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Draft Minutes of the Third Meeting of the General Council held in
Bombay on April 17 and 18, 1971

The General Council commenced its proceedings on April 17, 1971 at 2.30 p.m. and continued till 5 p.m. It resumed its deliberations on April 18, from 10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. M.R. Masani

- in the Chair

Andhra

1. Mr. G. Latchanna
2. Mr. Y.G. Gowd
3. Mr. B. Ratnasabhapathi
4. Mr. C.V. Siddaiah Murthy

Bombay

1. Dr. R.C. Cooper
2. Mr. Lalchand Hirachand
3. Mr. Madhu Mehta
4. Mr. R.V. Murthy
5. Mr. Shantilal Thar
6. Smt. Sharayu Daftary
7. Mr. Parmanand Kejriwal
8. Mr. Adi Narain

Delhi

1. Col. H.R. Paricha
2. Mr. M.R. Arya

Gujarat

1. Mr. H.M. Patel
2. Mr. Navin Patel
3. Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel
4. Miss Kusum Kumari Joshi
5. Mr. Manubhai Amersey
6. Mr. Piloo Mody
7. Mr. Viren Shah
8. Mr. Anandbhai Amin
9. Mr. Shamlaldas Tallubhai Patel
10. Mr. Dadubhai Amin
11. Mr. Narendra V. Vyas
12. Mr. Chimanbhai D. Desai

Himachal Pradesh

1. Mr. Budhi Prakash

Kashmir

1. Mrs. Goodie Oberoi
2. Mr. Abdul Wahid Bains

Kerala

1. Mr. H.K. Stephen
2. Mr. C.N. Sudhan
3. Mr. A.J. Dominic
4. Mr. Jacob Cherian

Maharashtra

1. Mr. N. Dandekar
 2. Mr. H.G. Vaishnav
- Mr. S.P. Shah

Mysore

1. Mr. N.K. Ganapaiah
2. Mr. V.T. Sreenivasan
3. Mr. K.N.V. Rao

Orissa

1. Mr. R.N. Singh Deo
2. Mr. P.K. Deo
3. Mr. Hari Hara Das
4. Mr. Loknath Misra
5. Mr. Tribikram Tripathy
6. Mr. Arun K. Bohara
7. Mr. S.M.A. Karim

Punjab

1. Bhai Gobinder Singh Sidhu
2. G.S. Bedi

Rajasthan

1. Rajmata Gayatri Devi
2. Mr. IakshmanSingh of Dungarpur
3. Mr. Giriraj Singh
4. Mr. D.N. Patodia
5. Mr. N.K. Somani
6. Mr. Meetha Lal Meena
7. Mr. Kalyansingh Kalvi
8. Mr. Chosar Singh Babel

Tamil Nadu

1. Mr. V.S. Srikumar
2. Mr. M.S. Nanza
3. Mr. T. Sadasivam
4. Mr. R. Srinivasan
5. Mr. N. Mohammed Hussain
6. Mr. S.S. Mariswamy

Uttar Pradesh

1. Mr. Harbhajan Singh
2. Mr. D.S. Chaturvedi
3. Mr. Om Prakash Pathik
4. Mr. R.P. Misra
5. Mr. H.K. Pathak
6. Mr. P.L. Pandey
7. Mr. S.L. Gaur
8. Mr. Tribhuvan Singh
9. Mr. Mohd. Farooq Khan

Special Invitees

1. Mr. M. K. Mohta
2. Dr. H.V. Hande
3. Mr. Digvijay Sinha
4. Mr. Shankarlal Guru
5. Mr. K.D. R. Pandey
6. Mr. J.H. Doshi
7. Mr. Rajkumar Gharpade
8. Mr. P.S. Koppiker

1. Condolence on Dr. K.M. Munshi:

The President paid tributes to the memory of Dr. K.M. Munshi who was responsible for the Party's development in its formative years, and was its Vice-President for a number of years.

The following resolution was adopted unanimously and the Council observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to his memory:

"This meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party expresses its deep sense of sorrow over the passing away of Dr. K.M. Munshi, one of the framers of India's Constitution and a great literary figure.

Dr. Munshi's contribution covered a wide range of public activity ranging from Indian culture to politics. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans all over India are standing monuments to his love of Indian culture and his efforts to revive all that is best in our cultural heritage.

As a leading member of the Swatantra Party, and for a long time as its Vice-President, Dr. Munshi played a major role in the development of the Party in its formative years.

In his death the Party and the nation has lost a pillar of strength and a patriotic son of India. "

2. Confirmation:

The Minutes of the last meeting of the General Council held in Madras on July 20 and 21, were confirmed.

