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Draft Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the General Council of the
Party held on Saturday and Sunday, June 24 and 25, 1972, at the
Dasaprakash Hotel, Madras

Present

Mr. H. M. Patel -- in the Chair

Andhra

Mr. N. Veerachari
Mr. Y.G.Gowd

Bombay

Mr. G.B.Sukhee
Mr. Madhu Mehta
Mrs. Sarla Datar
Mr. Shantilal Thar
Mr. K.H.Subramanian
Mr. N. Dandeker

Delhi

Mr. Mewaram Arya
Mr. Mohanlal Jatav

Gujarat

Mr. Piloo Mody
Mr. Anandbhai Amin
Mr. M. N. Amersey
Miss Kusum Kumari Joshi

Kerala

Mr. A.J.Dominic
Mr. K.T.Joseph
Mr. C.N.Sudhan
Mr. Jacob Cherian
Mr. H.K.Stephen
Mr. K.A.Abraham

Maharashtra

Mr. Sumatilal P. Shah

Mysore

Mr. Siddish Kashimath
Mr. K.N.V.Rao
Mr. N.K.Ganapath
Mr. R.Y.Chorpade
Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu
Mr. J.M.Lobo Prabhu
Mr. C.M.Mohan
Mrs. Mandanna

Orissa

Mr. Tribikram Tripathy
Mr. Ban Bihari Pati
Mr. R.N.Singh Deo
Mr. P.K.Deo
Mr. Gurucharan Tikayat
Mr. M.K.Sahu
Mr. N. K. Mohanty

Rajasthan

Mr. Kalyansingh Kalvi
Mr. D. N. Patodia

Tamilnadu

Mr. M.K.Nanja Gowda
Mr. J.Ramabhadran
Mr. P. Sunderesan
Mr. M. S. Hamza
Mr. V. Devanathan
Mr. N. Mohammad Hussain
Mr. C. R. Narasimhan
Mr. R. Kalamegham
Dr. H.V.Hande
Mr. M.K.Ramakrishnan
Mr. K.V. Mahadevan
Rajaji
Dr. M. Santosham
Mr. A. Doraiswamy
Mr. V. Padmanabhan
Mr. T. Sadasivam
Mr. K. Sunderam

Uttar Pradesh

Mr. H.K.Srivastava

Former President

Mr. M.R.Masani

Members of Parliament

Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Mr. M. K. Mohta

Special Invitees

Mr. R. B. Mishra (Orissa)
Mr. T.M.Tirupathy (Tamil Nadu)

The Minutes of the meeting of the General Council held in Bombay on April 8 and 9 were confirmed.

New Members of the Council

Mr. Patel informed the Council that the following members had been elected by the State Councils concerned to fill in vacancies in the General Council caused by the resignation or death of members :

Kerala

Mr. K.T. Joseph .. to replace Mr. C. Mathai who died

Mysore

Mrs. J. Mandanna .. to replace Mr. B.S. Gopalkrishna ..
and and
Mr. G.M. Mohan Mr. R. J. Desai who had resigned

Tamil Nadu

Dr. R. Kalamegham .. to replace Mr. K.R. Cheemaichamy and
Mr. R.K. Ramakrishnan Mr. A. Adiseshan who had resigned, and
Mr. Doraiswamy Nadar Mr. S. Venkata Rao who died.

He welcomed the new members to the Council

Order of Business :

The Council agreed with the National Executive's suggestion that the representatives of the Press be allowed to be present at the General Council proceedings from 4 pm that day and throughout the following day when the House considered the Draft Position Paper and the various Resolutions.

The National Executive's suggestion that the following be the order of business to be transacted by the General Council was approved :

- (a) Matters relating to organisation
- (b) Matters relating to Party policies viz., the Draft Position Paper and
- (c) Draft Resolutions

Organisational Matters

Mr. Patel referred to the last meeting of the General Council in Bombay on April 8 and 9 when there was an exhaustive discussion on the direction the Party should take; the problems that arose in regard to the conduct of the Party in the light of our performance in the last elections, and the needs of the present situation. He reminded members that the Council had, at that meeting, decided not to take any decisions but to allow members to think over the various suggestions that had been made. To facilitate this, the proceedings had been tape-recorded and a detailed summary of the proceedings had been circulated.

He had on his part thought over the various suggestions that had been made and in particular the one by Mr. Dandekar that it was time for a change in the leadership so that younger and more energetic persons could take over and guide the Party. Like Mr. Dandekar, Mr. Patel said he had neither the time nor the energy required by the Party in the present situation. He had therefore decided to step down. He added that it was his intention to suggest the name of Shri Piloo Mody.

At this stage, Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu sought permission to withdraw a resolution which she had given notice of to the effect that those who resigned should not be eligible for re-election and substitute it by another resolution viz., that Mr. H.M.Patel should be asked to continue as the President. Mr. J.M.Lobo Prabhu seconded her proposal. However, they said that they would leave the matter to Rajaji for his decision. Rajaji asked Mrs. Lobo Prabhu to withdraw her resolution as he felt that the reasons advanced by Mr. H.M.Patel to make way for a younger person were valid and praised Mr. Patel for his approach. Thereupon, Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu withdrew her substitute resolution.

Mr. H.M.Patel then stepped down from the Chair and Mr. N. Dandeker, the Vice-President took the Chair to conduct the election of a new President.

Mr. H.M.Patel proposed and Mr. N.K.Ganapaiah seconded the name of Mr. Piloo Mody as President of the Party. There being no other nomination, Mr. Piloo Mody was elected President of the Party unanimously.

Mr. Piloo Mody was then invited to take his Chair and conduct the proceedings of the General Council.

Mr. Piloo Mody -- in the Chair

Mr. Piloo Mody requested Rajaji to address the new Council and to give it his blessings. The text of Rajaji's talk is attached (Annexure A)

The President said that the General Council should adopt a Resolution endorsing whole-heartedly Rajaji's sentiments regarding Mr. H.M.Patel and his record of service to the country and to the Party. The proposal was approved unanimously. The following is the text of the Resolution :

"The General Council of the Swatantra Party expresses its deep sense of gratitude and appreciation to Mr. H.M.Patel for his services to the Party as its President during a very difficult period. The Council fully endorses the sentiments expressed by Rajaji, lauding Mr. Patel's services to the country and to the Party".

The Council then considered the resignation of Mr. Dandeker from the Vice-Presidency of the Party and of Mr. Mohammad Imam from membership of the National Executive on grounds of health. Both the resignations were accepted with regret.

Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu then proposed that Mr. H.M.Patel and Mr. N. Dandeker be elected to fill the two vacancies to the National Executive created by Mr. Imam's resignation and the election of Mr. Piloo Mody as the Party's President. The proposal was approved and Mr. H.M.Patel and Mr. Dandeker were declared elected unanimously.

Regarding the vacancy for the office of the Vice-President arising from Mr. Dandeker's resignation, the Council decided to defer filling the vacancy for the present.

Organisational Matters

Various papers had been circulated to the members of the Council concerning organisational matters viz.,

- (a) a letter from the General Secretary addressed to members of the Council,

- (b) suggestions received from the General Secretary of the Kerala Unit, and
- (c) comments by Col. H.R.Pasricha on the proceedings of the last meeting of the Council.

In the discussions that followed, the following members participated :

Mr. K.T.Joseph, Mr. M.R.Arya, Mr. Tribikram Tripathy, Mr. P.K.Deo, Mr.K. N.V.Rao, Mr. G.B.Sukhee, Mr. R.B.Mishra, Mr. E.K.Srivastava, Mr. Mohammad Hussain, Mr. J.M.Lobo Prabhu, Mr. R.Y.Ghorpade, Mr. Mohanlal Jatav and Mr. Devanadhan. While a number of points had already been made by the speakers at the last meeting, the Headquarters was asked to take note of fresh points made and to consider them while mapping out the Party's programme of action.

At this stage, the meeting was thrown open to the Press.

Mr. Piloo Mody made his speech accepting his office as President of the Party. A brief summary of his speech is attached (Annexure B)

The Council then took up for consideration a position paper prepared by a drafting group consisting of Mr. Piloo Mody, Mr. J.M.Lobo Prabhu and Mr. D.N.Patodia. Mr. Masani initiated the discussion. Those who participated were Dr. H.V.Hande, Mr. Lobo Prabhu, Mr. Y.G.Gowd, and Mr. N. Dandeker. The position paper was approved in the form attached (Annexure C)

The Meeting then rose for the day.

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The General Council resumed its deliberations at 10:15 am on Sunday,
the 25th June

Present

Mr. Piloo Mody --(in the Chair)

Andhra

Mr. Y.G.Gowd

Bombay

Mr. G.B. Sukhee
Mr. Madhu Mehta
Mrs. Sarla Datar
Mr. K.E.Subramanian
Mr. Shantilal Thar
Mr. N.Dandeker

Delhi

Mr. M.R.Arya
Mr. Mohanlal Jatav

Gujarat

Mr. Anandbhai Amin
Miss Kusum Kumari Joshi
Mr. H.M. Patel
Mr. M.N. Amersey

Kerala

Mr. C.N. Sudhan
Mr. A.J. Dominic
Mr. Jacob Cherian
Mr. M.K. Stephen
Mr. K.A. Abraham
Mr. K.T. Joseph

