the idea of a multi-national pattern in our land is not foreign.

Only by convincing the Congress patriot that the grant of self-determination really leads to unity can we isolate the influence of the Hindu-minded communal reactionary, who under the garb of “Akhand Hindustan” fans the flames of distrust and hatred

between the Hindus and Muslims and really supports national inequality and oppression. His slogan of "Akhand Hindustan" leads in fact not to unity, but to disunity and disruption.

It was in March, 1940, that the Muslim League put forward its slogan of Pakistan. The Congress had put forward non-co-operation as an oppositional weapon to extort power from Imperialism. In exactly the same way, the Muslim League too, realising the anti-war and anti-imperialist sentiments of the Muslim masses put forward a parallel slogan to that of the Congress, in order to share power, at the same time get the backing of the Muslim masses. The Congress declared: "If we are given independence. we shall support, the war." The League declared: "If we are given Pakistan, we shall support the war."

But there was more in the slogan of Pakistan than this. And that is the fact that within the slogan was included, in a distorted form, the rising national urge of the Muslim nationalities which had awakened to life with the spreading of political consciousness during this period. It is to this urge of the Muslim nationalities that the slogan of Pakistan with its talk of "our homeland," etc., appealed.

That is why this slogan has gripped the minds of the Muslim masses so strongly and is doing so more and more strongly day after day. This is what explains the rapidly growing influence of the Muslim League among the Muslim masses.

Since 1940 till today, this influence has been rising steadily, the popularity of the slogan of Pakistan among the Muslim masses has been rising steadily.

This is how the slogan of Pakistan has to be assessed. To forget that the democratic core within the Pakistan demand, the core which the Muslim masses really demand, is the right of Muslim nationalities to self-determination is to remain blind to realities. Such blindness will lead us all to common disaster. It is this democratic core, which has a basis in actual life, which explains the rapidly growing influence of the Muslim League and of the Pakistan slogan among the Muslim masses.

We have, therefore, to put our policy of self-determination to the Muslim peoples concretely in such a manner that appeals to their national consciousness. We must make real to them the patriotic national consciousness that binds each Muslim nationality to its homeland and that finds expression in its attachment to the Pakistan slogan. We must put before each Muslim nationalist a picture of free life in his homeland, in the land of his forefathers, among his fellow-nationalists.

This is the real need and urge of the Muslim masses, to concede it will inspire and enthuse them for the common struggle, shoulder to shoulder with his Hindu brethren, for National Government, defence and freedom. It is the only way of forging Hindu-Muslim unity to win Indian freedom first and afterwards to defend that freedom. It is the only way of weaning them away from separatist and disruptive slogans.

In this sense alone is the urge for Pakistan among the Muslim peoples real. In the religious sense, it is unreal. Only so long as their real democratic rights are not granted will they cling to Pakistan in the religious sense—in the hope that Pakistan will satisfy their national urge for self-determination.

The grant of self-determination to the Muslim nationalities has however nothing to do with Pan-Islamism. The theories of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Slavism figured prominently



in the discussions on the national question in the Soviet Union in the immediately post-war period. The Bolsheviks exposed how counter-revolutionary elements were using Pan-Islamic and Pan-Slavic sentiments to disrupt the unity of the peoples fighting for socialism.

In India, Pan-Islamic sentiment in the sense of a fellow feeling for brother Muslim nationalities in the Middle East or Central Asia, fighting for freedom against imperialism, played a role in awakening the Muslims to anti-imperialism. But Pan-Islamism cannot become the basis for the Muslim people in India of their struggle for self-determination. Pan-Islamism would not unite the Muslim people in India with the other Indian people in the common struggle but divide them.

It is well to remember that the Pan-Islamic idea did not take root in Indian politics. Dr. Mohammed Iqbal who put forward the Pakistan idea as early as 1931 did not base it on Pan-Islamic sentiments. The great poet put forward his idea in the framework of Indian patriotism:

“As far as I have been able to read the Muslim mind, I have no hesitation in declaring that if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own homelands is recognised as the basis of a permanent settlement he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India.” (Presidential Address before the Muslim League Session, 1931).