3. Presidential Address:

The President welcomed the members and referred to the grievous set-back the Party had recently suffered. This situation called for courage both to carry on the fight and also to face the unpleasant facts and learn the necessary lessons. Mr. Masani referred to Rajaji's message to the General Council and commended his warning against "me tooism".

Dealing with the reasons for the debacle in the Parliamentary elections, Mr. Masani referred to the Report that he had submitted to the General Council on the implementation of the mandate given to him at a previous meeting to bring into existence a consolidation of nationalist and democratic forces. He related in detail the story of the endless delays that had taken place and the final crumbling of the Front on 3rd January, 1971, which more or less made a gift of the elections to the Prime Minister and her Party.

The President also referred to what had happened at the National Executive meeting in Madras on 8th January and why the Executive had decided that, on balance, it would be better to join the Front even though without an agreed

programme. In many constituencies, membership of the Front had proved to be the "kiss of death" for the Party's candidates.

The President also referred to the fact stressed in his Report that the major failure of the Party had been that in not giving effect to the Mid-Term Report adopted by the General Council in November 1969, which had placed the Party in a weak bargaining position with other parties on the eve of the General Elections.

The credibility of the Party's present leadership had been damaged. There was nothing wrong with the principles of the Party, but with the performance of its functionaries and workers who had failed to convince the people about their dedication, discipline and sincerity of purpose.

It would be only under new spokesmen that the Party could revive and hence the resignation that he had tendered from the Presidentship of the Party. The President mentioned that while, naturally, there was reluctance among many colleagues in the Party to accept his resignation, it had already received a good response in the Press and among the public in general and he was convinced that its acceptance would redound to the Party's benefit in the long run. He reported on the discussion in the National Executive the previous day and appealed to the members of the General Council to accept his resignation.

A serious crisis might face the country two or three years hence as a result of the General Elections and it was for that challenge that the Party should prepare from now. It should not be assumed that the people would turn back automatically to the path of liberal democracy or to the Swatantra Party just because the present government failed to carry out its promises. On the contrary, as in Ceylon, they might turn to more subversive quarters like the Naxalites. Hence the need for developing an educational campaign and an extra-parliamentary Opposition to supplement what the members of the Party in Parliament could do.

In Mr. Masani's view, what people would expect of all parties including our Party was a quick reappraisal, development of new tactics, and a rededication to fundamental objectives.

4. Resolutions:

(i) East Bengal

A resolution on the happenings in East Bengal was moved by Dr. R.C. Cooper. After discussion in the course of which Mr. D.S. Chaturvedi and Mr. Manu Amersey spoke, the resolution was adopted in the following form :

"The Swatantra Party whole-heartedly sympathises with the people of East Bengal in their heroic struggle. It appeals to organisations and people in India to contribute generously and liberally funds and material to the Committee that has been established in Delhi to provide relief to the people of East Bengal.

The Swatantra Party expresses the hope that world opinion will be mobilised to bring about an immediate cease-fire in East Bengal to save any further loss of human life and property.

The bloodshed in East Bengal, resulting in loss of lives of a large number of people, must in the opinion of the Swatantra Party receive immediate attention of the United Nations if it is to command the confidence of the world. The UN displays callousness and complete inability to prevent heavy loss of human lives. This has impaired

the prestige of the United Nations and the confidence of the people in its effectiveness. This was also apparent on earlier occasions during the tragedies in Tibet, Hungary, Biafra and Czechoslovakia. In the opinion of the Swatantra Party where human tragedies are involved, immediate steps should be taken by the United Nations to move beyond the outdated plea of national sovereignty to evolve an effective machinery whereby fighting would be brought to an end.

The Swatantra Party earnestly urges the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene an emergent session of the Security Council and the General Assembly to meet and solve this urgent problem."

(ii) North Korea's Subversive Activities in Ceylon:

The resolution was moved by Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel. After some discussion, it was adopted unanimously in the following form :

"In view of the recent happenings in Ceylon, the Swatantra Party would like to warn the Government and people of India against the dubious designs and strategy of the Communist Government of North Korea and their agents. The Swatantra Party feels that maximum vigilance is necessary against the activities of North Korean diplomats and citizens in different parts of the country. In this connection, it is particularly essential to probe into the almost continuous series of full-page advertisements inserted in daily papers by the North Korean Government in large numbers during the past several months. They appear to be part of a sinister strategy which requires to be fully investigated and uprooted. "

5. Current Political Situation and matters relating to Party Organisation:

On the suggestion of members that any discussion on the political situation would inevitably involve reference also to the state of the Party's organisation, it was agreed that members could speak on both issues.