Maharashtra

Mr. Sumatilal P. Shah

Mysore

Mr. H.K. Ganapaiah
Mr. Siddiah Kashimath
Mr. K.N.V. Rao
Mr. G.M. Mohan
Mrs. Mandanna
Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu
Mr. J.M. Lobo Prabhu
Mr. R.Y. Ghorpade

Orissa

Mr. H.M. Sahu
Mr. B.B. Pati
Mr. P.K. Deo
Mr. R.N. Singh Deo
Mr. Tribikram Tripathi
Mr. N.K. Mohanty
Mr. Gurucharan Tikayat

Rajasthan

Mr. Kalyansingh Kalvi
Mr. D.N. Patodia

Tamil Nadu

Mr. P. Sunderesan
Mr. C.R. Narasimhan
Mr. K.V. Mahadevan
Mr. V. Devanathan
Mr. S. Narayanswamy
Mr. M.K. Nanje Gowder
Dr. H.V. Hande
Mr. M.K. Ramakrishnan
Mr. N. Mohammad Hussein
Mr. J. Ramabhadran
Mr. V. Padmanabhan
Mr. T. Sadasivam
Mr. T.T. Srinivasan
Mr. A. Doraiswamy
Mr. R. Kalamegham

U.P.

Mr. H.K. Srivastava

Former President

Mr. M.R. Masani

Members of Parliament

Mr. M.K. Mohta

Special Invitees

Mr. R.B. Mishra (Orissa)
Mr. T.M. Thirupathy (Tamil Nadu)
Mr. B.K. Deo (Orissa)

The Council then took up for consideration the following resolutions :

1. Fall of Orissa Government

The Resolution was moved by Mr. P.K. Deo and seconded by Mr. Manubhai Amersey.

Mr. M.R. Masani, Mr. K.N.V. Rao, Mr. Doraiswamy, Mr. C.R. Narasimhan and Mr. R.N. Singh Deo took part in the discussion. The Resolution was adopted unanimously.

2. Indo-Pak Summit Talks

The Resolution was moved by Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu and seconded by Mr. H.M. Patel. Dr. H.V. Hande and Mr. Piloo Mody spoke in support of the Resolution which was adopted unanimously.

3. Plight of Harijans and Adivasis

Mr. Madhu Mehta moved the Resolution which was seconded by Mr. K. Sunderam. Mr. P.K.Deo, Mr. Kalyansingh Kalvi, Mr. Sumatilal Shah and Mr. Sukhee spoke in support of the Resolution which was adopted unanimously.

4. Electoral Reform

The Resolution was moved from the Chair. Mr. P.K.Deo, Mr.K.N.V.Rao, Mr. N.K.Ganapaiah and Mr. N. Dandeker spoke in support. The Resolution was adopted unanimously.

(As a member of the Sub-Committee to examine various measures on electoral reform, Mr. Dandeker requested all members of the General Council to send in their suggestions to the National Headquarters on any aspect of electioneering before the end of July for the Sub-Committee's consideration)

5. College Education in Kerala

The Resolution was moved by Mr. A. J.Dominic and seconded by Mr.H. M.Patel. Mr. K.N.V.Rao spoke on the Resolution which was unanimously adopted.

6. Tamil Nadu's Farmers' Agitation

The Resolution was moved from the Chair. Dr. H.V. Hande spoke in support. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

7. Threats to Freedom of the Press

The Resolution was moved by Mr. Devanathan and seconded by Mr. Mohammad Hussein. Mr. C. R. Narsimhan spoke in support of the resolution which was adopted unanimously.

8. Land Ceilings

The Resolution was moved by Mr. H.M.Patel and seconded by Mr. M.R. Masani. Mr. Kalyansingh Kalvi, Mr. D.N.Patodia, Mr. N.K.Ganapaiah, Mr. Mahadevan, Mr. R.Y.Ghorpade and Mr. Nanji Gowder spoke in support.

(Mr. Ghorpade suggested that the Party should set up a Committee to study land legislation that came up from time to time at the Centre and in the States so as to guide the Party's Units and members on the attitude to be taken in respect of such legislation).

Mr. Gowd moved an amendment that the sentence in the resolution which stated that "the Party was not in principle opposed to measures for the equitable redistribution of land" be deleted. This amendment was not acceptable to the mover and seconder of the Resolution.

After some discussion Mr. Gowd withdrew his amendment and the Resolution was adopted unanimously.

The texts of these resolutions are attached (Annexure D).

