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Draft minutes of the 6th Meeting of the National Executive held on Friday and Saturday, 8th and 9th January 1971 at Kilki Buildings, Chetput, Madras

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Present:

Mr. M.R. Masani (in the Chair)  
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari  
Prof. N.G. Ranga  
Mr. N. Dandekar  
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy  
Mr. Dihyabhai V. Patel  
Mr. N.K. Somani  
Prof. R.K. Amin  
Mr. Madhu Mehta  
Mr. H.M. Patel  
Mr. D.N. Patodia  
Mr. Piloo Mody  
Col. H.R. Pasricha  
Mr. Y.G. Gowd  
Mr. N.K. Ganapathiah  
Mr. Harihar Patel  
Miss Kusum Kumari Joshi  
Mr. Johnson Vallikkappen  
Mr. S.S. Mariswamy  
Mr. G.K. Sundaram  
Dr. H.V. Hande  
Mr. G. Litchanna  
Dr. R.C. Cooper  
Mr. T. Sadasivam - By special invitation

1. The Minutes of the National Executive meeting held in New Delhi on November 8, 1970, were confirmed.

2. National Convention

The decision taken by the President and the General Secretary postponing the National Convention in view of the impending General Elections to a date some time after the elections was ratified. The Executive was unanimously of the view that it was not advisable to convene even a meeting of the General Council or of the National Executive as most members would be busy with matters pertaining to the General Elections. If necessary, the Central Parliamentary Board would be convened in New Delhi between now and the General Elections.

3. Election Broadcasts

The National Executive recorded the statement of the Chief Election Commission that election broadcasts by various parties would not be feasible unless there was unanimous acceptance of its scheme. The National Executive noted that the Swatantra Party had already conveyed its acceptance of the Election Commissioner's proposal along with two other messages from political parties in the country.

The National Executive was of the view that there was no need for unanimity in such matters and requested the National Headquarters to urge the Election Commissioner to leave it to each Party to decide whether or not they wished to participate in the broadcasts.

4. Situation in Orissa

The Joint Secretary of the Party, Mr. Harihar Patel, who is also Minister for Industries in Orissa reported on the latest situation. The President, Mr. Masani, also reported on the talks he had with the Chief Minister Mr. R.N. Singh Des. While taking note of these reports, the National Executive decided to watch the situation and expressed its satisfaction with the action taken by the Chief Minister in appointing a Cabinet Committee to look into the Kendu Leaves affair and of the Governor in summoning the Assembly to test the Government's strength. The Executive regretted the fact, that despite the suitable action taken by the Chief Minister, the Jana Congress had persisted in leaving the Cabinet and demanding a dissolution of the Assembly.

5. Matters regarding Electoral Alliance/Adjustments

The President reported on the correspondence and talks he had had with leaders of the Congress (O) and the Jan Sangh. He also narrated the events of January 3 culminating in his declining to sign the joint statement which was finally issued by the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh and the SSP. Mr. Masani pointed out that the final statement had made fundamental alterations in the original draft that had been worked out with the leaders of the Congress (O) and the Jan Sangh for publishing on the 3rd of January. The texts of both the statements the one that was finally put out by the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh and the SSP and the one he had drafted were circulated to members (copies attached).

Mr. Masani explained that, in terms of the General Council resolution of July 21, 1970 and the National Executive resolution of November 7, the mandate given to the President to negotiate an alliance on the basis of a common programme had clearly expired and hence he had declined to sign the joint statement.

Moreover, the statement as finally issued by the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh and the SSP would pave the way for the CPM's direct or indirect participation in the Front. The self-respect of our Party demanded that we refuse to be compelled to sign any statement or dismantle the Front under duress.

After considerable discussion in which Rajaji and most of the members present participated, the Executive adopted unanimously the following resolution:

- " The National Executive of the Swatantra Party has received a report from the President, Mr. M.R. Masani, of recent developments in connection with the Party's efforts for the establishment of a democratic alliance to contest the Lok Sabha elections, and, in particular, the developments in Delhi on January 3. After discussion, the Executive records its sense of deep disappointment at the abandonment of the effort at establishing a Democratic Alliance or Front with a common programme based on the MCC Resolution of June 28. The President of the Party was fully justified in asking for time to consult the National Executive of the Party when suddenly faced with a new proposal and it is a matter of regret that this was not agreed to despite the sincere pioneering efforts of the Party to bring about a full fledged alliance.

Having regard to the totality of the circumstances including the threat to the Constitution and the imminent danger to vital national interests which

require a change of government through the impending General Elections, the Executive decides that the Party should join the Front formed in Delhi on 3rd January 1971 so that there shall be one agreed candidate for each Lok Sabha constituency throughout the country who will be supported by all the participating parties in the front. The Executive has come to this decision in the light of the clear assurance given by Mr. Nijalingappa, the Congress (O) President, at a press conference in Bombay on 5th January that no Communist Party would be allowed to associate with the front formed in Delhi. "

The meeting then adjourned for the day.

The adjourned meeting of the National Executive reconvened at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 9th January.

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Present:

Mr. M.R. Masani (in the Chair)  
 Mr. N. Dandekar  
 Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy  
 Mr. Dhyabhai V. Patel  
 Mr. N.K. Somani  
 Mr. Madhu Mehta  
 Mr. H.M. Patel  
 Mr. D.N. Patodia  
 Mr. Piloo Mody  
 Col. H.R. Pishricha  
 Mr. Y.G. Gowd  
 Mr. N.K. Ganapiah  
 Miss Kusum Kumari Joshi  
 Mr. Johnson Vallikkappen  
 Mr. S.S. Mariswamy  
 Dr. R.C. Cooper  
 Mr. T. Sadasivam - By special invitation

6. Draft Election Manifesto

The Executive took up for consideration the question of the Election Manifesto of the Party.

In this connection, it considered a suggestion that, irrespective of what the other parties in the Front did, the Swatantra Party should stand by the resolution of its General Council of July 21, 1970, welcoming and accepting the AICC resolution of June 28, 1970 calling for consolidation of nationalist and democratic forces, on the basis of the programme spelt out in the resolution. The proposal was that in the preamble to the Manifesto, the Party should emphasise this fact and highlight certain political and economic points and attach a copy of AICC resolution. After discussion the following resolution was adopted unanimously :

" In the light of the changed situation and the absence of an agreed programme of work among the Democratic Opposition parties as had been originally contemplated, the Executive authorised the President Mr. M.R. Masani, Vice-President Mr. N. Dandekar, Mr. H.M. