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—As. 4.

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# **WHO RULES IN DELHI ?**

**Memorandum  
To the Congress Working Committee  
From Delhi Committee of the  
Communist Party of India**

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1947

As. 2

March 21, 1947.

To  
THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE  
CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE.

Dear Friends,

I am enclosing a memorandum to you from the Secretary of the Provincial Committee of our Party in Delhi, which shows that the bureaucracy continues to reign supreme in the capital right under the shadow of the Interim Government itself.

1) The Trade Union movement is being suppressed through harassment and arrests of the organisers and leaders of almost every Trade Union in the various industries. Normal Trade Union activity is being paralysed.

2) A planned offensive is being directed against our Party and our leading comrades are being arrested, and our normal mass work in the daily interests of the people is hindered.

3) Red-baiting is being organised in a planned manner inside the Government departments themselves through special circulars calling for purge of 'suspected' persons. The CID is pestering and seeking to terrorise those who sympathise with our ideals and work.

We cannot easily dismiss all these actions as remnants of the old days. Some months back a representation was made to Sardar Patel as the Home Member, by various Trade Unions but no real change has taken place. On the other hand the bureaucracy is carrying on as before making matters worse.

Delhi is the direct responsibility of the Interim Government which is today manned by the topmost leaders of the Congress and we are appealing to them through the Working Committee to ensure that prompt intervention takes place against the Delhi bureaucracy which is headed by the most universally hated old bureaucrats Christie and Le Bailly.

Vital issues are involved.

First and foremost is the issue of civil liberties itself which transcends all political differences. To let the bureaucracy suppress the Trade Union movement would only strengthen the capitalist profiteers whose greed has produced the present scarcity and the blackmarket and who refuse to meet the elementary democratic demands of the workers for a living wage and human life. Repression will not terrorise the working class, but only make it bitter and desperate.

To let the bureaucracy discriminate against our Party would only weaken our freedom forces, throw them further apart instead of bringing them together. We know that the top bureaucracy today seeks to exploit the anti-Communist prejudices of some top Congress leaders to get away with repression against us. Terror in no country of the world has crushed Communism or liquidated the Communist Party. We are confident that it cannot and will not be otherwise in our country.

There is great concern among the working class and all serious political workers of Delhi against this continued and growing bureaucratic repression despite the existence of the Interim Government.

We request you to intervene promptly and ensure that the most elementary demands outlined at the end of the memo are immediately satisfied and the working-class movement and our Party assured full opportunities to play its part in the cause and battle for a new life for our common people and complete independence for our country.

With greetings,

Yours truly,  
(*Sd.*) P. C. JOSHI  
General Secretary

**MEMORANDUM  
TO THE  
CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE  
FROM  
DELHI PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE,  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA**

*Delhi, March 5, 1947*

**Introduction**

On the 22nd of September, 1946, i.e. just three weeks after the Interim Government took office, the Trade Unions in Delhi submitted a joint memorandum to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Home Member. It was a factual indictment of the "veritable regime of repression" (to quote the memo) set up by Delhi's white bureaucracy at the head of which were Chief Commissioner Christie and ex-Deputy Commissioner Le Bailley. The memo in particular spotlighted repression against the Trade Union movement and showed the extent to which the civil liberties had been suppressed in Delhi. In the words of the memo, Delhi's white bureaucrats had made "normal political life extremely difficult for every political party." The memo ended with a strong appeal to members of the Interim Government and to the new Home Member, Sardar Patel, to intervene and end "this regime of repression."

On the 21st of March, 1947, i.e., just five months after the memo was submitted, it was known that Sardar Patel had asked the local Government to withdraw only 2 cases arising out of the anti-Victory Day demonstration (March 1946) and 3 cases connected with the Municipal strike (July 1946). However, the rest of the cases in connection with anti-Victory Day and ALL the cases connected with the Postal, Police and Birla Mill's strikes (which had been launched before the Interim Government took office) continued. This has, more or less, nullified the effect of the withdrawal of certain other cases. In fact the withdrawal of a

few cases is a mere eye-wash by the bureaucracy and should not deceive anybody for :

- a) The Municipal strike cases were launched inspite of Le Bailly's assurance to the Municipal Congress Party which was publicly committed to the prosecutions being dropped. Even then it took full five months to withdraw these cases.
- b) Most of the persons who were involved in the two anti-Victory Day cases which have been withdrawn are also involved in other cases in connection with anti-Victory Day and those cases have not been withdrawn. In fact they have already been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.
- c) The Postal, Police and Birla Mills' strike cases have not been withdrawn, it appears, because the bulk of the local Trade Union and Communist Party leadership is involved.

#### Who Are Being Prosecuted ?

Who are the persons against whom cases have NOT been withdrawn ?

