

A FREE HAPPY INDIA

**Election Policy of Indian
Communists**

**by
P. C. Joshi**

Three Annas

For A Free And Happy India

Election Policy of Indian Communists

I. BACKGROUND TODAY

THE COMING ELECTIONS will see a great programmatic battle between Indian parties. Other parties claim the monopoly of patriotism and wisdom and will put the blame on each other for coming in the way of the freedom of India. They will seek the confidence of the electorate against each other.

Ours is the only party that will do nothing of the sort, but tell the people the simple truth that India's main parties by fighting each other will not bring Indian freedom nearer, but only leave India in the hands of the British imperialists as the final arbitrators of its destiny.

The British Government has offered no plan of Indian freedom, but has only asked the Indian parties to come into conference with their own plans after the verdict of the electorate.

The proposed constitution-making body is so designed that the vast majority of our people stand disfranchised and the majority of its delegates will be Congressmen from Hindu-majority provinces, and Leaguers from Muslim-majority areas, and they will never come to any agreement among themselves with the existing outlook of their respective leaderships.

Such a constitution-making body will not be able to come to any agreement on the fundamental principles of the constitution of a free India. The Congress

and League delegations will be at loggerheads and the initiative will naturally pass into the hands of the British representatives.

This is the real secret behind the latest Wavell Plan. In the world of today, with the great political awakening in India, the British imperialists dare not directly and openly deny Indian freedom. Their present-day strategy is based on their firm belief that Indian parties will never come together and they will be able to impose their own plan for the future constitution of India.

COUPLAND SCHEME

A British-imposed constitution, designed to perpetuate the British imperialist hold over India under the guise of a "treaty" between India and Britain, is the grim prospect ahead.

The Congress will fight in the constitution-making body for a United India. The League will demand that the Muslim-majority provinces be carved into a separate sovereign state of Pakistan. Each side will look to the British representatives to side with it against the other.

The British will plead their inability to comply with either, and claim an august neutral status for themselves. They will patronisingly point out to both the Congress and the League that their demands are against each other's aims and can only be enforced through civil war.

They will promise to give an award that will meet the essence of the demands of both and also prevent civil war.

They will meet the Muslim demand for self-determination but will not give the Pakistan state the whole

of Bengal and incur the wrath of the Bengali Hindus, nor the whole of the Punjab and incur the wrath of the Sikhs. The boundaries they will carve will be such as will neither satisfy the League nor the non-Muslims and will create a permanent minority problem for the Pakistan state.

They will meet the Congress demand for a United India by enforcing a common Centre for co-ordinating minimum common defence and economic functions.

They will provide for their own representation in the future Indian Union by pushing in their own loyal stooges, the Princes. They will provide for separate treaties between Britain and the Indian States which will mean that Princely India will be the main future base for British garrisons and capital investments.

This is no imaginary picture. A blue-print of just such a plan is already there in the scheme for the future constitution of India drawn up by Professor Coupland. Coupland came as a Secretary at the time of Cripps, he is the respected adviser of the India Office, the maker of the Palestine Constitution and the British imperialist expert on colonial constitutions.

The Congress will not get a United India, but three Indias with the balance of power in British hands. There will be a Hindu Dominion led by the Congress, a Muslim Dominion led by the League and a Princely Confederation led by their White suzerain.

The League will not get a free and sovereign Pakistan but at best a Muslim Dominion under British overlordship.

After the elections, the Simla story will be repeated on a still vaster scale. Indian failure to come to common agreement on the basic principles of the Constitution of a free India will lead to the imposition of a British imperialist plan of modified Indian slavery.

II. FREE INDIA—FREEDOM FOR ALL

It is against this danger that our Party will rouse the people. As a revolutionary party we have never suffered from illusions and the worth of our realistic political understanding stands proved.

We alone warned against the illusion of a 'short and swift struggle' on August 8, and we were proved correct.

We alone forecast certain failure of the Simla Conference and against the outlook of trusting Wavell and mistrusting each other and we were proved correct a second time.

Once again we alone are fighting the illusion that success is round the corner after winning the elections, and we will be proved right once again.