Winding up the discussion, the General Secretary Mr. Madhu Mehta said that this was the 14th meeting of the General Council. Usually when the Council met there was plenty of discussion, various decisions were taken, but there it ended. There was no follow-up action. He hoped that

beginning with this meeting, all Council members would go back determined to carry out the various suggestions that had been made and decisions taken.

He said that there was need for soul-searching and to establish our image as a Party of the People. Party workers, he felt, had not been able to establish rapport with the people. This could only be done if we went to the assistance of the people in helping them solve their small, day to day problems.

The General Secretary desired to place on record the Party's appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. H.M. Patel.

He thanked Mr. T. Sadasivam for their hospitality. The General Secretary also conveyed the Council's thanks to the Tamil Nadu and Madras District Unit of the Party for their cooperation.

After concluding remarks by the President, the meeting then terminated.

Text of Rajaji's Address to the General Council in Madras on June 24, 1972

In its own way, what has happened in this General Council meeting is nearly as important as the Indo-Pak Summit meeting that is going to come. Some things are big, other things are small. But a small thing is as important as a big thing.

My blessings first of all to Mr. H.M. Patel who has really acted in an admirable manner and set an example for all men to follow.

My blessings and good wishes are there for all of you. I do not believe that there is any Party in India which resists the trend to dictatorship except the Swatantra Party. We can be proud of our lonely glory only if we are faithful to our duty. We must realise that the desire for power and influence has been found to be the greatest obstacle to right action. From the time of the Bhagwad-Gita, throughout the ages, we have seen that when we let our desire overwhelm our mind, we generally go wrong. So let us make up our mind that our one and only function is to prevent dictatorship to take hold of India. It must be a religious sense of duty that I am appealing for. Of course, I know the difficulty. Men want some influence, want some power of some kind - at least to travel in a railway train without paying for the ticket - but we must overcome that kind of feeling; or, at least, adjust our mind in such a way that we can be both a little bit worldly but a great deal other-worldly also.

Are we going to allow Smt. Indira Gandhi or anybody else to become dictators in India and destroy democracy in South Asia? We cannot do it. When we founded this Party - myself and a few brothers here - we had imagined that we will be strong enough to fight communism, authoritarianism and totalitarianism and that we will be true to the original constitution in every respect in a real sense and not merely paying verbal homage to the Constitution. We must make up our mind - my appeal to you is only that. I am appealing as a very very old man and as a man tired of superficialities. Let us realise that it is a religious duty that we should save democracy. I bring in the word religion because that is the only thing that can save us. All other things may deceive us - it is only God and religion that can save us. Let us therefore pray that this party, even though it might look somewhat in a mess just now and somewhat weak, becomes strong because it is the only Party that fights evil which is overhanging us just now.

If you wished only to hear my voice, you have heard it. But if you see how I feel, my heart is full of admiration for Mr. H.M. Patel and the manner in which we disposed our affairs today. I want this to be an example to all Parties, to all Governments including India and Pakistan. I do hope that we will play our part in bringing about not a treaty which can be broken but at heart a friendship and goodwill which cannot be broken. We want that this will come about and we should play our part in it. Never mind authority. Smt. Indira Gandhi is changing in my opinion, is bound to change. If we believe in truth, in its potentiality, she is bound to change. She is now in the meshes of falsehood to some extent and we will have to fight hard in order to bring her back to reality.

You have given me a chance to speak to you all and when the heart is full, words fail. I have no words enough to thank you all for the great goodwill you have shown and in particular look it. Here is Mr. Lobo Prabhu, a fierce warrior. Let me tell you, I asked him to withdraw his protest and he did it. We want that kind of real devotion about one another.

Forget me. Never mind individuals. The Party will be alive and must be alive if you want India to be saved from communist dictatorship. The Party is bound to be there and let us make sure that we play our part properly.

We have done well today. I am proud of the fact that you have come all the way because I am here. I do not think there was any other reason for you to come to Madras except your affection for me. I thank you for all that. Only I am sorry I am not well enough to do better than I have been able to do. If wishes can achieve things, my best wishes to you all.

Summary of Mr. Piloo Mody's Speech to the General Council on June 24, 1972,
accepting the office of President of the Swatantra Party

Mr. Piloo Mody thanked the members of the General Council for having reposed confidence in him by electing him to the Presidentship of the Party. He said that this was a critical hour before the country. There was a crisis of confidence all round. There was a crisis in the opposition, a constitutional crisis, crisis of no confidence in the democratic norms and functioning. There was a crisis of character exemplified by bribery, corruption, nepotism, black money and political and general immorality.

What was the role of the Swatantra Party in such a crisis-ridden situation? It was to ensure the survival of constitutional government in the country and as Rajaji put it - to protect democracy.