Mr. Jinnah has defined the Pakistan state as a secular state and resisted attempts to define it as a Muslim theocratic state as *Hukumat-e-Ilahiya*. Only the enemies of unity equate Pakistan with Pan-Islamism and impute “extra-territorial loyalty” to Muslim League patriots. The core of the Pakistan demand is the democratic urge among the newly awakened Muslim nationalities for self-determination and freedom and not Pan-Islamism.

It must be stressed very sharply that our Party’s solution does not amount to: “Give the Muslim League leaders what they want. They want Pakistan. It is true that this is an evil, but compared to what will happen if we don’t achieve communal unity, it is a lesser evil.”

Such a solution is essentially a bourgeois-reformist solution, its root is the conception of unity as a mere “top unity” between “leaders.” This approach does not think of unity in terms of a developing people’s movement; it does not think in terms of uniting the Hindu and Muslim masses by granting a democratic demand that is just and that will unite them.

On the contrary, this approach is a bourgeois approach, which depends for unity purely on the subjective goodwill of individual leaders. Such an approach naturally leads only to defeatism and demoralisation—to cursing this or that leader as “impossible”!

The right of Muslim nationalities to self-determination is not a “lesser evil”; it is a just right. Our Party’s solution is not:

“Give the League leaders what they want; it does not matter if it means partition of India.”

On the other hand, what we say is:

“Concede to the Muslim peoples their just democratic demands and thus lay the basis

for unbreakable unity between the Hindu and Muslim masses, unity to achieve National Government, unity to defend our common land from the fascists.”

The grant of the right of self-determination to all the nationalities of our land will in fact lead to a greater and more glorious unity of India than we have ever had till now. National unity that is forged on this basis will let loose such a flood of popular energy and initiative that our land has never seen since the glorious days of Congress-Khilafat unity. The Free India that will emerge as the result of this will be an India where all disruptive feudal-imperialist influences are destroyed, where the utmost democracy prevails, where the people have come into their own in every national state. Under such conditions, the interests of the people in every national state, that make up the Indian Union, are identical: they have everything in common, nothing in conflict. They gain everything by sticking to each other: they only stand to lose by breaking away.

The denial of the right of self-determination means denial of equality and freedom to every nationality in a free India. It means supporting the domination of weaker nationalities by stronger ones. It means denying to our peoples the freedom which all of us, in common, are demanding from the British—and to secure which, all of us have to fight together.

It is the denial of the right of self-determination which will disunite and disrupt India. It will increase mutual distrust and suspicion, it will play into the hands of the separatists. It will keep our peoples divided, it will keep the Congress and the League divided, at a time when the price of such disunity is the death and destruction of all we hold dear in common.

Does it help the cause of India's unity, to keep up Congress-League disunity? Does it help the cause of India's unity, to have Amery sit on our necks tighter, to lay our people helpless and prostrate before the Jap invader?

Does denial of the right of self-determination help us to go forward to a free India—without which all the “Unity” we shall have is the “unity of slavery?” Does coercion of any nationality into remaining inside the free Indian Union make the unity of that Indian Union firmer? Does it help us to defend our newly-won freedom better?

Every Congress patriot must see that it is the grant of the right of self-determination that leads to the greater unity and freedom of the peoples of India. It is its denial which leads to the exact opposite.

The Soviet Union gives us a glorious example today of such unity achieved through the free and voluntary co-operation of equal nationalities.

To the Muslim patriot we declare:

The granting of the right of self-determination recognises the patriotic national consciousness that binds each Muslim nationality to its homeland. It gives to every such nationality the freedom to take its destiny into its own hands and build up its own political and economic life in its homeland, in a free Indian Union. In a free India, the Pathan will have his own national state, with the right to secede; the Punjabi Muslim will have his own national state with the right to secede; and so on.

This together with guarantee of the cultural rights of the Muslims in provinces where they form a minority will remove all possibility of national or communal oppression. It

will assure the Muslims of India a free and equal place in the future Union of Free India.

This is what the Muslim peoples really want today. This is why they so enthusiastically support the Pakistan slogan of the Muslim League.