Our purpose in contesting the elections is not to expose the Congress and the League and glorify ourselves, but to popularise among the electorate such a vision of Free India that ensures freedom to all and does not become the domination of some over the others, based on principles that can and must unite all freedom-loving Indians.

Our Party is the consistent advocate of the great democratic principle of self-determination as the firm foundation for building up the grand structure of a Free India. It is the expression of the sovereign will of the people.

We demand from the British Government an unequivocal declaration in recognition of complete Indian independence. Without it Indo-British relations will never have a firm foundation, but only be a cover for the domination of our country by British imperialists.

If British Labour cannot force the British Govern-

ment to make such a declaration it will earn not the friendship but hostility of the Indian peoples and will have to face serious conflicts ahead.

Our Party will campaign for two basic political principles to be the foundation of the constitution of Free India.

(1) UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE.

Our Party declares that a constitution-making body based on a limited franchise and indirect elections is mass disfranchisement of the majority. It cannot and will not solve any burning problem, but only install the Indian vested interests as the legal Government of the country and breed new conflicts.

(2) SOVEREIGN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLIES.

The constituents of the constitution-making body should be sovereign Constituent Assemblies of Pathanland, Baluchistan, Sind, Muslim Western Punjab, Sikh Homelands of Central Punjab, Hindustan, Bihar, Rajasthan, Assam, Orissa, Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Gujerat and Bengal with previous agreement for plebiscite of Hindu and Muslim areas.

Every freedom-loving Indian will admit that India is one against British rule.

But only the prejudiced will deny that we have fundamental differences among ourselves which arise from our being different peoples and having different concepts of Indian freedom and the well-being of our people.

The common aim of freedom cannot be transformed into living reality unless our various peoples see that the freedom sought for will be the freedom of all.

The British built up a centralised state to keep all our peoples down.

It is inevitable that the nearer comes the issue of the transfer of power, the greater will grow the suspicions of the minority, or the relatively backward peoples, against majority domination.

The British imperialists plead our internal differences and leave us all in dependent status and ranged against each other.

The only way out of this vicious circle is to start on the basis of the recognition of the right to sovereign independence of all our peoples. They have homelands of their own, great historic traditions and a rich cultural heritage of their own, and a growing modern literature. Their homelands also constitute natural economic units.

Such a solution is not academic but truly realistic. It is the most sensible and modern way to solve our present-day acute political differences and prevent the growth of future conflicts.

(1) *It is the only democratic solution of Congress-League differences and meets the just demands of both.*

It meets the essence of the League demand for Pakistan by giving sovereign rights to Muslim homelands. It repudiates the unjust claim of some leading Leaguers to the whole of the Punjab or to Assam. Freedom for one's homeland cannot mean the right to grab others' homelands.

It meets the Congress objection that they cannot agree to League claims without the verdict of the people.

It leaves room open to the leaders of the Sikhs and Muslims to preserve the unity of the Punjab by coming to an agreement among themselves.

It leaves the entire people of Bengal, both Hindu and Muslim, to decide through a prior plebiscite

whether they will preserve the unity of their homeland or split.

(2) *Such a solution successfully prevents the further development of other existing, but not yet so acute, national differences, viz. Gujerati-Marathi, Punjab-Sindhi, Bihari-Bengali, Bengali-Assamese, etc.*

So far the vision of a Free India was only negative, freedom from British domination. As the freedom movement has grown, the national minorities naturally ask, what of our freedom in a Free India?

Our Party will place before all our peoples a positive image of freedom as Free Homelands in a Free India, whose basis and mutual relations the peoples themselves will decide through their direct vote.

This leaves the League to get a majority verdict of the Constituent Assemblies of Muslim homelands for a separate federation or to offer its own terms for entering an Indian Union.

This leaves the Congress free to pursue its goal of United India if it can win a majority in the Muslim Homelands or to offer terms that accredited Muslim leaders think are in the common interest.

Our Party is convinced that majority delegates of sovereign Constituent Assemblies based on universal adult franchise will not only vigilantly guard the freedom of their own homelands but voluntarily agree to set up a common Indian Union for defending and advancing common interests.