##### a) Postal strike cases

1. Y. D. Sharma, Assistant Secretary of the Delhi Provincial Committee of the Communist Party and one of the leaders of the postmen.
2. M. Yamin, General Secretary of the Delhi Provincial Trade Union Congress and leader of Delhi's tram and electricity workers.
3. Shakil Ahmad, President of the G.N.I.T. (bus) Workers' Union.
4. Janardhan Sharma, General Secretary of the Central P.W.D. Workers' Union.
5. Sewa Singh, General Secretary of N.W.R. Workers' Trade Union, Delhi.
6. N. N. Manna, leader of M.E.S. workers (Delhi).
7. Suraj Parkash, leader of the postmen in Delhi, Punjab and N.W.F. circle.

##### b) Police strike cases

1. M. Yamin, General Secretary of the Provincial Trade Union Congress.
2. Ismail, Secretary of the Delhi Electric Supply & Traction Co. Employees' Union.
3. R. C. Mittra, one of the leaders of Delhi's N.W.R. workers.

##### c) Birla Mills' strike cases

1. Bawa Ram Chander, member of the General Council of the AITUC (All-India Trade Union Congress).
2. R. C. Tyagi, ex-President of the Textile Mazdoor Sabha.
3. Mohan Singh, General Secretary, Textile Mazdoor Sabha.
4. Lal Singh, Treasurer, Textile Mazdoor Sabha, and 9 others.

#### No Justification For These Prosecutions

These prosecutions were launched by the imperialist bureaucracy.

a) In no other part of the country was any prosecution launched against anyone for having supported the postmen's strike. Delhi's bureaucrats decided otherwise and arrested almost all the well-known Trade Union leaders who had supported the postmen's demands on behalf of their respective unions.

It is well to remember that the postmen's demand were supported by several national leaders including Pandit Nehru. The strike had been settled and Conran Smith, member of the Caretaker Government, had given the assurance that no one would be penalised for having joined or supported the strike.

Delhi's bureaucrats went contrary to the assurance. We expect that a popular Government whose head is Pandit Nehru himself, should put a stop to this policy of the Delhi bureaucracy.

b) The Delhi Police strike (23rd March, 1946) was the subject of an adjournment motion tabled by the Congress Party in the Central Assembly. The Congress Party through Mr. Asaf Ali, had condemned the attitude of the local authorities which was responsible for the strike.

The local Government arrested three Trade Union leaders for having asked the striking policemen to shout anti-imperialist slogans !

c) The cases against 13 leaders and workers of the Textile Mazdoor Sabha arose out of a strike which took place in Birla Mills (August 1946). The demands of the workers were also supported by the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee. But the authorities of the mills did not budge an inch and took the help of the police to crush the strike. All the leading workers of the union were arrested for picketing. Actually many of these were arrested from their quarters of the union office.

d) A number of Trade Union workers and a prominent Congressman, Syt. Ishwar Dutt have been convicted already in connection, with various cases arising out of the anti-Victory Day demonstrations. They are in jail now.

### More Prosecutions Launched

Not only that the local Government has decided to proceed with the old cases but it has in the meantime launched fresh cases, mostly against Trade Union workers. Section 7 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (which was enacted in 1931 to suppress the Congress Civil Disobedience movement) is being freely used in Delhi right under the nose of the Congress Ministers. An anti-Congress measure is being used today to suppress the just struggles of the workers!

During the last few months, when the Interim Government has been in power, Section 7 (Criminal Law Amendment Act) has been used several times. Here are some instances :

1. *Railway*: Inder Sen and R. C. Mitra, both leaders of N.W.R. workers (Delhi) while making propaganda against ration-cut were hauled up under this section.
2. *Electric Power House*: A leading union worker, Ishwari, was arrested under this section. He has now been acquitted by the Sessions' Judge.
3. *Jamuna Mills' strike*: Five leaders of the Textile Mazdoor Sabha, including its President and Secretary, Shiv Narain and Mohan Singh, were arrested under this section while doing propaganda work in connection with a legal strike, which is still continuing.

The conditions in this mill are the worst in Delhi and the workers were forced to go on strike when all other means were exhausted. The owners went back on the promises which they had made during the last strike.

### No Attempt to Solve People's Problems

While the policy of repression against the working-class organisations and the Communist Party is pursued, no genuine attempt is made to tackle the problems that the working class and the middle class are facing in Delhi. There is an all-round shortage of food and cloth and one reads every day in newspapers about the rationing scandals.

There is a Rent Control Bill coming up before the Assembly which if passed in its present form would create a very grave situation for lakhs of working-class and middle-class families. The bill proposes one-third increase in rents and makes eviction of tenants an extremely easy matter. It has rightly been called the "Landlords' Bill".