But today the Muslim peoples together with all their other brother peoples of India are under the same feudal-imperialist fetters: they are both menaced by the same fascist invader. Their freedom cannot be won separately from each other; the League can no more win self-determination for the Muslim peoples apart from the Congress than the Congress can win freedom for India apart from the League.

The Muslim peoples of India have to stand shoulder to shoulder with all their brother peoples, the League has to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Congress, to win National Government of National Defence. Only through such united action can a free democratic India emerge and conditions be created in which all the peoples of India can enjoy their freedom.

And once the common freedom of all the Indian peoples has been won, the Muslim peoples will be able to defend their newly-won freedom in their homeland best by free and voluntary co-operation with their brother-peoples of India in a free Indian Union. In the free and voluntary co-operation of all the brother-peoples of India, Hindu and Muslim alike, lies best security for each. Those who won their freedom by standing shoulder to shoulder with each other can best defend that freedom also by standing shoulder to shoulder with each other.

That is why the interests of the Muslim peoples, today as in the future, lie in unity and close co-operation with their other brother-peoples of India. That is why the guarantee by the Congress of the right of self-determination of Muslim nationalities and the cultural rights of the Muslim minorities should mean for the Muslim peoples not separation from the rest of India, but a more glorious and more lasting unity within a free Indian Union, in which all, Muslim and non-Muslim alike—are equal partners.

## **VII. CONCRETE SOLUTION**

It now remains to concretise our solution to show how our policy is going to be applied to Muslim nationalities.

It is not our purpose here to attempt any detailed ethnographic surveys. This is neither politically necessary nor practically feasible. The idea is to attempt a rough concretisation of our policy so as to see (1) how closely our solution satisfies the democratic essence contained in the Pakistan demand, and (2) how far our solution offers a basis for negotiations between the Congress and the League for unity.

It is not a question of mechanically applying rigid pre-conceived notions to actual life, but one of genuinely looking for national urge and national consciousness wherever they exist in actual life.

Our solution should neither lead to hair-splitting ethnographic discussions on the one hand, nor should it be a mere fig-leaf to trick the Muslim peoples into unity!

Take Baluchistan. The Baluchis who are Muslims, speaking the Baluchi language form 98-99 per cent of the population of Baluchistan and the State of Kalat. They form a distinct nationality. So in the case of Baluchistan no difficulty arises.

Take the Pathans next. They are Muslims. They form more than 90 per cent of N.W.F. Province. So strong is the urge among the Pathan nationality for self-determination that even though the N.W.F. Province is one of the strongest Congress provinces, the Pathan delegation at the Allahabad A.I.C.C. (1942) would not vote against Rajaji's Resolution on Pakistan. To avoid being forced to vote against Rajaji's resolution, they absented themselves at the time of voting. They appreciated the stand of our Party on self-determination.

The example of the Pathans clearly shows the correctness of our policy.

In the Punjab, the Muslims of Western Punjab (beyond the River Sutlej) bear the distinct impress of a nationality with a contiguous territory, language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up. These Western districts have a Muslim population of over 60 per cent on an average, in many cases this percentage exceeds 70 or 80. But the question is not one of religion or of numerical preponderance. The dominant impress of the particular nationality is there on the life of this whole region.

This is why we grant the right of self-determination to this Muslim nationality of Western Punjab. The Sikhs and the Hindus in the eastern districts of the Punjab can easily come to a settlement with Muslims of the western districts on the basis of self-determination and guarantee of cultural rights. They can thus form a united autonomous Punjab, with the right to secede from the rest of India.

Take Sind next. The question here arises: Do the Sindhi Muslims form a nationality or do the Sindhis as a whole form a nationality? This question, of course, has to be answered not by *a priori* arguments, but by actually examining the life and consciousness of the people in Sind itself. And judged by this criterion I think that the Sindhis as a whole form a distinct nationality. Granting the Sindhis the right of self-determination would, of course, satisfy the national aspirations of the Sindhi Muslims who form part of the Sindhi nationality.

Ticklish questions which may be raised in this connection such as: "When a plebiscite comes up to decide the issue of separation, do the Sindhis as a whole vote or do only the Sindhi Muslims vote," have to be settled by negotiation. Our Party's stand, of course, is that the entire people belonging to the nationality will decide the issue of separation. But the main point here is that the grant of self-determination to the Sindhis is enough to settle the problem of unity and united struggle today; it is enough to serve as a basis for negotiations between the Congress and the League.

Then comes the question of Bengal. Firstly the Bengalis form a distinct nationality and so should be given the right of self-determination. There is much more in common between the Bengali Hindu and the Bengali Muslim than between the Bengali Muslim and say, the Pathan.

But in this case over and above this fact, Eastern Bengal forms a special problem. Here generally speaking there is a Muslim population of more than 60 per cent. Within the framework of a common nationality, the Muslim peasantry of Eastern Bengal has a distinct cultural complex of its own which has made its impress on Eastern Bengal as a separate entity. We have to recognise this. In the case of nationalities too, there are such things as transitional forms, and we have to recognise in Eastern Bengal precisely such a

transitional stage of development.

The crux of the matter is:

How best can we unite the oppressed peasantry of Eastern Bengal for the common struggle, recognising their special position?

The solution put forward in our Party resolution, on the one hand, enables the peasantry of East Bengal to share and enrich the common national heritage of Bengal; on the other hand, it enables us to unite them and to convince them that they would be better off if they remained within the Bengali State. It satisfies their urge and by this very means, paves the way for their remaining inside the Bengali state. Such a solution alone will enable us to isolate the separatists and pave the way for a political-revolutionary unity of the Bengali people.

The Muslims in the other provinces (including Eastern Punjab) form interspersed minorities. Their cultural rights will be guaranteed. It is these very rights (question of education, text-books, etc., in the Urdu language and such other demands) that formed the bone of contention between the Congress and the League during the Congress Ministry period in the U.P. The U.P. example already showed that in such cases the demands of the minorities no more rested on hazy religious ground, but had already been shifted to the modern political plane. That is why the guarantee of cultural rights, etc., is sufficient in these cases.

The question of the other nationalities cannot be dealt with in minute detail here. The general principles however are clear and are laid down in the Party Resolution.

One more point. Does all this really correspond to the essence of the demand of the Muslim League? It surely does. The famous Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League states the following basic principle of its Pakistan demand:

“That geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute “Independent State” in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.”

Our solution concedes to the “constituent units” of the zones specified in this resolution—namely to Sind, N.W.F. Province, Punjab and Eastern districts of Bengal, the right of self-determination to the point of secession. This means that these states, whose exact boundaries could be determined by the people later, can be autonomous and sovereign and form the federation within an Indian Union or they may secede and form their federation without.

The National Congress must recognise this right of these Muslim nationalities as of the other nationalities of which India is composed. Why? Because free India must be based on the principle of equality of the various nationalities. That alone would guarantee a united India—a voluntary federation of autonomous national states. Muslim peoples and their leaders are not bent upon separation. Grant them the right of equality and you create the basis for national unity today, and for the greater and more glorious unity of India tomorrow.

It is necessary in closing to stress once again a point, which is really the crux of the

Communist policy. That is, the question of the self-determination of nationalities is to be looked upon as a political-revolutionary question, not a constitutional question.

It is the constitutional reformists who begin with the question: whether to separate or not? We look upon the right of self-determination as the hallmark of sovereignty, and of equality. The grant of this right, including right of separation, dispels distrust and acts as the strongest unifying bond here and now. The object is to unite, not to partition off.

In our practical application of our policy, the way in which we demarcate the nationalities is judged by: How shall we define the nationalities in such a way as to create conditions where there will be the fullest and freest flowering and development of national characteristics?

It follows from the above that the question of when, whether, how (etc.) to separate, cannot and must not be decided today. The grant of the right of separation should not be confused with the actual exercise of this right, It should not be confused with the actual expediency of the exercise of this right in this or that particular case. This latter question can only be decided in any particular case at any particular time in terms of whole social development. Every case would be concretely judged on the basis of whether separation serves the interests of social and political development taken as a whole.

Unite all the nationalities for freedom, for national defence—this is our fundamental aim. Do we get a weapon in our hands in order to unite the Hindu and Muslim masses here and now and isolate the separatists? Do we define nationalities in such a manner that in a federated democratic India every nationality will be able to develop fully and freely?—These are the two fundamental criteria of the practical application of our policy.

The entire destiny of our nation today depends on national unity, on Congress-League unity. Whether we win National Government and go forward to a free India—or whether we pass helplessly into the arms of the Japs; this is the issue. No longer can the solution of the problem of Congress-League unity be delayed. And there is no other way of forging such unity except by conceding the right of self-determination to all the nationalities of India, including the Muslim nationalities.

# WORK FOR CONGRESS-LEAGUE AGREEMENT

*(Manifesto of the Communist Party of India for Unity Week, November 1942)*

The Communist Party of India, in this solemn hour of our country's destiny, reminds all fellow-fighters for freedom of the glorious heritage of 1920-21, of Hindu-Muslim unity, when in the fire of common experience, through common sufferings, in the common cause of freedom we learnt that our united might is invincible.

Who will dare stand in the way of Indian freedom when the masses of our two great communities stand united, when the great organisations of the Congress and the Muslim League join in a united front on a common programme of defending the existence of our ancient nation and winning its freedom?

This simple truth we can ignore only at our peril. The sooner we recognise it the faster we will realise our national responsibility, and go forward to discharge our patriotic duty.

The Japanese Fascists are pitiless and powerful enemies. In the holy defence of our Motherland, we shall have to mobilise every able-bodied son of our great people, give him a rifle and a stout heart. We need the all-embracing unity of our people and boundless courage in every breast.

Can an alien bureaucracy create such a front of unity? No! Its very existence depends upon our disunity; its only strength is our division; its way is to keep us divided, play brother against brother.

Can an alien bureaucracy inspire such courage in our people? NO, NEVER! It only knows how to suppress our people. It hates the patriot-heroes as enemies. It encourages the careerists who love themselves and not their people, who would serve it and forsake the people.

Can an alien bureaucracy command the patriotism of the people and lead them into the battle of India? NEVER, NEVER, NEVER! Its relation with our people is that of master and slave. Under the banner of patriotism, our awakened people have fought it for elementary rights and to be masters in our own country. It cannot talk in the name of patriotism, it only knows how to crush our patriotism. It cannot mobilise our people, it only knows to drive them like cattle.

All self-respecting Indians, except the craven and the contemptible few, recognise that India needs here and now a Provisional National Government, manned by the trusted leaders of India, of the National Congress, and the Muslim League and of the other patriotic parties. All see that such and such a Government alone can set aglow in each of the 400 million hearts of the Indian people, the fire of patriotism, which alone will make a total national resistance to the foreign invader possible.

Hindus and Muslims can never unite! Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb will not even sit in the same room! Thus whisper the evil tongues of the alien bureaucrats, the enemies of our people. Thus speak those who arrested Gandhiji and the Congress leaders. They do so because they do not want to see them united. They know that the unity of the Congress

and the League will be the end of their privileged rule, of a handful of foreign bureaucrats lording it over our vast country, of a soulless and thoughtless regime which today has become the millstone round the neck of our people.

We can and must unite. Only liars and defeatists amongst us repeat the phrases of the enemy and say Congress-League unity is impossible. Do not the Muslim masses want Gandhiji and the Congress leaders released? They do! Do not the overwhelming majority of Congressmen and Hindus want to live peacefully with their Muslim brethren, grant their just demands and get their co-operation for the common national demand? Certainly they do!

Instead of national unity we are in the grip of a national crisis. On the one hand, the imperialist rulers refusing to part with power are attacking the national movement embodied in the Congress. On the other, enraged patriots are destroying the means of national defence in the name of national freedom. In this clash and conflict the country is going to pieces.

The very experience of the national crisis is turning the face of our people towards national unity as the only way out of the crisis and towards victory.

More and more people, both Hindus and Muslims, participants and non-participants, are beginning to see that the campaign of sabotage and anarchy helps only the bureaucracy to mow us down, helps only the foreign invader by clearing the path for his advance.

More and more they see that continued Government repression only feeds the fire that is destroying the nation's strength, the people's morale and the actual means of defence, that only the coming invader can profit thereby.

More and more they have begun to see that the only way out of this vicious circle is Congress-League agreement to man an All-Parties' National Government of National Defence and National Salvation.

Such an agreement incorporating the united will of the Indian people to shoulder the responsibility of defending their country, in alliance with the United Nations, through their own Government, is itself the mightiest sanction which the Indian people have ever forged. It will force the imperialist rulers to bend before the united will of the Indian nation and hand over our country to us, to be defended by us as our own. '

Such an agreement will immensely strengthen the hands of the progressive sections of the peoples of the United Nations, and above all, inside Britain itself, who want the co-operation of the Indian people in the war against the Fascist aggressors and advocate settlement with Indian patriotic political parties.

Such an agreement will completely encircle the handful of imperialist reactionaries, who in their blind greed to hold on to our beloved Motherland as their coveted colony, are actually playing with the fate of our people as well as their own. Such an agreement will seal their doom, end the era of British Raj over India and usher in the period of Indian Swaraj and of brotherly alliance between the Indian and the British people as equal partners in the grand alliance of the freedom-loving United Nations.

How to get Congress-League agreement? The Congress leaders are in jail, the Congress is under ban and the League leadership is not taking the initiative. The people



need national unity as they do bread and water. Our fate and future depends upon it. Without unity, there is no alternative to blind destruction today as there will be none to catastrophe and death when the fascist invasion begins. This grim realisation must inspire our patriotic will for unity.

Where there is a will, there is a way. The people can and must find it. The leaders can be made to move and they will respond if those who are already fanatically convinced about the immediate need and urgency for unity begin rallying the people in ever larger numbers behind the slogan of Congress-League Unity.

Difficulties can and must be surmounted. They pale into nothingness before the need for unity.

For centuries we have lived together in this common Motherland of ours. We have enriched each other's culture, language and the arts. Now we are faced with a common peril, total destruction of all that we hold dear at the hands of the Fascist aggressor. The bureaucracy won't let us man our own defence and have our own Government which will have the confidence of our entire people. Must we not get together for our very existence?

Defence of the Motherland—is it not our common concern?

National Government of National Salvation—is that not our common need and immediate aim?

Must we not unitedly force back the imperialist bureaucracy and take our destiny in our own hands?

Is it not in our joint interests that our country takes its place alongside world democracy and the Islamic world?

And when we both want to fight for a free India, can we not agree what that free India would be like? All already agree that it won't be freedom if it did not ensure that no nationality or community could oppress another.

The two organisations which together command the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the Hindu and Muslim masses have moved towards each other, very nearly towards a common understanding. The League in its Bombay Working Committee meeting has tried to allay the Congress fear that it is not serious about the national demand by reiterating the goal of complete independence and supporting the demand of really responsible National Government if the Muslim demand is guaranteed. The Congress in its Bombay A.I.C.C. resolution has tried to allay Muslim fears by pledging complete autonomy to the federating units and residuary powers.

The logical culmination of this mutual reorientation, of the League thinking and acting more and more in common national terms, of the Congress becoming in word and practice, more and more considerate to Muslim fears and interests, can only be a Congress-League agreement. There is no other way out for either organisation, in their own and common interests. Speed up the process, this is the call of common patriotism.

The position of the Communist Party is clear and emphatic. We declare that in a free India, all nationalities, Muslims or otherwise, having a contiguous territory as their homeland, common language, culture, common economic life and psychological make-up must have the right to form sovereign states which will come together in a joint Indian

Federation or Union. Each unit must have the right to secede if it so desired.

Our stand has been welcomed by the Muslim Leaguers, but the latter hold back because they doubt if the Congress will accept it. Most of the Congressmen are prepared to come up to autonomous provinces with a sovereign status, but they are not prepared to go so far as we do because they do not yet trust the Muslim League.

We are confident, an abiding solution of the communal problem, achievement of Congress-League agreement is possible only on the basis we advocate. Our solution is based on justice, the same undying principle on which the battle of Indian freedom is based—of self-determination. The freedom we claim for our country as a whole must be extended to all the nationalities that inhabit our vast land. The edifice of a free India can only be built on the basis of people's consent and not through coercion of the weak or the backward. We have no doubt that a free India will also be a United India, the Hindu and Muslim masses having fought together the greatest common battle will not fall apart in the hour of victory but get still closer together to build a common destiny grander than we have ever known before.

