

S.V.Raju

148, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
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Dear Mr.Dandeker,

Mr.Masani was kind enough to let me see your letter to him of 23rd July. He decided not to reply to you out of a sense of resignation as if to say "Oh What's the Use ?". But I am unable to resist the compulsion of replying to you, not because I feel it is going to have the slightest impression but out of a sense of anguish, the same feeling I had when I finally decided to step down from my position in the Party.

The first thing that came to my mind were two remarks you had made in the course of the many discussions we had when you were my General Secretary and later President. The first was immediately after the Haryana elections when you said more or less as I can recall "I am afraid the Swatantra Party is condemned to be permanently in the Opposition." After a pause you added "Not that I mind it. On the other hand ~~xxx~~ it is a very useful role that the Party can play." I recall wholeheartedly agreeing with you. The second remark that I still remember is ~~xxxxxx xxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx xxxxxxxxx~~ your statement to me soon after the 1971 elections when we were down but not out and which expressed your disgust of the behaviour of political party leaders in other parties. You said "I am proud to be in the Swatantra Party for it is a Party of gentlemen. I commands respect from everyone I meet." When I read your letter I was pained and thought to myself whether it was the same Dandeker or someone else.

I have had and continue to have great regard and respect for you. Along with Masani and H.M.Patel you are the only other man I have considered to be among the best of the living people I have the privilege to know. And yet, I find for reasons which leave me cold, your advocating that we bless the attempt of rank opportunists from our Party and others to form what is patently a "kichda" garbed in respectable and apparently acceptable policies. Policies which meet the approval of men like Raj Narain and Biju Patnaik.

If the move to destroy the Swatantra Party or what is left of it had come people who had sought to build the Party from its infancy I would

have understood. For they would have justification, otherwise they would not to kill their own baby. But then the move to get the Party to commit suicide comes from those who had little to do with building it up and had everything to do with destroying it from within from June 1972 when Mr. Piloo Mody (a more conceited man I have yet to come across) and his evil genius Mr. M.N. Amersey got into position. You will recall the numerous occasions when I bitterly complained to you about the manner in which the Party's affairs were being conducted. The funny thing is that it is precisely those whom the Party turned into national leaders who are ^{now} ~~not~~ seeking its destruction.

I have been too long in the Party and in a vantage position to be fooled by outward expressions. My blood literally boils when I recall the numerous instances when the two men I have named above undertook irresponsible actions which brought shame to the Party. To name only two - the Sabarkantha by-election and the U.P. misadventure. In retrospect I am convinced that these two men were deliberately pushing the Party towards a position when it would fold up willingly, for their motivation was power and not ideology.

Turning to the arguments you have advanced, I would respectfully ask you Sir whether you seriously believe that the "Kichda" will do any better than the SVDs which you used to roundly denounce. You will say that this is different because there is an agreed programme. But Sir, you will agree that it is easy to agree on generalities. The problem comes when you get down to brass tacks.

What harm has the Swatantra Party done to be treated thus. Its policies did not fail us. We failed the Party. And do you honestly think sir, that a bunch of confirmed opportunists are going to implement our policies better than we tried?

Do you Sir, seriously believe that the "Kichda" constitutes a National alternative? Is it really going to reduce the number of parties in India. Of the seven parties that are expected to commit harakiri, only four are of any consequence. Of these four two (purselves and the BKD are deeply divided on the issue) ~~xxxx~~ the third (the Utkal Congress is presently wooing the Congress in Orissa) and the fourth itself a splinter of the old SSP has been further splintered.

The State Units of Maharashtra, Tamil Nad and Delhi have refused to go along. They may be "little frogs in the Pond" but they are ideologically committed "frogs", they are ~~X~~sincere "frogs", they are courageous ~~2~~"frogs", because/they ^{though} are fully aware of the miserable organisation plight of the Party they have decided to carry on as best as they can and hope to live to fight another day. They have my admiration and my loyalty.

I hope you will forgive me, if at the Convention (I am a delegate) I speak out my mind and share with the delegates little known facts about the present officials who have deliberately led the Party to the position of forcing it to dissolve itself. I owe it to the Party and owe it to Rajaji who may have been forgotten so soon after his death by people he loved and had regard but who will forever live within me as a symbol of integrity and sincerity.

I am sorry if I have made this letter longer than I intended it to be. I don't care if a Piloo Mody or a Mannu Amersey seek the Party's destruction. For I expect nothing better from them. But I do care when when a person of your eminence, stature, integrity and honesty of purpose which used to come ~~thought~~ through every action and word also supports their cause.

I plead with you to let the Party live, even if it be in an attenuated form. The Liberal Party suffered decades of political oblivion and is now making a comeback. God and Rajaji willing the Swatantra Party too will one day stage a comeback if it is permitted to live. For deep in me is the conviction that the Swatantra Party's policies alone and preached by it alone hold out hope for the unfortunate people of our country.

In pain and sorrow,

S.V.Raju