There was a great deal of discussion at this meeting and the last one and a great deal of tortuous ruminations on the problems facing the country and the role of the Swatantra Party.

From the discussions he had come to the conclusion that the Party should demonstrate its oneness with the people, that it was with them, willing to fight and willing to sacrifice for their cause.

The Swatantra Party carried no brief for any section of the people. The Party's task was not a work for faint hearts.

We must be thankful to Mrs. Indira Gandhi for having cleansed us. In fact, she has cleansed other parties as well by collecting all the garbage and gathering them in her own Party. It was always easier to clean garbage accumulated in one place and at one stroke.

The Swatantra Party had lost everything - men, money and media - but, it had not lost honesty, sincerity and dedication. This the Party must preserve so that when an honest man walks people will automatically conclude he belongs to the Swatantra Party and when a Swatantra Party man walks, people will automatically conclude that he is an honest man.

Mr. Mody said that the Swatantra Party was fighting a cause bigger than any man, however good. The cause was to save democracy in India, to fight evil, corruption, dictatorship and communism -- a fight for liberty and justice.

But this would remain mere words unless they were translated into a meaningful programme both in content and in quality. The Party must be prepared to fight injustice wherever it sees it or whoever was involved; it must fight for a society based on merit, for equality of opportunity especially for the backward people and the minorities, for rewarding work and efficiency and for the right of those who wish to work.

The Swatantra Party must show the way how millions of new jobs can be created through rural development, in agro-industries, how new areas can be opened up for trade and industry. This was a great task and a great cause. Mr. Piloo Mody said that he was acutely aware of how unworthy he, at any rate, was for this great task but said that one should make up in spirit what one lacked by way of skill.

He pointed out that all were agreed on the Party's principles and policies but every one felt that it required a new look or orientation. He therefore promised a new Statement of Policy worked out with the brains trust that the Party had, for the General Council's perusal and approval. He said that the present system of Party organisation was based on a hierarchical pattern which often did not work.

ional/ Mr. Mody promised to put before the General Council a new organisat/
pattern for discussion and approval. This would involve constitutional
changes in the Party and he promised to prepare a new constitution for
the General Council's consideration.

There were other changes he said he would like to make. For instance,
he would like the meetings of the National Executive and the General
Council to shed some of their order while improving their content.

The two must meet longer and oftener. Mr. Mody suggested that the
National Executive should meet once in two months - at least six times a
year and the General Council should meet three times a year. A
National Convention should be called every year except perhaps during
election years. Mr. Mody emphasised the need for communication between
the Party's ranks at all levels and for a spirit of comradeship.

Resources were needed to strengthen the Party internally. He said that
the Party should have five hundred jeeps at any given time - run garages
conveniently located. It should have printing presses large and small
in every language. There should be collection drives to collect funds
whether they were big or small.

He offered to visit a district which enrolled a minimum of a thousand
workers but he wanted their membership fees to be presented to him. He
said that they would be allowed to keep the subscription collected, less
the usual 5 % which was the Centre's quota.

He referred to a public function the day before when he was presented
with a ponnadai by the Madras District Unit in appreciation of his work
in Parliament. He felt that every Unit should similarly recognise,
applaud and encourage those of its members who had performed well in
Parliament or in the State Legislatures or done any good work so that it
would act as a spur to better performance.

Mr. Piloo Mody concluded by saying that the slogan of the Party at this
hour should be "We Shall Overcome".

Annexure C

Statement Approved by the General Council

Madras, June 24, 1972

The country faces today a situation in which several unhealthy trends are compounded such as the lowering of standards of our public life, blatant corruption, economic stagnation, control over mass media of communication, tampering with Elections and detention without trial, undermining the fundamental rights of the citizen through the systematic denigration of the judiciary and Amendments to the Constitution, the absence of an effective opposition in Parliament, the concentration of power in the hands of the Union Government and the atrophy of the autonomy of the States of the Union and finally the concentration of power within the ruling Party in one pair of hands. All this is a violence on Democracy. Faced with this picture there are a large number of patriotic men and women who are greatly concerned with the future of the country but express their helplessness to do anything to counter these trends, preserve democratic institutions and further the prosperity of the people.

In such a situation, the Swatantra Party which alone stands for a clean and effective administration has an important role to play. Indeed it may be claimed that it is today the only real opposition party to the Government of the day. The Swatantra Party has always fought for the twin values of Liberty and Justice in the interests of the whole country, with malice to none and greater sympathy for those in need of it.

