

Appeal to Members of Parliament

**VOICE YOUR
PROTEST AGAINST DETENTION
OF
COMMUNIST LEADERS
WITHOUT TRIAL**

**DELHI STATE COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA**



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APPEAL TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Dear Friends :

Delhi State Committee of the Communist Party of India takes this opportunity to approach you on the eve of this session of Parliament with the earnest hope that you would voice your strong protest against the wanton attack by the Govt. of India on our party. Our State Committee has decided to approach the members of Parliament because perhaps none of our M.Ps. would be in a position to attend this session due to repressive measures of the Government.

We are not approaching you with the expectation that you should justify the policy of the Party. Our party alone is responsible for the decisions taken by it and as a democratic party we are prepared to abide by the verdict of the people. What we expect from you is only to protest against the detention of nearly one thousand leaders of our Party without trial.

If the Home Minister had the slightest regard for democracy he would have allowed our M.Ps. to reply on the floor of both the Houses in the Parliament to the fabricated charges levelled against the Communist Party. Nothing would have happened in the country if the Communist M.Ps. would have been given the opportunity to defend their position. The

Government, however, is morally afraid of such a step because there is no case with it to justify this undemocratic action.

When Government took these drastic steps against a legally functioning party in the country, it was its responsibility to produce all the 'irrefutable' evidence before the people. However more than a five weeks have passed but no such evidence was given by the Government. Perhaps the work of fabricating the evidence is not yet over ! It is thus proved beyond doubt that the so-called irrefutable evidence is being concocted after action had been taken against the Communist leaders.

The Government has promised a white paper and we do not know its contents so far. We will be able to reply to the 'irrefutable' evidence only after a perusal of the White Paper. Every democrat in the Country must see that it is not enough only to produce the so-called evidence. It is also the responsibility of the Government to prove genuineness of the evidence in the Court of Law. The Home Minister has stated in a press conference in Kerala that the Government had no obligation to prosecute the Communist leaders during an emergency. But by stating this he has only created an evidence to prove that the Government is misusing the emergency powers.

In his press conference at Trivandrum on January, 25, he turned down the demand for release of at least on parole these communist detenus who were contesting the election and said that they were separated from the Community for the special purpose of preventing them from spreading the anti national virus. He however, contradicted himself when a correspondent

asked him why the Communists were allowed to contest the mid-term Kerala elections. He replied that he was allowing the Communists to do so because the people of Kerala might have a chance to disown these 'pro-Chinese Communists'. The cat is thus out of the bag at last. Shri Nanda has allowed us to contest the elections so that the people should disown us. If he has so much faith in the people why is he so much afraid of release of the communist leaders during the Kerala elections? If communists are really anti-national, people will defeat them in the polls. But he knew very well that the people in Kerala would throw out the Congress during polls because of corrupt practices of his own partymen. After all, charges of corruption were levelled against Shanker Ministry even by Congressmen!

The 'Patriotic' congress Government arrested five 'anti-national' communist MLAs when a no-confidence motion was moved against congress ministry. They were released only when public protested all over the Country. This, however, could not prevent the down-fall of a corrupt ministry. Then the Government tried to abolish mid-term elections to a void utter defeat of the congress party during the elections. When these tactics were defeated by the democratic movements of the country a new devise was adopted by the Government. And that was a whole-sale arrests of communist leaders with a view to create a scare among the voters in Kerala. These methods however, will not improve the tarnished image of the ruling party in Kerala. Let us hope that the Home Minister will be honest enough to learn from the results of Kerala elections. Despite these repressive measures he will not be able to save his party from utter defeat. Our party will give a good account of herself during the election. The threat to our Parliamentary

democracy is coming directly from the ruling party. It is rather ironical that the Home Minister is charging us for subverting democracy.

Com. Jyoti Basu, a member of the Polit Bureau of our party has given a fitting reply to the so-called charges levelled against our party by Shri Nanda. We are enclosing a copy of his reply along with this appeal for your information.

We are also enclosing reactions of various newspapers and political figures in our country which speak for themselves. We are proud to note that different sections of democratic opinion in our country have rightly condemned the draconian steps of the Government. We have no doubt that ultimately the democratic traditions in the country would prevail over the undemocratic methods of the ruling party.

