

Swatantra Party

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GENERAL SECRETARY'S LETTER No. 130

6th August, 1966

Dear friend,

When the Central Parliamentary Board met in Madras on July 22 and 23, it considered Rajaji's front-page appeal in the July 23 issue of Swarajya. The Board welcomed the appeal (copy attached), which called for good and qualified men to stand as Swatantra Party candidates for Parliament and to meet their own election expenses.

The Board instructed the Central and State Offices of the Party to broadcast the appeal as widely as possible.

The Central Office has accordingly made arrangements for publishing Rajaji's appeal as an advertisement in the major national English language dailies on August 15 on the occasion of Independence Day.

We shall be glad if you give effect to the Central Parliamentary Board's wishes in your own State by bringing Rajaji's appeal to the notice of relevant persons and with a view to eliciting the maximum response. We shall be glad to know the measure of response you are able to evoke by way of self-supporting candidates of good calibre coming forward to stand for Parliament or Assembly.

Yours truly,

(M.R. Masani)
General Secretary

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COME, LET US SAVE DEMOCRACY

By C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

I HAVE NO hesitation in calling a party and a government, who are bent on maximum power for the State and the reduction of the Basic Freedom of the citizens to a mere mockery of it, an anti-Gandhian party and an anti-Gandhian Government. The present Congress Party, and the Government it is running, are anti-Gandhian beyond doubt.

They do not say it but they have clearly come to believe that Gandhiji's views as to how much power the State should wield, and how much freedom the citizens should enjoy in the field of production, trade and commerce, are old-fashioned and fallacious and that the contrary views they themselves have come to hold and are now practising, following the communists, are the policies which the country's condition of affairs calls for.

The Congress Party and the Government it runs have no use really for parliamentary debates, or for any parliamentary opposition or for the rule of law. They wholeheartedly believe in Ordinances issued by Government in the name of the President. The Party machine is gradually becoming the Government. The Congress Party desires to maintain a permanent Emergency, the D.I.R. replacing normal law. This is the true position, whatever the forms and external trappings may be.

The Party and the Government run by it believe they must go on for all time in spite of their failures, unreplaced by any other party or government. And for this purpose and to this end they cling tenaciously to the power they

have acquired over the economy of the citizen, with which they can nullify all democratic freedom of choice and perpetuate themselves in office and totalitarian power, while appearing to go through elections according to the Constitution.

Gandhiji would have sworn by all the gods of the Hindu pantheon and by Truth, which he often asserted was God, that he would not have industrial development if the means to it must be that India must bend under a heavy load of foreign debts besides forfeiting the greater part of individual freedom. He would have sworn that India's happiness did not lie in that direction. He would have exercised all his moral authority among the people to ask the Congress Party to retire from office, if it was admitted that it had taken the country to bankruptcy. And he would not have asked for any further proof for this beyond the 37½ per cent devaluation of our rupee as against the currency of our creditors.

The nation has realized that the Congress Government has utterly failed and there is a widespread and settled feeling against it. The Congress Party no longer holds its position as a political party but is functioning as a new kind of caste, sitting like an incubus over Indian society by force of tradition.

The rigidities of the various opposition parties are melting away as a result of this upsurge against the ruling party. They are all eager to come together to defeat the Congress and evict it from office. The nation is watching this movement with satisfac-

tion, approval and hope. The people want good government and the rule of law back.

They want the freedom in economic affairs which they enjoyed even under foreign rule. They do not want "to barter their two eyes in exchange for a fine painting," as Bharati sang in Tamil. They do not see any sense in losing basic freedoms on the promise that the five-year plans will on a future day "take off". They see that the taxes and the prices, the defence expenditure and the debt servicing charges will not let any plans "take off". They hunger for good government and a sound economy and no vanities.

I smell the coming upsurge against the Congress Party as one smells a coming storm and rain.

The Party is not going to reform or change its erroneous policies, which have brought the national economy to bankruptcy. The Premier is an unwilling prisoner of the Party. We must therefore defeat the Party in spite of the Premier.