The Communist Party has been in the forefront of popular agitation for food, cloth and houses. The local bureaucracy and

the vested interests are naturally interested in suppressing the Communist Party.

Against the workers, the employers' and the Government's offensive is on the increase. To take a few instances.

1. *C.P.W.D. workers*: It is already 8 months that the Central Government had accepted the Conciliation Board's recommendations to make the work-charge staff permanent. The Government has not taken any step to implement its promise. There is great agitation among the workers.
2. *Railway*: Among certain sections of the workers retrenchment has already started. Pinpricks against the workers are on the increase. On the ration-shops only a few articles are available.
3. *Textile*: There are varying rates of D.A. in different textile mills in Delhi. By manipulating in "picks" the employers are trying to reduce the rates.

Against all this, the workers' agitation is growing. A strike situation is developing among different sections of the workers, particularly among the C.P.W.D. workers.

The bureaucracy's repression against the Trade Unions is an attempt to smash these growing struggles.

### Who Rules in Delhi—Congress or Christie?

Delhi is the direct responsibility of the Interim Government. Sardar Patel as Home Member is directly responsible for Law and Order in Delhi. But the Congress Home Member seems to place reliance on the advice of Chief Commissioner Christie who is known to the people of Delhi for his anti-people, anti-working class and anti-Communist policies. He and ex-Deputy Commissioner Le Bailly have been responsible for a series of repressive measures against popular organisations in Delhi. All have suffered under this regime, including Congressmen. That a popular Government should continue to rely on the advice of a bureaucrat of Chief Commissioner Christie's type instead of checking him is causing widespread concern.

In fact Delhi's bureaucrats feel encouraged to continue their policies against popular forces under the cover of anti-Communism. They are doing their worst to suppress the rising working-class movement in Delhi and making it difficult for the workers' organisations and the Communist Party to function normally.

The local C.I.D. has intensified its watch on Trade Union and Communist workers, their houses and their offices, and has started terrorising pro-Party and pro-working class elements and particu-

larly those in the middle class. C.I.D. officers have been going round the houses and offices of pro-Party clerks and others and threatening them with dismissals. The object seems to be to scare away the middle-class elements from the Communist Party.

#### Attack on Radical Congressmen

The attack is not only concentrated against the Trade Unions and Communist Party but is also directed against other left elements. Recently Syt. Hukam Singh, a local Forward Bloc leader, has been arrested.

- Syt. Ajit Das Gupta of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and a Vice-President of the Provincial Trade Union Congress was arrested and fined for using loud-speakers for public announcement without the permission of the police. (In Delhi it is an offence under the so-called Madras Nuisance Act, extended to Delhi, to make loud-speaker announcement without the permission of the police !)
- Syt. Kachhwaha, a Ward Congress leader, has recently been arrested for organising in New Delhi's Connaught Place a public meeting under the Congress auspices. It is an offence under the New Delhi municipal bye-laws to hold meetings in Connaught Place !
- Syt. Gulab Chand Jain, an old Congressman, was being continuously harassed by the police. He is reported to have gone to the City Magistrate's Court and said, "Why is the Police harassing me? Why don't they get a warrant for arrest and summon me to this court?" He was hauled up for contempt of court !

It is clear that Delhi's police and bureaucracy have not changed. The Communist Party and the Trade Unions are of course singled out; but other political workers and parties are not spared from bureaucratic harassment.

Nor is this all. Encouraged by the anti-Communist prejudices of Congress leaders and particularly of Sardar Patel, the Home Department of the Government of India, seems to have already launched an anti-Communist drive in the offices of the Government of India. A local daily, *Jang*, reported that soon after the India-wide raids on our offices, the Home Department on 13th November issued a circular to all the Departments "to purge" the Communists and other revolutionary elements.

The Home Department has not yet contradicted the news. On the other hand, it is reported that in several Departments inquiries about "Communist infiltration" have already started.

#### Withdraw Cases, Restore Civil Liberties

Most of the demands contained in the memo submitted to Sardar Patel in September, 1946 remain unfulfilled. The Communist Party and the Trade Unions request you to intervene and secure the realisation of the following demands, which are for elementary democratic liberties :

- (1) All the cases pending against Trade Union and Communist and other political workers (like the Postal, Police, Birla Mills' and Jumna Mills' strike cases) be dropped;
- (2) All those jailed (viz. anti-Victory Day cases) be released;
- (3) Better class treatment be given to all political workers in jail ;
- (4) Full civil liberties be restored to the Communist Party, Trade Unions and all other political organisations.
- (5) Ban on the use of loud-speaker for public announcement be lifted.

(Sd.) M. FAROOQI,  
Secretary,  
Delhi Provincial Committee,  
Communist Party of India