It would not be out of place here to say something about our patriotism. We do not need a certificate of patriotism from the Home Ministry. Our party is loyal to the interests of the workers, peasants, salaried employees. We have done nothing to harm the interests of these classes which constitute more than 95% of our people. We are acting only against the interests of monopolists and ~~Indian~~ Landlords which constitute an insignificant minority in the Country. The present Government is safeguarding the loot of the Indian people by these vested interests and is attacking the living standard of the people. If the nation constitutes the majority of the people, it is the Congress Government which is anti-national. All the parties in the country that are fighting for the rights of the people and against the policies of the Government are true national parties.

Moreover, it is the Government which is acting against the national interests by keeping the doors wide open for the foreign private capital. This has resulted in increasing the loot of our country and impoverishment of the masses. The grip of foreign monopolists on our economy has increased of late to such an extent that even some spokesmen of the ruling party are expressing concern over these developments. Even Shri Krishna Menon while characterising the recent trends said that it would not only invite economic imperialism to India in its most dangerous forms but would also dovetail our economy with the foreign economy. The Communist Party has stoutly opposed this anti-national policy of the Government. Therefore, to site track the attention of the people from its own anti-national behaviour, the Government has resorted to vile slander against the Communist Party. But the people will soon realise from their own experience who in reality is anti-national.

The Communist Party can never be crushed by brutal repression. The Government has shown its bankruptcy in solving all the basic issues of the people. It is increasingly coming before the public eyes as the government of monopolists and landlords. To protect the interests of these privileged classes, the Government is using notional emergency and DIR. Under these circumstances it is the sacred duty of every democrat to demand withdrawal of these two draconian measures which are wantonly used to suppress the democratic movement in the country.

We hope you will view these developments with concern and put an end to the ruthless attack on the legitimate activities of the democratic opposition in the Country.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
(Sri Ram).

Secretary,
Delhi State Committee,
Communist Party of India.

**A REPLY TO THE UNION HOME MINISTER'S
CHARGES AGAINST THE COMMUNIST
PARTY OF INDIA**

An Appeal :

Dear Friend,

I am submitting to you the reply which I have given to the charges levelled against the CPI by the Home Minister, Sri Gulzarilal Nanda.

The issue is no longer between the CPI and the Government of India. According to us democracy itself and India's finest traditions are in peril.

Hence I hope and trust that you will give serious thought to the situation that has arisen and act to reverse the process that has been set in motion by the Government of India.

Yours sincerely,
Jyoti Basu

C/o. West Bengal State Committee
Communist Party of India
33 Alimuddin Street, Calcutta-16.
12 January, 1965.

COMMUNIST REPLY TO SLANDERS

In reply to the charges of the Union Home Minister against the Communist Party of India, Jyoti Basu, Member, Polit Bureau, stated the following in a press conference held in Calcutta on 12-1-1965, on behalf of the Central Committee C.P.I.

Sri Gulzarilal Nanda, the Home Minister, Government of India broadcast a speech on January 1st, 1965, explaining to the nation the reasons for the vicious attack on the Communist Party of India and the countrywide detention without trial of almost its entire leadership under the notorious D.I. Rules, which are against the provisions of the Constitution according to the judgement of the Supreme Court.

It is astounding that democracy and the rule of law should be so blatantly suppressed by the Government with such vague generalisations, palpable untruths and ignorant theoretical assertions. It is difficult to reply in detail to such a speech. But a reply is necessary because India's great democratic traditions, decency in public life, morality and our struggles for building a truly free and prosperous India for the common

people are all in jeopardy. I shall take up some salient points.

1. The Home Minister is angry with us because we have parted ways with Sri Dange and his followers and has charged our Party of being inspired by China. But I deny such a charge and our Party documents will prove conclusively our independent stand. We do not agree with Chinese or Soviet Communist Parties on all issues in regard to the situation in our country or the world communist movement. In any case, it is not for the Government of India to dictate to us whether we should remain with Sri Dange or not.

2. We are accused of accepting as our objective 'People's Democracy' which the Home Minister asserts is a 'Peking prescription' and he contrasts it with Parliamentary Democracy.