The main difficulty is that the Congress has infinite cash as against its opponents. I appeal therefore for offers from good and qualified men to stand as candidates for Parliament on the Swatantra ticket who are able to meet their own election expenses. We are considering a plan under which we throw all caution to the winds and set up our candidates in three to four hundred parliamentary constituencies and have it out with the Congress.

The 1967 elections offer us a chance to save democracy. The

Communist competition does not count. It is only a bogey which the Congress exploits. I appeal to all those who love our country and wish it to be saved from totalitarianism to set aside caution and overvaluation of temporary security and all things else that make for fear and hesitation.

The Congress stands condemned and defeated already.

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ, यशो लभस्व
पूर्वमेव एते निहताः
निमित्तमात्रं भव, सव्यसाचिन्!

Be no more than an instrument and complete the defeat, as

Sri Bhagwan said to Arjuna on the battlefield.

Whether the outcome is success or failure, effort and resources which are put into this battle to save democracy will not be a loss. Even a little effort in this direction will protect the nation from the great fear of totalitarianism. No harm can result from the battle even should it not end in victory.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति
प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य
त्रायते महतो भयान् ॥

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

By C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SRI MORARJI DESAI wrote to me making a personal appeal that I should revoke my previously intimated decision declining to give evidence before his Administrative Reforms Commission. His distressingly generous letter moved me deeply but I had to stick to my former decision.

He had no doubt a claim to ask for my evidence, in view of my "active public life extending for more than half a century". But apart from my present relative ignorance of the administrative machine's composition and working, I have fundamental difficulties which I proceed here to set out.

I believe that if the nation's economy is to be managed as the present Government is trying to do, that is, if not wholly, largely, on a State-controlled and stiffly regulated basis, the administrative machine and its working should be altered and shaped to bring about the best possible results under that policy. Even if I entirely oppose this manner of running our people's affairs from the government secretariats, I can see what that difficult if not impossible policy requires in the matter of administration. If, on the other hand (as I ardently desire and wish to work for with all the power I can put forth) this wrong policy should be terminated, and our national

economy put on a free and competitive basis with maximum individual initiative and freedom, restricting the function of the State to its proper sphere, the administrative machine should be reformed and geared to that policy. The reforms to be introduced in the latter case would be wholly different from the changes that would have to be made if Statism must be continued and made as effective and as beneficial as possible.

What I have said must be sufficient to explain why I was unable to comply with Sri Morarji Desai's request. The two economic worlds would be completely different from each other—one revolving round controls and regulations, the other round individual activities centred on free competition, with no large or small monopolies created by government licences. The administrative arrangements to meet the requirements of these two very different conditions would be so different from each other, that it would be impossible to consider the problem of reform in an alternative way and do justice to it. The set-up, the size, the character, the recruitment of officials, everything would be so different in the one case from the other, that it would be a futile waste of energy to discuss reform without knowing whether we want it for the one or the other kind of governance.

There is an enormous difference between government as liberal philosophers understand it and government as the regimentation school conceive it. The difference is something like that between iron and steel. The difference makes the two government types two different species. The administrative set-up for the one will not suit the other. My difficulty is one which every witness before the Commission should also feel. But some of them may take for granted that the present ruling party's economic policy must continue, and give evidence accordingly. But I do not wish to do this.

Others may mix the two things up, the need for freeing the economy and the administrative reforms the Commission is dealing with, and give evidence in what I would call a confused way. I am not sure if the Commission assumes that a change of economic policies is within the ambit of its enquiry. As far as I understand proprieties, it should not be the function of the Commission to discuss that issue.

This Commission should not have been appointed now on the eve of the general elections. It would be a big fallacy to proceed on the assumption that administrative reforms can be usefully thought out, isolated from the question of national economic policy. The total control which the present Government seeks to have over the economic activities of all the individuals composing the nation calls for a kind of administrative machine entirely different in size and composition, as well as in methods of operation, from what a free economy requires by way of government administration.

We cannot discuss administrative reforms in a concrete and useful way unless we know how the economy is to work—is it to continue as it now works or in the Swatantra way? This is the difficulty which confronts me and makes me abstain from giving evidence before the Commission. It is not a case of non-co-operation.