While reiterating its belief in the validity of the principles set out in the Statement of Policy of the Party of March 19, and 20, 1960, which has been further proved in the last decade, the General Council of the Party considers it necessary to present a simple and stimulating programme to the people in terms of their rights for which it will dedicate itself.

1. RIGHT TO MAXIMUM RETURNS TO ALL AGRICULTURISTS :

Peasant proprietors who form 49% of the population be assured of economic holdings without uneconomic ceilings, reducing production or the utility of their investment or without condemning them to a permanently low living standard unrelated to standard of living in other sectors.

Landless labour constituting 13 % of the population should have priority for all land made available by the strict enforcement of economic ceilings and from vast areas of cultivable waste land like Chambal which Government should develop and distribute without further delay.

Tenants constituting 9% should be confirmed in the permanent tenure of their land on fair rents without being involved in further litigation for rights which are of no real interest to them. To add to their assets, their tenancies should be made transferable by mortgage or sale.

2. RIGHT TO HOUSING :

The land with Government should be surveyed and made available for housing on the most economic pattern of construction. Secondly banks may advance loans freely for house construction. Thirdly existing tenants may be allowed to transfer their rights of tenancy, under suitable safeguards.

3. RIGHT TO PRODUCTIVE WORK :

Unemployment in India is growing, by and large, as a consequence of mistaken policies and priorities of Government. There is more unemployment at the end of every Five-Year Plan than there was at the beginning. It is authoritatively estimated that 14 million were unemployed in India in 1970 and with current policies continuing there are going to be another 23 million by 1980 thus resulting in 37 million unemployed. This shows a rise in the number of unemployed at the rate of 6,000 per day. There is no artificial method of creating jobs for the unemployed unless they are productive and the only way to secure employment is by basing the next plan on full employment opportunities to different sections of the people. For the largest section of the unemployed which is in the rural sector, a Standing Offer of Employment on minimum wages must be created. For the educated unemployed industry must be cleared of restrictive controls for expansion in itself and in the connected sectors of trade, transport and services. In addition, all employment should be based on equality of wages and qualifications in public and private sectors to ensure social justice and to stimulate full contribution by all workers. Labour should be served by increase of employment opportunities.

4. RIGHT TO PLENTY, FAIR PRICES AND GOOD QUALITY :

The consumer who in a competitive free economy should be supreme has been the forgotten factor in Indian economics and has been sacrificed. He will be served by the termination of inflation, corruption and the manipulation by licences which the Congress Party has tolerated for political reasons.

5. RIGHTS OF LABOUR :

The Swatantra Party ever since its inception has supported the workers' right to organise themselves and where necessary to strike as also to be associated with management. The Party has also sought to help in their emancipation from domination and exploitation by outside elements of a political nature. In so far as Government employees are concerned, the Party stands for freedom for them to carry on their work without interference from political pressures. The General Council feels that the Party's call given in its Statement of Policy of 1960 to its members to help workers in all possible ways for organising themselves has not been adequately responded to and it urges members of the Party to help trade unions to establish and to grow, taking care to see that these organisations are organised and controlled by the workers themselves.

6. RIGHTS OF MINORITIES

In a multi-lingual and multi-religious country like ours, maintenance of equality before the law and the protection of the minorities is a major task. The Party has pledged itself to carry out the provisions of the Constitution for the protection of the rights and interests of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other minorities and of those who work under economic and social handicaps such as Harijans, Adivasis and other Backward classes. There cannot be any question that the success of national integration demands that there should be no feeling on the part of minority communities of a denial of fair representation in the public services or of equal opportunities in trade, commerce and industry or of a fair deal in regard to admission to colleges and educational institutions, of facilities for the development of their institutions, languages and of some machinery for the redress of their grievances. The General Council of the Party reiterates its concern in this matter.

7. RIGHT TO FREE AND FULL INFORMATION :

The General Council is concerned at the way in which those in authority are seeking to establish a monopoly over all media of mass communications. While on the one hand they stubbornly refuse to carry out the recommendations of the Chanda Committee in regard to Radio and Television, they are now seeking to lay their hands on the Press under the deceptive slogan of "Diffusion of Ownership". The Swatantra Party stands for the fullest freedom of expression and will oppose to the bitter end measures of the nature referred to above.

8. RIGHT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE :

The Swatantra Party is strongly opposed to privileges acquired through inheritance or otherwise. The Party stands for a society based on merit. It stands for equality of opportunity and for the recognition of the workers' efficiency through promotions and increased pay, which lead to job satisfaction. The Party is strongly opposed to nepotism, push and favouritism preached by those in power without consideration of merit.