We have no doubt that through such Constituent Assemblies, there will be no partition of India, but as democrats, we are quite prepared to abide by the verdict of the Constituent Assemblies of the peoples concerned.

Our faith in the future unity of India is based on faith in democratic principles and the commonsense of

the common people. Once the freedom and equality of our various peoples is unequivocally recognised by calling into being their own sovereign Constituent Assemblies it is not fear of domination that will keep them apart, but the pull of common interests that will bring them together.

III. FREEDOM FOR STATES SUBJECTS TOO

Under British civilian leadership the Princes have been ordered to learn to use democratic robes, "reforms" have been introduced in some States which however do not go beyond the Minto-Morley Reforms (1906) in some, in a few up to Montagu-Chelmsford (1919) Reforms and in others hardly any start has been made.

This is to ensure that in the future constitution-making bodies, the Princes too bring along some "representatives" of their peoples who however do not enjoy the franchise that exists even in British India.

Our Party will unflinchingly campaign for the full application of the principle of self-determination and adult franchise to Princely India.

If Congress-League agreement is a frontal blow at British imperialism, assertion of the right of self-determination by the States' subjects will be such a back-hand drive as to lay it low even in its proposed last fortress.

Such an extension of democratic principles to the representation of the States in the coming constitution-making body will not only enable the suppressed people to come on top of their autocratic rulers, but lead to a real union of peoples of various nationalities, i.e., Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujerat, Karnatak, Andhra,

etc. parts of which are under these feudal autocrats and part under the British. Their culture, economy, and political life will record an unprecedented upsurge after the union of their own people under one national state.

The Party will thus give concrete form to the freedom urge of our peoples, as freedom of all peoples and freedom for all parts of India and plead for an alliance of free peoples in an Indian Union to be constituted by their accredited delegates duly elected by the Constituent Assemblies which are directly elected by their universal vote. Thus alone can a truly free India emerge and remain really united together.

The Party will put forward not only a political but also an economic programme containing not only the best final solution of our economic ills but immediately practical measures that will give quick relief to our hard-pressed long suffering people and prepare the ground for the basic reconstruction of our economy on democratic foundations.

IV. FOOD FOR ALL—LAND TO THE PEASANTS

Under the double-load of mediaeval landlordism and modern capitalism our agrarian economy has been decaying fast. After the experience of the war years any honest man should see for himself that our agrarian economy stands self-condemned. The traditional exploiters of the peasant have not only sucked him dry but have also learnt to act as thieves of peoples' food.

If the British inflation-planners were the first, and the town wholesalers the second, the village exploiters

were the last and the most vital link among the manufacturers of famine for millions and food scarcity for all.

They must go lock, stock and barrel if our villages are not to become graveyards and our people have at least their food guaranteed to them.

The parasitical zamindar, the usurious mahajan, the crafty baniya become monopoly-trader, have all become hoarders, blackmarketeers and land-grabbers. There is no social crime they do not commit, nothing that they hold sacred. Their doings in Bengal have shocked humanity but that was the last stage in the journey towards which village society is going all over India.

KISAN DEMANDS

The Party will popularise the following measures to destroy these enemies of the villages, liberate the peasant and serve as the basic slogans of rural reconstruction :

- (1) Abolition of landlordism, nationalisation of land. Redistribution of land to make the uneconomic holdings of the poor peasants into consolidated economic holdings and to make large-scale co-operative farming possible.
- (2) Usury to be banned. All agricultural credit through co-operative State banks.
- (3) Private trade in people's food to be banned. People's State to ensure direct purchase from the peasant at fair price.
- (4) Large-scale mass peasant initiative to be directly aided by the people's state for starting a network of co-operative sales and purchase societies to buy from the peasant his surplus produce at a fair price

and make available to him his daily necessities at cheap rates.

INTERIM MEASURES

The Party will demand that the popular Ministries immediately enforce the following urgent steps as interim measures to increase food production, give prompt relief to the poor peasant-producer and get from the parasitical landlord a part of his ill-gotten gains to start village rehabilitation.

