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SWATANTRA PARTY
Bombay Region
Phone ; 253085

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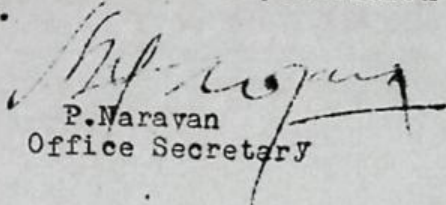
5th August 1972

n o t i c e.

A Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Swatantra Party, Bombay Region, will be held at the Party Office at the above address, on Wednesday the 16th August 1972 at 6-15 p.m. You are cordially invited to attend the same.

AGENDA.

1. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th June 1972.
2. To consider points from the minutes of the General Council held on 24th and 25th June 1972.
3. Party Programmes.
4. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.


P. Narayan
Office Secretary



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May 26, 1972

General Secretary's Letter No. 231

Dear Friend,

As you are aware, the General Council at its meeting in Bombay on April 8 and 9, discussed at considerable length various matters concerning Party policies, programmes and organisation particularly in the context of the Party's performance in the recent Assembly Elections.

The General Council will now be meeting in Madras on 24th and 25th of June to take decisions in the light of the discussions held at Bombay. It is necessary that the representatives of your State/Regional Unit should come prepared to the Madras meetings with suggestions and proposals in this regard.

I also enclose copy of the General Council Minutes and would invite your specific attention to the last page where the consensus that was evident among members at the last Council meeting has been recorded. It would therefore be pertinent if the comments, suggestions and/or proposals of your State/Regional Unit were to be made within the framework of the Consensus.

We shall be grateful if the views of your State Executive and/or comments are received by us on or before Thursday, June 15.

In view of the importance of the meeting, may I also take this opportunity to urge on you to ensure that the maximum number of representatives of your Unit on the General Council attend the Madras meetings ?

Yours truly,

Madhu Mehta
(Madhu Mehta)
General Secretary

Encl : *

P.S. The proceedings of the General Council meeting has already been posted to you earlier.

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 device non-violent measures to mobilise public opinion against this pernicious political practice.

Moved by : Mrs. Lobo Prabhu
Seconded by : Mr. H.M. Patel

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.

Moved by : Mr. Madhu Mehta
Seconded by : Mr. K. Sundaram

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.

Moved by : Mr. A.J. Dominic

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.

Moved by : Mr. V. Devanathan

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 deplores 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.

Moved by : Mr. H.M. Patel
Seconded by : Mr. M.R. Masani