

## 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 Party 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-unioned 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 the 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.

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