- (1) Landless labourers to get all the available fallow land whether of the landlord or the Government for producing food grains.
- (2) Poor peasants with uneconomic holdings to be given substantial reduction in rental to stabilise their own family economy and to encourage intensified food production.
- (3) Big landlords to pay over and above the land-revenue a steeply graduated income-tax so as not to leave an annual surplus of more than six thousand a year out of the total rental collected each of them.

The present serf village cannot be allowed to exist in a free India. It must be rid of its feudal parasites and selfish hoarders and must be led by the actual tiller of the soil, the producer of people's food.

Immediate enforcement of measures like the above will dispel the spectre of chronic famines and put the village economy on its feet. It will be the foremost task of our Party through peasant mass mobilisation during and after the elections to see that newly elected popular governments carry out such measures to ensure the people food and the village toilers decent livelihood, and that they do not succumb to the influential pressure of the brutish and selfish parasitical elements.

V. FOR PLANNED INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

The British industrialists have traditionally used their political power to prevent the industrialisation of India. Even during the war years they sabotaged the starting of vital new industries and the maximum expansion of existing industries. They kept India poor and undeveloped and during war years made us suffer scarcity and high prices, hardly equalled in any other civilised country.

The Indian industrialists and capitalists instead of standing by their people in a time of such acute crisis only accentuated it by hoarding all available goods and transforming the normal market into blackmarket. The majority of leaders of industry and trade have become notorious war-profiteers. They through their own deeds stand by self-condemned as selfish anti-social elements in whose hands the future of the economy of our country cannot be trusted. The Indian people have not fought for freedom only to let the Indian capitalist-profiteers become the monopoly kings of Indian industry and finance.

The Party will advocate the rapid planned industrialisation of India to proceed under the direct guidance of the People's State on the basis of the following basic principles :

- (1) Nationalisation of all key industries.
- (2) State control of all capital resources for the development of the country as per State Plan.
- (3) Planned and even development of the industrial resources in different parts of the country.
- (4) Large-scale expenditure on social services. Guaranteed living wage to all workers.
- (5) The State Plan to be implemented through free

and equal co-operation between the representatives of the State, management and labour.

JOBS FOR ALL

It is idle waste of time to work up schemes for the future planned industrial development in India if the threatened industrial crisis is not vigorously fought here and now. Therefore the Party will concentrate its immediate attention upon measures that will prevent post-war unemployment and provide jobs to all those already employed in war-time industries now being rapidly closed down.

The Party will advocate in the Legislatures and vigorously press upon the popular Ministries to support and implement the following interim measures to keep up the existing level of industrial employment and get the financial resources to pay unemployment allowance and start new industries:

- (1) Reconvert war-time industries to peace-time needs through workers' co-operation.
- (2) Pass immediate legislation to take over all British concerns in part payment of the sterling balances and to be immediately developed as nationalised industries.
- (3) Pass immediate legislation not to return the EPT reserve fund to the profiteer-capitalists.
- (4) Setting up of an impartial open tribunal to investigate war-profiteers and confiscation of the entire fortune of those found guilty of blackmarketing and profiteering during the war years.

In every industrial constituency our Party will put forward detailed concrete scheme for saving peoples' livelihood and for better service of the peoples' needs by the industries concerned. They will be based on

bridling the capitalist-profiteers and trusting the workers, employees and technicians. We will mobilise working class support behind them and demand that popular Ministries immediately carry them out.

NO OPPRESSION OF UNTOUCHABLES

The Communists Party stands for complete abolition of the social oppression of the millions of untouchables. It will fight to secure equal economic and political status for them in the governance of the country. In implementing its programme for settling landless labourers on our newly reclaimed land, the Party will insist that untouchables who form a large proportion of the landless labourers be given special attention.

VI. ATTITUDE TO OTHER PARTIES

From the very character of our Party comes our non-sectarian approach to other parties. The Congress and the League make exclusive claims against each other. We will support them both where we are not putting up candidates of our own. We have our very serious differences with them, but we recognise them as our major patriotic political organisations that must be generally supported against their reactionary rivals.

