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S.M. personal

8/10

October 17, 1973

Dear Mr. Schmautz,

Kindly refer to your letter of 31st August to the Indian Liberal Group and the reply of Mr. K. H. Subramaniam, the Honorary Secretary of the Group, dated 4th October.

As Mr. Subramaniam has written to you, ours is by and large a Party upholding Liberal principles and values. We are also the youngest national party in India founded in August 1959.

I have under separate cover sent you the off print of an article I had written on the Swatantra Party which will give you a fairly good picture not only of the Party's policies but also its organisation and the extent to which it has been able to establish itself in the Indian political scene.

You ask about our plans for developing and how we propose to influence India with liberal ideas. To put it very briefly, it has been our experience that it is not really very easy to make people who are underfed, under-nourished, not aware of the fundamental character of Western political institutions (for example, the concept of Parliamentary democracy) to realise liberal values which talk of individual liberty, dignity and rationality of man and the fact that competition and not State monopoly is the key to economic growth.

Socialist ideas or what we loosely term as leftist positions have a greater appeal merely because they promise people shortcuts to success even if such promises are never intended to be kept and even if application of so-called socialist policies lead to greater economic privations.

What is indeed interesting in the experience of our Party is that we have been able to garner a greater degree of support in the rural areas rather than in the urban centres. This is because of our appeal to the proprietary rights of the small farmers, their right to get the best possible price for their produce and our opposition to legislation which takes away the incentive of the farmer to produce more. Our stand opposing cooperative farming (which in India is synonymous with collective farming) has also brought us considerable support. In fact, our main slogan is "For Farm, Family and Freedom".

The present position of the Party is not bright; two landslide victories for Mrs. Gandhi in the 1971 elections to the Lok Sabha and the 1972 elections to the various State Assemblies almost wiped out most opposition parties but we have survived a critical year and the socialist promises made in the 1971 and 1972 elections have not been fulfilled. The chickens of faulty economic policies are coming home to roost in terms of sky-rocketing prices, ever increasing unemployment and an economy of shortages. We are now, in such a climate, finding a greater receptivity to our points of views.

Mr. Coelho
also literature
in statement of
Doherty and
Swatantra Party

We have no illusions of capturing power immediately. Acceptance of liberal values and ideas has to be preceded by education of the people at large in regard to such values.

Quite apart from illiteracy, the Indian tradition which is essentially authoritarian, makes our task doubly difficult but we feel that if the Parliamentary institution can survive, the hope is that in the long run, liberal values will find an echo in many parts of the country.

Along with my article, I have also sent you two or three basic documents which state the Party's position on various issues.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(S. V. Raju)

Executive Secretary

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CC : Mr. K.H. Subramaniam,
Bombay.