9. TASK OF EDUCATION AND AGITATION :

The Party feels that the two big tasks which it faces today are firstly the education of its members and others to an awareness of the realities and dangers that face our country and calls for a number of study circles to perform this task. The second task is to guide and lead the various sections of the people in agitations for the relief of their legitimate grievances and the achievement of their just objectives. It should be the task of the Party and others to provide to various sections of the people, guidance, help and leadership against injustice, corruption, arbitrary action and wrong doings on the part of those in the ruling party. It is only through a series of effective agitations of this nature that the present helplessness of the people can be ended and a spirit of resistance to all measures endangering liberty and justice can be generated.

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Resolutions Adopted by the General Council
Madras, June 24 and 25, 1972

1. Fall of the Orissa Coalition Government

The Swatantra Party strongly condemns the unscrupulous tactics of the Ruling Congress in its bid to capture power in Orissa.

Keeping in view the Prime Minister's assurance in Parliament on impending legislation against defections, her silence over the coup engineered by her party, suggests tacit connivance with its methods. The implication is that the legislation has been deliberately deferred, thereby encouraging defections to the ruling Congress and obstructing defections from it thereafter.

The Swatantra Party welcomes the decision of the Orissa Unit to organise an "Anti-Defection Week" at the beginning of the Monsoon Session of the Orissa Assembly through a series of meetings in Bhubaneswar and in the constituencies of the defectors.

The Swatantra Party resolves that other units will similarly devise non-violent measures to mobilise public opinion against this pernicious political practice.

2. Indo-Pakistan Summit Talks

The Swatantra Party welcomes the initiation of summit talks between Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India and Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, President of Pakistan. It commends to both leaders the urgency of agreeing upon terms which will prevent the eruption of a fourth war between the two neighbouring countries thereby ensuring durable peace which will exclude the interference of global powers on the Indian sub-continent.

3. Plight of Harijans and Adivasis

The recent spate of reports on the ill treatment and harassment of harijans and adivasis in various parts of the country are a sad commentary on the degree to which Gandhiji's teachings have been forgotten by many of our countrymen.

Despite guarantees in the Constitution and various statutes giving equal status to our less fortunate brethren, the lot of harijans, adivasis and other backward classes continues to be deplorable.

The General Council of the Swatantra Party reiterates the pledge contained in its election manifesto to carry out effectively and faithfully the provisions in the Constitution for the protection of the rights and interests of all minorities and of those who work under various handicaps such as harijans, adivasis and other backward classes, and calls upon its members to mobilise public opinion on this issue, to take the lead in taking every possible step to redress wrongs and injustices that may be inflicted on these sections of our people.

4. Electoral Reform

In the light of the unhappy experience of the Parliamentary Elections of 1971 and the State Assembly elections of 1972, the General Council of the Swatantra Party concurs with the large volume of opinion in the country that the time has come for a thorough study and overhaul of the electoral system.

The shocking use of money power and the black money creates a situation where an honest and poor man can have no chance of getting elected. The other deficiency is the unrepresentative character of the legislatures where the ruling party which has got only 43% of the popular vote, has captured more than 70% of the seats in the Lok Sabha. This not only distorts and vitiates the popular will, but also makes it possible for attempts to be made to destroy the Constitution of our country by those who represent only a minority of the electorate.

Among the solutions that should be considered to this problem is the employment of the List System, which is one of the forms of Proportional Representation practised in several democratic countries. According to the List System, the voter votes for one or other political party which has published a list of its candidates in a certain order of preference. This list may be one for the whole country or one for each State.

Once polling is over, the number of votes cast for each political party are counted and tabulated and the seats in the legislature are distributed in approximate proportion to the number of votes cast, thus resulting in the first of so many of each list being elected.

As grave doubts are prevailing in the minds of people about the genuineness of ballot papers that were used, it is necessary that some method whereby votes are punched is introduced so as to do away with the present system of stamping of votes.

The General Council appoints Mr. N. Dandekar and Mr. Manubhai Amersey to examine various measures of electoral reform and to present its report to the next meeting of the General Council.

5. Tamil Nadu Farmers Agitation

The General Council extends its support to the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Agitation for the implementation of their 12 Demands which among other things include -

- a) reduction in electricity charges for pumpsets,
and also
- b) doing away with the increased agricultural tax
recently levied by the D.M.K. on the basis of crops.

The General Council is of the view that this increased taxation on one side and the recent enactment by the D.M.K. Government writing off the rent arrears due to the farmers on the other, will totally ruin the farmer.

The General Council therefore urges the local D.M.K. Government to immediately concede the twelve demands raised by the farmers of Tamil Nadu.

6. College Education in Kerala

We deplore the decision of the Kerala Government to compel privately managed educational institutions in the state to charge the same fees as are charged in Government Colleges and institutions without at the same time promising to make good the financial loss that this step would cause to the private institutions.

