

July 11, 1977

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

1362

Mr. Dandeker

Re: Swatantra Party Office

The delay in sending you this note was occasioned by the fact that I have been trying to find out what was the position regarding the offices of other parties who have joined the Janata Party. The position of some of the offices in regard to which I have been able to obtain information is as follows:-

Congress(0)

The Congress(0) office at Congress House now carries the legend outside "Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee Properties Trust".

The Congress(0) office in Matunga (F-Ward office) houses the Janata Party office but the tenancy is in the name of the Matunga Gujarati Seva Mandal.

Jana Sangh

The Jana Sangh office in Kalbadevi is in the name of an individual who has let it out to the Janata Party.

The Jana Sangh office in Matunga now houses the RSS in whose name the tenancy stands.

Socialist Party

The tenancy of the Socialist Party office at Bhai Jivanji Lane which now houses the Maharashtra Janata Party office is in the name of Marathi Granth Sangralaya.

Another Socialist Party office at Prarthna Samaj is their own building and houses unions affiliated to Hind Mazdoor Panchayat.

Swatantra Party

Now coming to our office, the tenancy as you know stands in the name of the Maharashtra Swatantra Party. The AEI and the White Star are sub-tenants. I wonder if you are aware that Khyber Restaurant has bought over the building housing our office and they already seem to have ideas of getting us to leave on the pretext that the Swatantra Party does not exist. No direct approaches have been made to me but I believe one Mr. Bandrawalla has met Mrs. Sarla Datar. You will agree that under no circumstances should we give up the premises, for to get similar premises it will be next to impossible.

As of today what is happening is as follows:-



The portion that used to house the National Headquarters is now being used by Mr. Ratansinh Rajda the South-Bombay MP. I also understand that some Passport fellow has been allowed to conduct his business from that premises.

So far as our office is ~~our office~~ is concerned while a large portion of it is at our disposal a small cabin has been given to a Chartered Accountant who pays us Rs.400/- a month and also foots the telephone bills. Incidentally all telephones both at our office, in the old NHQ now used by Mr. Rajda (even Madhu Mehta's and Bhatia's phones) stand in the name of the Swatantra Party ! Mrs. Datar pays us Rs.350/- per month and AEI pays on an average Rs.60/-.

We (Mr. Parmanand Kejriwal, Mr. Girish, Munshi, Mr. K.H. Subramaniam and I) have been wrestling with the problem of how to keep hold of the tenancy. We understand that the Court will take a dim view of any attempt by us to say that the Janata Party is in reality another name by which the Swatantra Party functions. The new landlords will seek to prove that the Janata Party is a new Party. Another problem is the fact that the tenancy stands in the name of the Swatantra Party which is not a <sup>juridical</sup> corporate entity and as such the Office Bearers of the Party as they may be from time to time are the real tenants in the eyes of the law.

We have been working on the possibility of creating a Trust to be named the "Rajaji Trust" which is a continuation of the Swatantra Party. Hence the Trust will be formed under Clause 10(b) of the Party's Constitution. There is also the suggestion that we put a small board outside the premises (not outside the building) with the words "Swatantra Party Properties Trust". In the eyes of the law, tenancy is also property. This we have checked.

Meanwhile the board outside the building has been kept only because of the change in the landlord and our efforts to make sure that till such time as certain legal arrangements are worked out we do not lose possession of our place.

I think you have been unfair both to Mr. Masani and myself that we want to carry on the Swatantra Party. All that we have been trying to do is to arrange matters in such a way that part of the premises are at the disposal of the Janata Party which in fact is now being used by Mr. Rajda and that the other part will house the White Star, the AEI and any other non-party activity that we may wish to carry on.

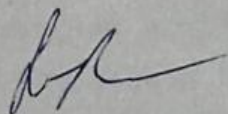


From a political point of view, both Minoo and I feel that the future is very uncertain so far as the Janata Party is concerned. I happen to be in a position to know in some detail and in specific terms the infighting that is going on. In the light of this it would be suicidal for us to do anything which will end in our being turned out of our premises.

What made me sad is not that we are arguing this so much but a feeling that you suspect my bonafides.

I am a product of the Rajaji/Masani/Dandekar School. Naturally I will fight hard for what I feel is right till a satisfactory and principled solution is found.

I would be happy to meet you if you so wish to discuss this issue further at a date and time convenient to you.



(S. V. Raju)

P.S I want to affirm that under no circumstances will I allow anything to diminish my affectionate regard for you - even if you tried!