The President's Report on developments since the last meeting of the General Council (Annexure A) along with several papers contributed by members of the Party including those of the General Secretary and the National Headquarters formed the basis for the discussions.

At the outset, the General Secretary Dr. Cooper read out a summary of the discussion on the same subject at the National Executive the previous day. Those who participated in the ensuing discussion were :

Mr. Parmanand Kejriwal, Mr. Meethalal Meena, Mr. Y.G. Gowd, Maharawal Lakshman Singh of Dungarpur, Mr. Gobinder Singh Sidhu, Mr. P.L. Pandey, Mr. N.K. Garapala, Mr. Mowaram Arya, Mr. Harihar Das, Mr. N.K. Sonani, Dr. H.V. Hande, Mr. Giriraj Singh, Mr. S.S. Mariswamy, Mrs. Goodie Oberoi, Mr. V.T. Srinivasan, Mr. D.S. Chaturvedi, Mr. R. Srinivasan, Mr. G. Iatchanna, Mr. R. Ghorpade, Mr. Abdul Wahid Raina, Mr. H.M. Patel, Mr. Digvijaysinh of Wankaner and Mrs. Sharayu Daftary.

In the course of the discussion, members referred to the Committee appointed by the National Executive to take a fresh look at the Statement of Policy of the Party adopted in 1961. Members felt that the Committee needed to be made more representative so that the workers in the field who had first hand knowledge of the problems the Party faced at the grass roots level could give the benefit of their experience and advice.

Winding up the discussion, the General Secretary said that in deference to members' wishes, the National Executive which would be meeting soon after the

conclusion of the General Council would endeavour to make the personnel of the Committee more representative. He added that the various points made by members had been noted and would be considered by the Committee appointed to reorient Party policies.

6. Mr. Masani's letter of resignation:

Mr. Masani's letter of resignation from the Presidentship of the Party (Annexure B) was then taken up for consideration.

Initiating the discussion, Mr. Masani reiterated that he accepted responsibility for the Party's debacle not so much in regard to joining the Four-Party Alliance, for which the National Executive was equally responsible, as for his failure to carry conviction with the members of the Party in regard to the Mid-Term Report which was adopted by the General Council in November 1969 but which had not been taken seriously by anyone. He said that his resignation was intended to give the Party a new look with a new leadership as, in his view, the present leadership had lost credibility, as indeed was the case with all other opposition parties.

In the discussion the following participated:

Dr. H.V. Hande, Mrs. Goodie Oberoi, Mr. D.N. Patodia, Mr. Madhu Mehta, Mr. Y.G. Gowd, Mr. Ratnasabhapathi, Maharawal Lakshmansingh of Dungarpur.

Col. H.R. Pasricha moved a resolution, accepting the resignation of Mr. Masani which was seconded by Mr. N.K. Ganapathi.

Mr. V.T. Sreenivasan and Mr. Lalchand Hirachand also spoke on the subject.

Winding up the discussion, Mr. Masani said he was deeply touched by the concern of members. It had been a painful experience for him to have had to sit through and listen to members requesting him not to press his resignation.

He said that as desired by members at the beginning of the discussion, he had listened with an open mind. Unfortunately, no new argument had been advanced by any one which would have enabled him to reconsider his resignation. On the contrary, several points made by many members were really additional reasons for him to insist on his resignation being accepted. He reassured members that as mentioned in his letter of resignation, he would continue to be associated in the Party's work and to spend to the best of his ability its principles and policies through both the written and the spoken word.

The Council then accepted his resignation and adopted the resolution which was moved by Col. Pasricha in the following form :

"This meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party having tried its best to persuade Mr. Masani to withdraw his resignation from the Presidentship of the Swatantra Party and failed, regretfully accepts his resignation.

The General Council records its deep sense of gratitude to Mr. Masani for his services to the Party first from December 1959 to the end of 1967 as its General Secretary, and subsequently, as its President from January 1970 till today. The Council is gratified to have Mr. Masani's assurance that he will continue to give the Party the benefit of his advice and counsel and propagate the Party's principles and policies.

The General Council is grateful to Mr. Dandekar for having agreed to officiate as President till new office bearers and members of the National Executive are elected in September this year. "

7. Minimum Programme for 1971-72:

The General Council then took up for discussion a draft minimum economic programme which the Party's workers should widely sponsor as the Party's prescription to meet the twin problems of unemployment and rising prices.

