

3772

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board Held at
Kalki Buildings, Madras on July 23, 1967

Present :

Prof. N. G. Ranga (In the Chair)
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Sir Homi Modi
Smt. Gayatri Devi
Mr. B. P. Singh
Mr. G. Latchanna
Mr. M. R. Masani
Mr. N. Dandekar - Officiating General Secretary

The minutes of the last meeting held in New Delhi on May 20, 1967 were confirmed.

1. Issues before Parliament:

The Board considered the following issues that were before Parliament and the position taken by the Party's Parliamentary Group concerning them.

a) Fundamental Rights

The Board deplored the attempt on the part of the Government to seek to undo the decision of the Supreme Court on Fundamental Rights. It decided that all such attempts to subvert the Constitution should be opposed by the Party both in Parliament and outside. The decision of the Parliamentary group not to join the Select Committee to consider a Private Member's Bill on the subject was endorsed.

b) Privy Purses

The Board condemned the attempt by the Congress Party to abrogate unilaterally the solemn Treaties and Covenants with the former Rulers of the erstwhile Indian States and the Constitutional Guarantees concerning their Privy Purses and called upon the Party to resist all such illegal, unconstitutional and dishonourable acts.

c) Composition and Functions of The Planning Commission

The Board deplored the decision of the Government of India to flout the well-considered recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission that the Planning Commission should henceforth be an Advisory Body of experts and that neither the Prime Minister nor any other member of the Central Cabinet should be Chairman or Member of the Commission.

d) Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Board approved the position taken by the Party in Parliament condemning the failure of Government to adopt an objective and impartial attitude in regard to the Arab-Israeli dispute and to work for a just and stable peace in West Asia.

e) Medium of Instruction

The Board approved the action of Mr. Dahyabhai Patel and Prof. R. K. Amin in submitting minutes of dissent to the Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Education for continuing the option to parents and students to adopt the regional language or English as the medium of instruction at the University level and in regard to the freedom of parents to prefer the schools of their own choice for the education of their children.

2. The Board then went on to consider various matters relating to the States.

A. Andhra

The formation, and recognition as the Official Opposition, of the "Democratic Front" in the Andhra Legislative Assembly comprising of the Swatantra Party and the Jana Congress under the leadership of Mr. Latchanna was approved after Mr. Latchanna had clarified that:

- (a) The Democratic Front was formed on the clear understanding that only democratic Opposition Parties and Independents who had firm and unshakeable faith in democracy would be invited to be partners in the Front and that under no circumstances would Communists be included, and
- (b) the Jana Congress had not joined the newly formed Bharatiya Jana Kranti Dal.

B. West Bengal

The Officiating General Secretary having just completed a visit to West Bengal with Mr. D. N. Patodia M.P. reported on the sinister developments in recent months in the industrial and rural areas of West Bengal and the possible developments in the near future. It was noted that the Communists had demonstrated :

- (a) that the disturbances had been planned long ahead and were only awaiting the suitable opportunity now afforded by the coming into power of a government controlled by them;
- (b) that the motivating force was purely political, with only a facade of industrial and agrarian grievances;
- (c) that they were resorting to organised violent activities with the main object of subverting the Constitution, e.g. revolt in rural areas such as Naxalbari, revolts in the shape of Gheraos in industrial areas from Calcutta to Dhanbad, and attacks on non-communist Trade Unions and disruption of Industrial Production;
- (d) that they were deliberately misusing their position as members of the State Government to intimidate, infiltrate into and destroy the morale of the Police and other services, and

- (e) that they constituted the prospective fifth column of the Chinese Communist regime bent upon destroying the independence, integrity and free way of life of the people.

In the light of this the Board felt that the elimination of the Communists from the West Bengal Government was immediately necessary and that the Communist Parties should also be declared illegal and banned.

C. Uttar Pradesh

Mr. Ehanu Pratap Singh, President of the U.P. Unit, reported on recent developments concerning the Party and the S.V.D. Government. Arising out of a discussion on the letter of threatened resignation submitted by Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan (the Party's member is in the State Cabinet) and four others, ostensibly in protest against the Party's Arab-Israeli policy, the Officiating General Secretary was requested to meet Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan in response to his request within the next two days and after explaining the Party's policy in this regard to request him to withdraw his resignation, failing which to withdraw from the U.P. Government. In the event of his failing to do either, the State President should inform the Chief Minister requesting him to replace Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan by another nominee of the Party. It was hoped that the Chief Minister would accede to his request in order to make it possible to implement the Party's decision to continue to support the S.V.D. Government.

The Officiating General Secretary and President of the State Unit were authorised to take necessary decisions in regard to the continuance of support to the S.V.D. Ministry in the event of any major departure from the agreed programme such as might seriously conflict with Swatantra Party principles.

D. Madhya Pradesh

Discussing the recent developments in Madhya Pradesh leading to the prorogation of the State Assembly by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister, the Board took the view that the correct course of action for the Governor would be to call on the Leader of the Opposition to form the Government before resorting to the dissolution of the Assembly.

E. Rajasthan

Smt. Gayatri Devi reported on recent developments in Rajasthan.

The meeting then terminated.