This is really amusing and some half-educated official must have briefed the Home Minister, who in his hurry to condemn us did not pause to think how ridiculous he would look by uttering such words. 'People's Democracy' is not a Chinese concept and it came into existence long before the Chinese Revolution. Moreover in China state power has been described as 'New Democracy'. Our Party had adopted in its programme the concept of 'People's Democracy' over 20 years back and the Chinese had nothing to do with it nor did the Government of India ever refer to it as a treasonable objective. In any case People's Democracy should not be contrasted with Parliamentary Democracy. It should be contrasted with Bourgeois Democracy i.e., democracy for a

handful of landlords and capitalists which prevails in our country. We wish to replace this kind of a State by a State where democracy for the vast masses of our people will be ensured and monopolists, landlords, blackmarketeers, hoarders and profiteers will not hold to ransom the entire nation.

3. The Home Minister suggests that documents, circulars and instructions exist which will prove that we have decided on violent methods of struggle or armed insurrection of the 'Telangana type' to overthrow the present government. He charges us with deleting from the preamble of our Constitution the aim of striving for a peaceful path to socialism. He says that our Party Programme laid stress on the necessity of pursuing the non-peaceful path to socialism and characterised any talk of peaceful path in the country as "nothing but self-deception and deception of others." Sri Nanda has further said that "important leaders of the Left Communist Party have noted with satisfaction the fact that unlike the situation at the time of the revolutionary activities in Telangana there is now a communist power across the Indian border which makes revolutionary activities within this country far more opportune."

This seems to be the latest and crucial charge against us. But here again the Home Minister has been briefed crudely and I wonder how so many untruths can be covered up. Our aim is to strive for a peaceful path and this proclamation has been transferred from the Constitution to our programme where it should actually belong. In this matter the Home Minister has given a totally fabricated quotation. Here is the relevant quotation from para 113 of our Programme :

"The Communist Party of India strives to achieve the establishment of People's democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing a parliamentary and extra parliamentary forms of struggle, the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring about these transformations through peaceful means.

However, it needs always to be borne in mind that the ruling class never relinquish their power voluntarily. They seek to defy the will of the people and seek to reverse it by lawlessness and violence. It is, therefore, necessary for the revolutionary forces to be vigilant and so orientate their work that they can face up to all contingencies, to any twist and turn in the political life of the country."

Similarly, the alleged statement of left communist leaders does not exist and the Home Minister should have the courage to name such leaders who have made such fantastic utterances. I assert that no document or circular of our party exists suggesting violent methods of struggle and we treat our programme seriously. We are not used to double talk.

4. Neither does any document of our party exist suggesting the absurd and treacherous idea of a 'pincer movement' during 1962 border war with China. According to us revolution is not meant for import or export. It is said we are waiting for a Chinese attack on our country to synchronise with internal revolution. But Chinese attack on our country can only delay the achievement of our objective. It can never

help the peoples's forces. On the contrary, it can be of help to the Congress Government to mobilise the support of the people who are daily moving away from the Congress. I challenge the Home Minister to prove to the satisfaction of a Court of law that a single circular or document as alleged by him has been issued by our Party leaders or Party Committees. Such documents are unmarxist and anti-party. The General Secretary, CPI, Sri P. Sundarayya issued a statement on 22nd November, 1964 contradicting press reports about so called secret preparations for violent struggles being made by the left communists. Among other things he said, "We are a legal party openly functioning just like any other political party in the country. We are working among the people, participating in all their trials and tribulations and day-to-day activities, advocating the way out of their difficulties and trying to win their confidence and support. We have to work hard and go a long way before the majority of the people repose their confidence in our party and lead to the replacement of the present government by genuine people's democratic government. We do hold that any radical change in the present set-up is possible only with the backing of the majority of the people. In such a situation to accuse us of contemplating an armed struggle, is nothing but a vile slander."

5. I am not aware of any leftist leaders in West Bengal describing on 24th October India, in effect, as the aggressor as the Home Minister asserts.