The programme was moved by Dr. R.C. Cooper and seconded by Mr. Madhu Mehta. During the discussion that followed the following members participated:

Mr. H.M. Patel, Mr. M.K. Mohta, Mr. R.V. Murthy, Mr. Digvijaysinh of Wankaner, Mr. R. Srinivasan, Mr. Ratnasabhapathy and ~~the~~ Rajnata of Jaipur.

After incorporating various suggestions made during the discussion the programme was adopted in the following attached (Annexure C).

8. The General Secretary Dr. R.C. Cooper paid tribute to Mr. Masani with whom he had worked first as the Treasurer and then as General Secretary. He was sure that though, not formally holding office, Mr. Masani would always be available to give advice and guidance to the Party.

Mr. Masani thanked members of the General Council and said the National Executive would meet to follow up the various suggestions that had been made during the discussions.

He expressed his gratitude to the General Secretary, the Executive Secretary and the staff of the National Headquarters for their loyal and efficient cooperation during his tenure of office as President.

9. The meeting then terminated.

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A B
"Annexures B and C"

As both these annexures were circulated to members in advance of the meeting they are not enclosed with these Minutes. "

Annexure C

SWATANTRA PARTY
General Council

April 18, 1971

Swatantra Party's Minimum Programme for 1971-72

Concerned with the plight of most of the citizens of India, the Swatantra Party submits that, within the year 1971-72 itself, the Central and State Governments should do something substantial to alleviate the sufferings of the country's population, especially the poorer sections.

The Swatantra Party therefore demands that the Central and State Governments commit themselves to fulfilling a minimum scale of performance of public welfare for this year.

To facilitate such a programme, the Swatantra Party puts forward the following concrete suggestions among others.

1. The Government must devise plans to create a minimum of 50 lacs new jobs every year to be able to reduce the carry-over of about three crores unemployed to the next plan.
2. Among the surest and expeditious means to ensure employment opportunities, precedence must be given to minor irrigation schemes, road building and road transport. Admittedly, the most fruitful among employment-generating programmes, road building and road transport are also labour-intensive, besides promoting wider economic development and yielding quicker and greater returns to the exchequer. To sustain the tempo, revenue from roads and road transport should be ploughed back into more road construction. This will create employment for at least 30 lac additional jobs during 1971-72; and 160 lacs jobs in next five years.
3. Equally important is the need to slow down the pace of population growth. For this, Family Planning efforts must require top priority.
4. Along with shelter, provision must be made for ensuring pure drinking water to people in every village, where such facility is not available.
5. Housing is another employment-generating activity. This, apart, acute housing shortage in our country demands immediate action. The Government should therefore commit itself to an investment of at least Rs 200 crores for the construction of low cost housing alone during the year 1971-72.
6. The Government should ensure that every agriculturist, small-scale industrialist and self-employed person is able to obtain necessary credit facilities (from the State Bank and the 14 nationalised Banks at a reduced rate of Interest.)
7. Having regard to the fact that prices have soared during the past five years continually and the value of the rupee has accordingly slumped correspondingly, the Government should immediately apply an effective brake to its expenditure especially non-plan, non-productive expenditure and arrest further inflation to prevent any more increase in prices this year. Many developing countries have attempted and achieved stability of prices.

8. The Government must particularly provide the Common man, the labourer on the farms and in the factories immediate relief in prices in respect of the main items of his daily necessities. This is best done by reducing the excise duty by at least 50% as the following table illustrates :

	Present Price	Present Excise Duty	Proposed Reduced Excise Duties	Proposed Reduced Prices
1. Kerosene (per litre)	55 p	22p	10 p	43 p
2. Printing Paper for School Exercise Books (per lb.)	1.55 p	15p	6 p	1.50 p
3. Vanaspati (per kilo)	6.00	1.20p	60 p	5.40 p
4. Match box (per box)	10 p	2 p	1 p	9 p
5. Tea (per kilo)	9.00	48 p	24 p	8.76 p
6. Coffee (per kilo)	13.00	6.6 p	3.00 p	9.40 p
7. Controlled Sugar (per kg.)	1.75	35 p	17 p	1.57 p
8. Cement (per bag at work site)	12.00	2.40	1.20	10.80

9. Prices in the ultimate analysis are determined by the inexorable law of supply and demand. And to meet both the present and the prospective demand (created by the addition to the purchasing power of the newly employed) supply must be augmented by more production from expansion of existing units as well as creation of new ones without being inhibited by licensing, monopoly or economic concentration considerations.

As a democratic Party believing in a fair deal to the common man, the Swatantra Party does not want to content itself by merely giving the common man a new hope but is keen on seeing that hope blossom into fruitful fulfilment.

Only thus would terms like "political stability" and "economic progress" become meaningful to the common man.