

4507 *Crisis file*
'Pallav'

Uchharang Nagar,

Rajkot 2.

21st June 1968.

Revered Shri Rajaji,

I am addressing this letter to you after a lapse of about two and a half months. I was expecting something from your side, but the expectation did not materialise. Why this neglect?

I have read about the decisions of Swatantra Party General council meet in the press and I pen these lines more in pain than in anger.

You have been an exponent of Dharma, to be followed under all circumstances. Your opposition to Congress is based mainly on moral issues. Truth you take to be above party considerations. That has been your image in my mind.

But the decisions of the General council meeting at Madras and your comments in ~~Swatantra~~ Swarajya compel me to say that your passion for truth has been weakened in your eagerness to save an unfortunate, immoral situation created by Gujarat Swatantra party.

Instead of taking an upright, stern attitude you write, "Shri H. M. Patel's report to me in a personal talk gives me the hope that the Gujarat Swatantra members have buried the hatchet and are repentant".

Repentant about what? I have found it, at my cost, that instead of being repented ^{and} some of them have behaved rudely. No body from Gujarat Swatantra party has ever written a line of regret to me for what has happened. In fact, they have scrupulously avoided any official contact with me. Mr. Pravinsinh Solanki has written an arrogant letter to me, and Mr. H. M. Patel has accused me of ingratitude publicly - as if I have to be grateful to him for getting me defeated! Is this repentance?

I am a common man and am quite happy to be one. But history teaches us that a deliberate injustice to an honest common man has resulted in the doom of powers much mightier than Swatantra party. The Gujarat Swatantra party deliberately engineered opposition against me and ^esucceeded in getting me defeated. Now, they want to forget the whole episode and bury, not hatchet, but me. It pains me to see you conniving at this nefarious business.

I have been alleging right from the beginning that there was only a mock-quarrel amongst the Swatantrites of Gujarat. They conspired to beat me in the Rajya Sabha election and now they have succeeded in getting a clearance certificate from an exponent of Dharma like you.

Swatantra party in Gujarat may temporarily look like gaining by such tactics, but how will the posterity judge us ? If I be in the wrong please say so. If Gujarat Swatantrites are in the wrong, Dharma demands that you should pull them up and show them their place.

The disciplinary action that has been taken is a sheer eyewash.. The real culprits, who have received your certificate have shown no sense of repentance in them. No impartial persons will call them repentant. I am prepared to stand before the bar of the public opinion and prove my charge to the hilt that the Swatantrites of Gujarat have all along treaded the path of Adharma in my case and they persist in doing so even now. Do you bless this attitude ?

You write " to give an unconditional pledge in 1966 is not very wise." It is easy to be wise after the event. I remind you that the pledge was not given by the central executive, but by Gujarat Swatantra leaders when they were in difficulty. The central executive only ratified it. It was because of this pledge that Mr. Beharilal Antani could get elected to the council of state on our votes. It is very strange that past good deeds are so conveniently forgotten and there is philosophising at the cost of wronged one.

I can understand smaller men taking a brach^e of promise lightly. But a person of your eminence and rectitude should never tolerate or exonerate a broken promise. Mahatmaji fasted against Darbar Viravala because he did not honour a promise.

I am a small man and it is very likely Gujarat Swatantrites, with your blessings, may succeed in throwing me into oblivion but a party can never thrive on an unhealthy and immoral tradition of broken promises. What will public life be worth if the solemnity of a promise is to be brushed off so lightly and nothing done about it ?

I still expect you to prevail on Gujarat Swatantrites to stand by moral values. If you feel the Swatantra party leaders of Gujarat are really repentant, here is the acid test.

I am unhappy about the whole incident and more so to learn that you have put something transitory above Dharma.

I hope, I may be absolved from the voluntary silence imposed by me on myself.

Yours truly,

Balubhai P. Vaidya

(Babubhai P. Vaidya)

To
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