Government cannot be unaware of the cost to them to run Government educational institutions. This decision of theirs therefore is clearly unfair and unjust and designed to compel privately run educational institutions to close down.

Private educational institutions are managed by persons who have been motivated by no other object than the advancement of education and with such assistance from voluntary organisations it would never have been possible for education to have spread as widely as it has in the State.

The step now decided upon by Government to compel them to close down or face financial bankruptcy is a display of unprecedented ingratitude.

If education is to advance and educational experiments are to continue to be tried, it is essential private educational organisations should continue in the interests of sound educational development as also in the interests of justice. This Council expresses the confident hope that the Government of Kerala will even at this late stage retrace its steps and allow educational institutions to charge fees that are reasonable and fair or alternatively to increase the grant to cover the additional loss caused by reduction in fees.

7. Threats to Press Freedom

The General Council of the Swatantra Party notes with concern the attempt of the Ruling Congress and the D.M.K. in Tamil Nadu in threatening and pressurising the Press into reporting news items only for building up the image of the ruling parties at the Centre and the State. If this sort of thing goes on unchecked, a time may come when it will be made impossible for newspapers to present the opposition point of view.

In this context, the General Council condemns the recent attempt in Madras to destroy a local newspaper office by violent methods just because it was also reporting points of view which were opposed to the State Government. The General Council is strongly of the view that this habit of threatening newspapers and giving Government advertisements only to papers which sing the praise of the Ruling Party will ultimately cut at the very root of a free press and convert this country into a totalitarian State.

8. Land Ceilings

The farmers of India, within the limits in which they function, have rendered yeoman service to the country by bringing about what has been popularly described as the "Green Revolution".

The General Council feels that at such a time when further encouragement and capital inputs need to be placed at the disposal of our farmers, mischievous efforts are being made under the umbrella word of "Land Reforms" which cannot but have the effect of retarding further progress. The Swatantra Party stands for a fair deal to the landless labourer, share cropper, tenant, the tiller and the farmer alike. This was spelt out clearly at the October 1969 Convention in Bhubaneswar, when the Party resolved that its members shall work actively for the security of tenure for tenants and share croppers and for the prescription and enforcement of a statutory minimum wage and reasonable conditions to farm labourers and for securing guaranteed floor prices to farmers and peasants for agricultural commodities.

Although the Swatantra Party holds that peasant proprietorship is the most productive and the highest social form of relations between man and land and is pledged to resist all efforts to destroy it, the Party is not in principle opposed to measures for the equitable redistribution of land, and (subject always to full scope being available to modernisation of agriculture) with a view to broadening the basis of peasant proprietorship and giving stability to our rural life, provided always that no man is deprived of his land except on payment of just and fair compensation. The wonderful results achieved in the agricultural fields in Taiwan and Japan by such measures after World War II have resulted in these countries producing the highest yields per acre of rice in the world. The success of these measures was due to certain attendant circumstances. The entire operation was carried out not in a spirit of vindictiveness and hatred but in a pragmatic attempt to reorder the rural economy. In other words this was achieved by reducing the pressure on land through diversification rather than by expropriation. Secondly, full compensation at market price was given to those dispossessed of surplus land with the intention that they should.

- (a) invest it in rural processing industries spread throughout the countryside thus securing the progress of agriculture itself and the growth of rural employment and economy, and
- (b) in carrying through an intensive programme for the reclamation of large areas that lie waste today - ravine lands and lands which have become uncultivable because of salinity brought to surface owing to or because of poor drainage.

The General Council deplors the current campaign of the Congress/Communist axis for lowering land ceilings which were fixed barely a decade ago. It is well known that of all classes of society, the agriculturist is the most hated by the Marxist because if any class of society stands in the way of their establishing totalitarian dictatorship and destroying what they describe as the institution of Bourgeois democracy, it is the peasant. Indeed it was the then Law Minister of the Maharashtra Government, Mr. A.R. Antulay, who not long ago confessed as much when he stated :

"This (Land Ceilings) is not an ultimate solution. It is only a stop-gap arrangement. We do not have sufficient land for distribution to all the landless persons. Therefore, ultimately the whole land will have to be nationalised in order to provide social justice for all."

The Swatantra Party therefore warns all concerned and in particular the small peasant proprietors that the ultimate aim of the Union Government is to expropriate and nationalise all land holdings on the plea that small land holdings have brought down food production. The General Council warns the entire country to be vigilant against this dangerous attempt deliberately to bring down production and thus bring in collective farming. This must be resisted now, otherwise it will be too late.