Our ardent appeal to the Muslim Leaguers is: your right of self-determination will remain on paper if you do not intervene in the national crisis. Hindus, Muslims and all will pass from under British domination to Jap slavery if you let the situation drift. The harder you work for the release of the Congress leaders, the more unequivocal your support to the national demand, the more ardently you work for Congress-League agreement, the easier it will be to get the Congress to accept willingly and enthusiastically the right of self-determination. The Congress is in jail, you are free. You discharge your patriotic responsibility and none will be able to deny you your just right.

Our appeal to Congressmen is: destruction of national defence and anarchy against the people, is not the path to National Government but national suicide, The shortest cut to National Government is Congress-League agreement. Appeal to the patriotism of the Muslim brethren, concede their just demand for self-determination and such a mighty United National Front of the Indian battle will emerge which will sweep everything before it, the British bossdom of the present will become a nightmare of the past, and our 400 millions will stand arrayed in an unbreakable front for Indian freedom, for world humanity. Let us have faith in our own brother patriots, confidence in the sound instincts of our own people. Congress-League agreement comes the sooner, the harder you work for it. This time the move for unify cannot fail, it is the existence of all that is at stake. Through disunity common death or through unity common salvation. These alone are the alternatives.

The Communist Party of India appeals to Leaguers, Congressmen and to all to join hands with it for a mass unity campaign to bring' together the Hindu and Muslim masses for urgent and common demands.

**—STOP REPRESSION**

**—RELEASE THE CONGRESS LEADERS**

**—CONGRESS-LEAGUE AGREEMENT NOW**

**—FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

To work for Congress-League unity is to put our patriotism into practice. To hold back and find fault with the Congress or the League is to nurse a grudge against your own brother, indulge in phrase-mongering when the situation is too grave for words, do nothing to rescue the country from the mad hands of the imperialist bureaucrats, and do nothing to resist the Fascist aggressors.

The Communist Party of India is pledged to campaign for Congress-League agreement:

- in every village and tehsil,
  - in every town and city,
  - inside every college and office,
- wherever a Communist lives and works.

**FORWARD TO UNITY**

**ONWARD TO VICTORY!**

## APPENDIX

### *Population Figures of Muslims in Majority Areas (1931 Census)*

<b>I. PUNJAB</b>		<b>II. BENGAL</b>	
(Western Districts)		(Eastern Districts)	
1. Lahore	59.9	1. Nadia	61.6
2. Sialkot	62.1	2. Murahidabad	55.5
3. Gujranwalla	70.7	3. Jessore	62.0
4. Shaikupara	34.8	4. Rajahahi ...	75.7
5. Gujrat	63.7	5. Rangpur	71.0
6. Shahpur	82.8	6. Rogra	83.5
7. Jhe'um	89	7. Pabna	76.9
8. Rawalpindi	82.8	8. Mulda	54.2
9. Attack	91	9. Dacca	69.8
10. Mianwali	87	10. Mymensingh ...	76.6
11. Montgomeri	69.1	11. Faridpur	65.1
12. Lyallpur	62.5	12. Bakargunj (Barisal)	72.4
13. Jhang	83.1	13. Tippera	76.0
14. Muraffarpur	86.5	14. Noakhali	76.5
15. Dera Gazikhan	86.1	15. Chittagong	76.7
16. Biloch Transfrontier		16. Sylhat (Assam) ...	59.2
	Total		99.9
17. Moltan	80.2		
<b>III. SIND</b>		<b>IV. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER</b>	
1. Karachi	71.3	1. Hazara	95.0
2. Hyderabad	69.5	2. Peshawar	92.2
3. Nawabshah	76.0	3. Kohat	92.4
4. Larkhana	83.3	4. Bauna	87.0
5. Sokkur	70.0	5. Dora Ismail Khan	86.0
f. Thar Parkar	52.5		
7. Upper Sind Frontier	89.9		
		<b>V. BALUCHISTAN</b>	
1 British Baluchistan	87.0	2. Baluchistan States	97.5