

Appendix I

PARTITION OF BENGAL AND PUNJAB (Circular to All Party Committees of B. P. I. Before Partition)

The question of partition of Bengal and the Punjab become one of the most burning issues of the day and it is particularly agitating the minds of the people of those two provinces. The issue of partition came to the forefront as a direct result of the Declaration made by the British Government on February 20, 1947 in course of which it was stated that "His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interest of the Indian people."

Since the days of the Cabinet Mission, scores of statements and declarations have been made on behalf of the British Government regarding the future political status of India. But, almost each of these statements have been contradicted by declarations made subsequently. The long-term plan of the Cabinet Mission envisaged a Union centre for the whole of India with certain reserved subjects and autonomous provinces with residuary power. But this latest declaration has definitely scrapped the Central Indian Union and encouraged rivalries among different sections of the Indian people. It has made the British Government the sole arbiter regarding the fate of the people of India and has paved the way for the retention of British imperial interests in India by taking advantage of the zonal rivalries among the

Indian people. This is patent fact and cannot be lost sight of by those who really want to see India free from the yoke of foreign domination.

The Congress leaders, however, have an entirely different outlook. They are putting their whole weight on the side of the British Government and are asking the resurgent Indian people to lay down their arms directed against British Imperialism and place their confidence on the pronouncements made by the British Rulers. They have allied themselves with the British Power and are determined to accept whatever concessions they are offered by the British masters in order to consolidate their strength for furthering the cause of the propertied classes of India. That the Congress leaders do not stand for relieving the distress of the toiling millions of India has been amply proved in course of their work as members of the Interim Government. They are cutting down the elementary rights of the Indian people, e. g., right to strike by the workers. Before their very eyes a reign of terror has been let loose on the poorer sections of the Indian people fighting for their bread and the right of Association. Thus although they are sitting tight against the struggle of the toiling people, they are patting the back of the Indian capitalists, by submitting to their demands as has been done in the case of the recent Budget proposals of the Central Government.

Such being the standpoint of the Congress High Command, they are manoeuvring to secure for them the widest orbit of control. For this they are not even caring to eschew their old political traditions and principles. It was the Congress Working Committee which first proposed the partition of the Punjab province into Hindu-Sikh and Muslim majority zones. This set the ball of disruption rolling and the demand for partitioning Bengal into West Bengal and East Bengal provinces was immediately raised first by a hotch-potch of interested elements

to be followed later by the Bengal Provincial Congress.

These neo-protagonists of partition have, it seems, totally forgotten their arguments against the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League. They seem to forget that until lately they were propagating the feasibility of 'self-determination' of various nationalities in India on the basis of language and culture and definitely not religion. For furthering their selfish sectional interests, these new champions of partition are deliberately betraying the pioneers and martyrs of Indian national revolution who have fought and faced the British gallows for a united and greater Bengal. They try to hide their treachery with our glorious revolutionary traditions of the past by putting forward cheap jingoistic communal sentiments of despair and reaction arising out of a fear complex.

As for ourselves we are totally opposed to this proposed scheme of partition as we consider it as absolutely mechanical which can only serve the purposes of the Hindu and Sikh vested interests. It is evident that this scheme cannot solve the communal problem in any way, rather the scheme renders the communal minorities in the North Punjab and Eastern Bengal much more helpless as the migration of these minorities is not possible. The arguments, we used in course of our total opposition to Pakistan, are equally applicable here. We will never be prepared to concede the differentiation of nationalities on the basis of Religion. We consider Religion to be a personal affair of every individual which has little to do with a historically evolved nationality. We boldly assert that we stand by the differentiation of nationalities on the basis of language and culture, and that we stand for a Greater Bengal which must be brought into being by including the Bengali-speaking areas of Assam and Bihar viz; Surma Valley, Manbhum, Singhbhum, etc into Bengal.

It must be clearly understood that this bane of communalism is the creation of the British Government and its lackeys for retaining their stranglehold over India. It has been deliberately infiltrated through the Communal Award and separate electorates. The Government of India Act of 1935 was totally undemocratic as among others, it laid a solid foundation for an Indian constitution on the basis of communally separate electorates, weightage for the majority community in the Muslim Majority provinces and franchise for only 13 p. c. of the population. The leftist parties all over India beginning from 1936 onwards were agitating for boycotting and wrecking the 1935 Act. But the Congress leadership accepted the Constitution, formed Ministries in different Provinces and worked the Act in all possible way. This action on the part of the Congress High Command and certain other glaring omissions and commissions on their part resulted in the consolidation of the strength of Muslim League in certain provinces and the formation of stable League Ministries in those provinces. It is mainly due to the acceptance of the Separate Electorate scheme of the British Government and the 1935 Government of India Act by the Congress that we find a most reactionary and communal Ministry in Bengal today. And now to save their skin and face, the Congress leaders are renouncing their principles and asking for a separation of the province. They are after righting a wrong by committing another wrong which is impractical and impossible.

The idea is gaining ground among the supporters of separation move that they will get their demand by the mere asking. But there is hardly any chance like that. The League cannot accept separation as that will definitely weaken their proposed Pakistan state and there is little chance for the British Government to come forward to pull the chestnut out of the fire for the Congress. They would rather enjoy their supremacy at the cost of our difference. Even if the

British Government accepts the partition schemes, it will disrupt the nationalities of Bengal and Punjab and will encourage the forces of communal reaction by driving a distinct wedge among the progressive forces. Moreover, the acceptance of the scheme of partition by the British Government will not necessarily mean its acceptance by all the other parties in India. So there is very little likelihood of getting a separate Bengal or Punjab Province through petitions and in a peaceful way. It has got to be secured through struggle and in that struggle the forces of reaction must be defeated. And if we are to go through the fire and ordeal of struggle, why should we leave aside our glorious traditions of the past and fight for a wrong, sectarian and suicidal cause?

As opposed to the proposal for partitioning the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, we must agitate and struggle on the following issues: 1. Replacement of Separate Electorates by Joint Electorates; 2. Elections on the basis of universal adult franchise and numerically equal constituencies (equal number of voters); 3. The drafting of a democratic constitution for Bengal by democratically elected people's representatives; 4. Right of secession from the Centre but propaganda in favour of remaining within the Indian Union and the matter to be decided by a referendum; 5. Delimitation of Bengal boundaries and inclusion in it the Bengali speaking areas of Bihar and Assam.

There is no more time to be lost. Our Party Committees everywhere must start campaigning against partition right from now on. Alliance must be sought and achieved with other Parties and organisations opposing partition, e. g. Forward Bloc, C. P. I., R. S. P., R. C. P. I., B. L. P., Students' Congress, Students' Federation, Kisan organisations and Trade Unions opposing the scheme. Joint Committees must be formed with these bodies wherever

possible and public statements, mass petitions and mass demonstrations must be organised. The reports of all such activities must be sent to our Party organs and the Daily Papers, particularly to 'Swadhinata', 'Swaraj', 'Nationalist', 'Advance' etc. for publication.

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