Our Party will put up its own candidates in almost all Labour seats to demonstrate that it is the accepted leader of the working-class. We will also contest such rural seats, both general and Muslim, where we are the existing majority of the people to demonstrate the strength and vitality of the organised Kisan movement.

In those general seats excepting those reserved

for Scheduled Castes, where the Party is not putting up its own candidate, we will support the Congress candidate.

In those Muslim seats where the Party is not putting up a candidate we will support the League against all rivals.

If any constituency a notorious hoarder and hated enemy of the people stands as a Congress or a League candidate the Party will of course not campaign for him.

In this election our two main parties, the Congress and the League, are going to fight each other in a manner that will not lay the basis for evolving a common plan for Indian freedom, but create the atmosphere of civil war.

Our Party is entering the electoral contest not to fight one or both of them, but to stand in their middle and fight the flames they both light by ourselves putting forward a plan of Indian freedom that embodies their just demands, but repudiates the unjust claims of both, and offers concrete proposals of national reconstruction that are equally in the interests of all peoples.

Our non-partisanship is not our only strength. We are the only Party that enjoys the joint mass backing of *both* Hindu and Muslim masses, the entire working class, and wherever we have organised Kisan movement in eastern and northern India.

The influence of our programme will be felt throughout India whether we are ourselves contesting a seat or not. It is a programme that will be patiently and intently listened to both by the followers of the Congress and the League.

How can any serious patriotic Indian turn a deaf ear to a practical programme of Indian freedom which guarantees :

FREEDOM OF ALL

FOOD FOR ALL

JOBS FOR ALL

AND WHICH CAN BE REALISED ONLY THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF ALL.

And above all who will not see that as it is it is hell for all, and if it continues much longer, India will become a worse hell ; where people suffer like animals and profiteers prosper, where political leaders are factional and at loggerheads with each other, where lies run current and truth is suppressed, where the desire to dominate is called the will to freedom, where instead of a united fight for freedom, the clouds of civil war gather thicker and blacker.

The simple issue our Party will put to the people throughout India is :

Must it be Darkness or Dawn, Death or Life, Slavery or Freedom.

Communists And Congress

Why Communists Resigned From The Congress

WE, INDIAN COMMUNISTS, had great hopes from the leadership of our foremost patriotic organisation, the Congress, to take the initiative to think out and rally the entire country behind a democratic plan for immediate realisation of Indian freedom in alliance with the victorious progressive popular forces of the world.

In fact, the central plank of all our agitation during

the last three years has been to demand their release and to expose imperialist reaction that forcibly kept up the deadlock.

Never before have the sufferings of our people been greater, and such eager looking to the political leaders for immediate relief and a way out.

Never before has the economy of our country been in greater danger, nor has there ever been a greater urgency nor such practical possibilities to rebuild it on new foundations.

Never before has there been such a widespread sense of political despair and frustration, on the one hand, and greater political interest, on the other.

Never before in our national movement was there greater need squarely to face up to the various complicated issues that constitute the Indian problem—the achievement of Indian freedom and the building up of Indian democracy.

AGAINST THE LEAGUE

The Congress leadership after its release has not been doing serious thinking but demonstrating sectarian arrogance.

After three years of imperialist deadlock, they got the chance to offer a constructive lead to the country in the last AICC meeting. Instead of offering a concrete plan for Indian freedom, they have committed the Congress organisation to a course of action that will only further divide and disrupt the freedom forces themselves.

The Congress has undoubtedly become stronger during the last three years, but so has the League.

To glorify the strength of the one but to deny that of the other, is to be blind.

The Congress stands for the freedom of India, the League demands freedom for the Muslim homelands.

To demand the right of self-determination from the British but to deny it to a section of our own countrymen is plain injustice.

The Congress is a non-communal organisation, but the majority of the Muslims consider the League as their organisation. The Congress damns the League as a communal organisation, but more and more Congress Muslims are themselves going over to the League.

Not to read the signs of the times is not wisdom.

In the name of Indian freedom, the Congress leadership is denying freedom to the Muslim homelands. In the name of the unity of India, it is keeping divided India's two main political organisations.

Present disunity cannot lead to future unity.