6. Our two resolutions at Tenali and Calcutta (7th

Party Congress) concerning settlement of the border question with China do not tantamount to toeing the Chinese line as the Home Minister suggests. We do not advocate negotiations on Chinese terms. We are certainly keen for a settlement but negotiations must be based on terms acceptable to both governments. We advocated writing to China expressing the Government's willingness to start negotiations if the Chinese Government withdraws the 7 civilian posts from Ladakh. If the Chinese government refuses to remove the posts or does not take initiative to give any other suggestion which can be acceptable to both, then she stands to lose as far as world public opinion is concerned. Of course, I notice that MPs. like Sri Khadilkar, P. N. Saprú, Sudhir Ghosh have said much more in Parliament for a settlement. They speak about Colombo powers proposals not being sacrosanct, misunderstandings on border question, necessity for a direct approach to China without surrendering an inch of Indian territory etc.

7. On the question of Mao Tse Tung's photo : Mao Tse Tung is a great Marxist leader who has achieved revolution in his own country. But our party by no means agrees with him on all issues concerning the world communist movement or interpretations of the situation in India. His photo was not hung up as a result of deliberations among the organisers of the Tenali Convention. Some comrades put it up along with photos of other Marxist leaders according to usual custom without taking into consideration all aspects of the question. It was decided by the leaders later that it would not be put up during other conferences on theoretical and other grounds.

This matter was discussed with the Home Minister by some leaders earlier, and we thought the matter was closed. I also ask can a citizen be deprived of his liberty on this score when the Government has diplomatic relations with China and sends greetings to her wishing her well.

The charges are therefore malicious, false and slanderous. They follow the well-known pattern laid down by the infamous Dr. Goebells.

The Government cannot look upon us kindly because we are a serious force which wishes to replace the present government and remain with the people in their struggles against its anti-people policies. But we did not consider the government so weak and panicky that it would discard all decencies of public life, suppress the rule of law, abandon free and fair elections and all democratic procedures and take recourse to deception and falsehood in order to divert the attention of the suffering but struggling people from their real problems.

It has struck at the most powerful opposition party on the eve of the Karella elections and the Calcutta Corporation elections which is to be held on the basis of adult franchise for the first time.

Why could not the Government face the people politically? Why could it not leave it to the people to give its verdict about us? Why is it afraid of even Courts of Law? Why is it afraid of free and fair elections? How truly we have stated in our programme that danger to parliamentary democracy

comes not from us but from the ruling class as it happened in Kerala in 1959.

We also consider it our duty to preserve parliamentary institutions from such attacks and danger.

It is the Government which is subverting the nation's security by creating chaos in our economic life, imposing limitless suffering on our people and serving the interest of a handful of monopolists and profiteers.

A heavy blow has been struck at our party but all is not lost. The people must rouse themselves into activity and all democratic forces must combine to meet this offensive against democracy itself. The people will have the last say and truth will prevail.

ALL INDIA CIVIL LIBERTIES COUNCIL

Extracts from the resolution adopted in an emergent meeting of the Executive Committee held on January 11, 1965.

"The Supreme Court had observed that detentions in violation of fundamental rights are bound to render the government for damages for the violations of the constitution by a government which has assumed office under an oath to bear true faith and allegiance to our constitution and respect fundamental rights.....

"We fully share with the government the concern for the security and the safety of our country and we yield to none in our patriotism. Our love for our country and its democratic constitution compels us to declare that any citizen guilty of treason must be tried and severely punished by competent court of law."

"But democracy itself stands undermined and respect for fundamental rights stands subverted when the executive takes upon itself the responsibility to deprive even the meanest citizen in this land of this liberty without formulating the charge against him and without giving him an opportunity to defend himself and establish his innocence in the court of law."

"It is not possible for democrats in this land to place implicit faith on the fiat of the executive to furnish sufficient basis for denial of fundamental freedom to the citizens. Such action of the executive must always be backed by a valid law and it must be capable of being tested in competent courts at all times to inspire confidence. Even British rulers did not claim a right during any of the two world wars, either to detain an Indian in jail for a day under an invalid law or deny his access to courts of law to test the validity of his detention."

"We, therefore, view the recent large scale arrests of citizens in this country as a retrograde departure from standards of democracy and civil liberties."

"We are firmly of the opinion that our citizens are certainly entitled to greater respect for their fundamental liberties at the hands of their own government."

