

M.R. MASANI.

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My dear Piloo,

I had hoped to attend the meeting of the General Council of the Party that you have called on 9th and 10th June in Delhi but I find that I am unable after all to do so.

2. I am therefore dropping you this line to share with you and our colleagues my thoughts on the issue that is coming up before the meeting as to whether or not the Party should be dissolved in order to facilitate the emergence of the proposed new party.

3. While I see no objection in principle to a proposal to dissolve the Party to permit of a consolidation of all non-Marxist parties, including the Congress (O), Jan Sangh, the Akalis and the DMK for the purpose of establishing a two-party system and of counteracting the mischief of the British electoral system from which we suffer or to strengthen the hands of Jayaprakash Narayan in his campaign for developing people's action on a non-party basis, I do not think that the proposed move to form a new party in conjunction with the BKD, the Pragati Dal, the SSP and the Loktantrik Dal provides any justification for such a drastic step as the dissolution of the Party for which we have all worked for nearly fifteen years.

4. I fear the proposed Party will be such a puny affair that it is not likely to make any impact on the country as a whole. The only national party that would be called upon to dissolve itself will be the Swatantra Party, as all the others are local groups. I hope it is appreciated that, outside of U.P. and Orissa, it will only have the effect of a minor ripple and even in these two States it will mean no change in the situation except in name. The major purpose of establishing a two-party system and of avoiding a split vote will not be achieved unless the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh, the DMK and the Akalis also join in. Indeed, it is quite likely that a move of this partial nature may actually come in the way of a more comprehensive consolidation of non-statist and non-Marxist elements a little later.

5. The mere adoption of a platonic statement of principles which may be found possible is not enough. The Swatantra Party's programme provides a clear cut alternative to the policies of those in office for two decades. Anything less than a 'U' turn or a complete reversal of these policies cannot pull the country out of its present mess or avert the economic collapse that it is facing. Will the proposed new Party have the homogeneity that is necessary

and is it likely, in the light of past experience, to present a credible image to the people? Or might it on the other hand reduce the specific appeal of each of the combining elements and only result in strengthening the ruling party? These are questions and doubts that assail one.

6. I would therefore be inclined to suggest that the General Council may, as a first step towards a genuine consolidation, be prepared, while maintaining the Party's individual identity, to agree to our coming together with others on a common programme for Unity in Action. Such a front would, it is hoped, by working together in unison show the path to others and thus pave the way for the emergence of a genuine and principled alternative for the country. That would be the time at which we could consider dissolving our Party in order to merge into something bigger and better.

7. In any event, I understand from Madhu Mehta that you are all agreed that the General Council can at most only recommend dissolution of the Party to a National Convention which alone is competent to dissolve the Party. That is the correct constitutional position. It will also give us all another opportunity to meet again and take a final decision.

With best wishes for a successful meeting,

Yours sincerely,

Minoo Masani

(Minoo Masani)

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