When the Congress leadership refuses to deal with the League, it is refusing to build a United Front for Indian freedom. When Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru declare that they will fight the League, they are only getting the Hindus and Muslims organised into hostile camps. When the Congress leadership seeks the intervention of the British Government against the League, it plays into the hands of British reaction, postponing the day of India's freedom.

We do not consider it good patriotism to seek the intervention of the British in our internal affairs. *This will lead not to Indian freedom, but to a British-imposed and British-planned constitution.*

We do not consider it good sense to fight our brother Muslims in the name of Indian unity. *This is unleashing the forces of civil war and certainly not forging the future of one Indian Union.*

of its own membership and denies elementary democratic rights to a section of the national movement inside the national organisation itself.

The Congress leaders have not stopped here. They are giving direct or indirect support to the champions of rival organisations on the Student, Kisan and Trade Union fronts. These elements are either the open agents of profiteers and hoarders, or thoroughly discredited individual 'Labour' and 'Kisan' leaders who have lost their old mass following to us and seek to stage a come-back with the Congress banner in hand.

Our Party cannot passively watch Congress-League conflict growing, aid the one against the other and fan the flames of civil war instead of struggling its hardest to build their joint front for freedom's battle.

Our Party cannot patiently hear slanders against itself repeated *ad nauseam*.

Our Party cannot permit itself to be chained and gagged by a leadership that is leading our freedom movement to the rocks.

Our Party will not let professional careerists disrupt the Kisan Sabhas and Trade Unions. We have spent all our young lives to build them up, they are joint Hindu-Muslim mass organisations and the living bases of the Indian democracy of the future.

We, Indian Communists, consider the existing anti-League and anti-Communist policy of the Congress High Command as direct encouragement to the forces of civil war and class-war, which will lead to the ruin of our country and not to its freedom.

Instead of carrying out such a policy, we consider it our foremost duty to demarcate ourselves most sharply from it.

We are, therefore, directing our Party members to resign from the Congress. Our AICC members will, however, not resign. They will answer the 'charges' and face the verdict of the Working Committee against our Party and get it to opine on the issues that concerned the past as they will concern the future of our common national movement.

After about two weeks, all documents will be available to the people to judge for themselves.

We are confident that all honest Congressmen will see that this, in the prevalent circumstances, is the best course both for the Congress and our Party.

It will enable us to put our policy before Congressmen and the people without let or hindrance.

It will enable the Congress to find its feet more naturally after three years of illegality. After all, how long will the ranks not ask the leadership: How is brother fighting brother the path to the freedom of the country?

By the conscious adoption of an anti-League and anti-Communist policy, the Congress leadership has with its own hand shattered, not only our dream, but of all genuine progressives, of seeing the Congress develop as the base and builder of the United National Front of our people.

As long as our country remains enslaved, the only path to our national independence lies through a National United Front of all popular forces.

AS UNITY-CRUSADERS

In the extremely critical and difficult period that is coming ahead, we will ceaselessly work for Congress-

League unity as also for Congress-Communist unity and create the basis of Congress-League-Communist unity inside one joint front for Indian freedom. With full faith in the patriotism of our Congress and League brothers we will work as unity-crusaders, patiently explaining the just viewpoint of the one to the other and by ourselves going out to resist the unjust claims of the one against the other.

* AGAINST THE DISRUPTORS, WE SHALL APPEAL TO THE COMMONSENSE OF THE COMMON MAN.

* AGAINST THE SLANDERERS, WE SHALL SUPPLY TRUE FACTS.

* AGAINST THE PREJUDICED, WE SHALL PIT OUR ARDENT PATRIOTISM.

The greatest argument for our policy will be the growing realisation among both Congressmen and Leaguers that the harder they fight each other or us, the firmer will be the grip of British reaction over the fate of us all.

To-day we may be alone in working against the tide, but the tide will turn.

How long can passion drown reason ?

How long can partisanship prevail over patriotism ?

How long can we remain apart and all under foreign rule ?

What we say today all will see tomorrow through their own experience. We work and shall continue to work for a common front against common slavery and for common freedom. We shall win and not lose, for ours is the cause of all.