HIND MAZDOOR PANCHAYAT

It is difficult to find words strong enough to condemn the action of the Government in ordering the mass arrest of leaders and workers of the Communist Party of India. It is most reprehensible that the draconian Defence of India Regulations should have been used in this heinous act.

While one can safely expect the Government to come out with some cock-and-bull stories to justify these arrests, it will not be wrong to conclude that the forthcoming elections in Kerala and the Government's fear of the rising tide of people's anger and discontent owing to rising prices and falling standards of living are the two main reasons for this round up. If there were any really valid grounds for the detention of these leaders, the government should have had the courage to use the normal laws of the land to arrest and prosecute them rather than take recourse to the DIR.

Some of us have over the years maintained that the Congress government despite its protestations on democracy is avowedly a fascist government. With each passing day, the need to destroy this government which denies to its people both food and civil liberties is becoming greater.

While, therefore, demanding the immediate release of all those who have been arrested under the Defence of India

Regulations and the scrapping of the bogus Emergency which is used to further the government's fascist intentions, I would also appeal to all parties of the opposition-right, left and centre to jointly launch a massive agitation for the overthrow of this rotten, fascist regime.

30th December, 1964.

ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS

"The AITUC lodges its vigorous protest against the arrests of trade union leaders in various states of India. Those arrested include office bearers and members of the working committee and General Council of the AITUC and leaders of the State TUCS."

"The Defence of India Rules have been repeatedly used to crush the movement of people for the redressal of their grievances and for betterment of their lives".

"The wholesale arrests of TU and other democratic leaders cannot but add to discontent specially in view of the failure of the Government to solve the price and food questions."

"These arrests have once again underlined the immediate need for repeal of D. I. R. and the ending of the state of national emergency."

"The AITUC demands the immediate release of all those arrested."

31st December, 1964.

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia M. P.

"Now comes this most perverse blow of tyranny. At a time when the largest single party in Kerala was preparing for elections its leaders —almost all of them—have been arrested and put out of action. This may influence the elections in favour of the Government party and against the Gopalan Communists. The elections will then have been a total farce. The Government has been very badly advised. This repressive act six weeks before the elections is like stopping a poll or falsifying the count, all features of the worst forms of dictatorship. Any of the so called "documents" may be outright forgeries or marginal opinions. Even if I were to be arrested with the necessary atmosphere of mystery, large numbers would believe that I was a spy of some foreign government or agency.

Shri N. C. Chatterjee M. P.

Shri Chatterjee described the arrests as "lawless law and exploitation of emergency powers" by the Congress Government. He further said,

"The arrests were motivated to foil the Leftist activities in the ensuing Kerala election and also to prevent them from starting any agitation against the food policy of the Congress Government.

Shri K. Santhanam M. P.

Even under the normal constitution, the executive in India is empowered to order the preventive detention of individuals to safeguard the security of the State but this has to be done after the scrutiny of the actions of each individual who is to be deprived of his liberty and other limitations of time and judicial review had to be observed. I do not believe that, in the case of many of the left wing Communists who have been detained any real proof of active conspiracy or revolt can be produced. It is the essence of democracy that even a murderer or a dacoit should have the protection of the law and the courts. It is a matter of regret that, impelled by their indignant opposition to communism, many members of Parliament, including those of the opposition parties and many responsible newspapers, should have failed to recognise these arbitrary arrests as a threat to their own liberty. I have no sympathy with communism or communists but I do not think that any self-respecting Indian should be content that his personal liberty should be at the mercy of executive discretion however mild, wise and benevolent it may be."

—Hindustan Times 29 January 1965.

Shri K. Chandrasekharan

(Chairman Kerala unit of SSP)

Shri Chandrasekharan said in a statement in Ernakulam that when the country had not been told, either through Parliament or otherwise, of any developing tense situation on the northern borders or in the country or in the state, the massive arrests were likely to be construed as the

first attempt of the Congress Party to "torpedo free and fair elections in Kerala."

He said unity amongst the opposition parties was likely to be cemented by such actions and, with greater determination, they would now join in the common task of routing the congress in the election.

