

D. N. Patodia
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
(LOK SABHA)



Phone: 75391.

340, Vinay Marg,
New Delhi-11.

Paul K. J. [Signature]

April 5, 1969

Dear Mr. Masani,

3047

I am enclosing herewith a copy of my short speech made on 3rd April in the Lok Sabha on the Bill moved by Shri Madhu Limaye relating to compulsory formation of students' union.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

for (D. N. Patodia)

Shri M.R. Masani, M.P.
2, Tughlak Road,
New Delhi-11.

Encl: As above.

P.S. As I am unable to sign myself, this letter has been signed by my Secretary.

Speech made by Shri D.N. Patodia in the Lok Sabha
on 3rd April 1969 while speaking on the Bill moved
by Shri Madhu Limaye relating to Compulsory formation
of students' union.

At the outset, I wish to compliment Shri Madhu Limaye who has rendered a service by drawing the attention of the House to the larger needs for constructive participation between students and the educational authorities. So far as the spirit of the Bill is concerned, I am in agreement and I hope that by this process some constructive coordination will be possible between the students and the educational authorities so that the energies of the students can be canalised more towards education, towards constructive approach and not towards various political matters as they are indulging at the moment. While appreciating the spirit, I cannot help saying that in respect of some of the matters, the mover of the Bill has gone wrong.

There are certain clauses in the Bill over which I would like to comment briefly. First is clause 3 of the Bill which provides for (1) compulsory formation of students' union in each University, and (2) it provides for automatic enrolment of every student as a member of the Union unless he notifies to the contrary. Now this provision for statutory formation of a students' union has not met with great success elsewhere. It gives a handle to various political parties to convert these unions into a chess-board of politics. Attempt will be made by parties to impose their authority, to grab the power for political purposes. This is a great danger. When Mussolini made the Unions as statutory, it did not meet with success. Therefore, I believe formation of a students' union should be voluntary and should not be made statutory. If it is made statutory, in my opinion, we will be running the risk of converting it into a political chess-board.

The other clause over which I propose to comment briefly is clause (6). Here a provision has been made that in various courts, academic councils and other bodies of the University the students will have compulsory participation. Students will have compulsory representation. In effect it will mean that in the matter of selection of curricula, in the matter of selection of syllabus and even in the matter of appointment of teachers etc., the students will sit along with University authorities and will have their voice. This again is a type of demand over which most of the European countries at the moment are agitated. Even there the public opinion is not clear about it. It is not well-understood as to how far the student who himself has got to be educated and who possibly

lacks that amount of maturity which is needed for the selection of teachers or selection of curricula will be the proper person to participate. I think this particular clause also needs greater consideration and a little deeper consideration before it is accepted.

The third clause to which I propose to refer is clause (7). subscription payable by the student has been made compulsory to be deducted at the time of payment of tuition fees. This can be read with Clause 3 which makes it compulsory for every student to become a Member, unless he informs to the contrary. This is an apparatus which will mean that these student organisations will ultimately be controlling huge wealth. Here I would say that simply by virtue of the fact that they would be controlling this wealth, there will be an attempt by certain other individuals and non-educational organisations or political parties to have their control over this organisation. That would be the danger by which the purpose for which we are thinking of seeking the coordination of the students will be defeated.

In India there is larger and larger involvement of students in undesirable political activities. I was recently told, in respect of one particular university, one of the candidates spent as much as Rs.20,000 for an election to the Union.

I was also told that there is a proposal in some of the unions that some of the office bearers should be provided with a permanent conveyance to work for the Union. We have to take care of these things. It is anybody's guess from where these finances are being arranged. But of course, it is quite clear that they are not being arranged by that section which wants to promote education. The spirit of the Bill and the spirit of any such coordination should be to promote the cause of education, to bring about better coordination between the students and educational authorities and not to promote the causes of rift or a chessboard of politics.

This Bill is intended for circulation and I feel that by the time public opinion is obtained and this comes back after circulation, there would be so many changes for the better. I am hopeful that the hon'ble Mover himself will further examine it and make necessary changes that may be desirable in the context of the situation.

Therefore, I feel, the idea of sending this Bill for circulation is a good one. I am happy that the amendment by Dr. Rao to extend the period has been accepted by the Mover. I hope, by the time it comes back, this will be a Bill in a better form, which will be presented to Parliament, which will serve a good cause. Thank you.