—PTI

Patriot Daily

"If as is rumoured, the decision to arrest these men did not originate in the central Government, but was demand by the Chief Ministers who had recently met in New Delhi, the congress as a party has no reason to be grateful to these state leaders. Whatever temporary advantage may have been gained in Kerela or some other state will be offset by the suspicion that it is a desparate election manoeuvre by a political leadership that is liable to be rushed into panicky decisions by ephemerel threats.

31 Dec. 1964.

Shri Prem Bhasin (PSP leader)

It is difficult to accept at its face value the official version that the arrests have been made in the interest of national security. If the Home Minister has "impeachable evidence" as claimed by him, it is incumbent on him to publish the evidence and institute trials.

The Century Weekly

"Is it not significant that not one national newspaper, almost all of them conformists or docile, has accepted the Government's story or written strong condemnation of the alleged wrongdoers? They make it through the very thin veil that they alone have preferred to comply that they do not feel convinced and that the Government's version is unconvincing. This is a sound test in the present case, for these newspapers are all anti-communist and anti-progressive and are anxious to conform to the Government's ways and thoughts...
.....

"As for men like A. K. Gopalan, it would require more than an allegation for any responsible person to believe that men like him would act as agents of a foreign Power, or that they would command any following if they did.

"The Government's action has tarnished the image of India abroad and not in the communist countries alone but in the countries who have democratic set up. Even *The Times of London* considers that the Indian Government's action was part of its strategy to isolate the 'Leftist' from 'Rightists' among the communists.....

"When a thousand public men, however misguided, some of them well known fighters against suppression in the British days who began their political life in the congress and were imprisoned without trial or specific charges and for indefinite period and when amongst them are members of Parliament

and state legislatures, Parliament should have been told first and before the 'spokesman' confides in selected Indian and foreign newsmen."

"The Government has responsibilities to all the people. The present conduct appears to have shaken their faith. That the rule of law and the requirements of justice will guide the Government's conduct must become assured in people minds."

9 January, 1965.

NEW AGE WEEKLY

"Repeated demands for facts and evidence appear to fall on deaf ears. And the opinion is growing even in circles which are prejudiced in favour of government that there is no concrete evidence in the hands of the Home Ministry....."

"The essential point before the people irrespective of their differences with the policies of the arrested leaders is this, if the Congress government is allowed to get away with this indiscriminate assault on the fundamentals of democracy by the detention without trial of its political opponents, the future of democracy in India is dark."

10th January, 1965.

NATIONAL HERALD

"In any action against Communists, left or right or any other political party the Government have to make a convincing case that action is not being taken because of fear of agitation against the failure of the Government's social and economic policies and that there is present an imminent danger to peace and tranquility or to the security of the country."

1st January, 1965.

HINDUSTAN TIMES

"There is a startling degree of disbelief in the case Mr. Nanda put forward to justify the countrywide arrests of the left communists. This is so even in circles openly hostile to communism. The prevalent theory is that the government has acted primarily to divert attention from the worsening food and prices situation, and secondly to avert the imminent congress debacle in the elections in Kerala.

6th January, 1965.

TIMES OF INDIA

"The conferment of extraordinary powers involves a simultaneous acceptance of the proposition that the executive is the best judge as to the precise conditions which warrant the

exercise of its special powers. But in practice public opinion in a democracy tends to take a sceptical view of any use of extraordinary powers by the executive."

"For this reason alone, if not for any other, the arrest of the Left Communists in such large numbers throughout the country will be regarded with some concern. Even those who have not the slightest sympathy for the politics of the Left Communists and who think that their ideology and political programme are thoroughly inimical to the national interest might wonder whether it was really necessary to swoop down on them and put them behind bars."

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

"Yet, after conceding all these arguments in favour of the Government's action, liberal conscience may still be uneasy on some possible aspects."

"One is over the casual remark made by Shri Nanda that people had been asking why the action had not been taken earlier."

"One implication of such a statement is the possible preconceived notion that such action could be popular, apart from being just and necessary in the interest of national security. This seems to introduce an element of political consideration."

“Such an impression is likely to be strengthened by Shri Nanda’s admission that there has been no kind of special development before the arrests. If the need for arrests has not suddenly developed, why was not action taken earlier when the Parliament was in session, so that the Government’s action could have been authoritatively explained to it within possible limits ?”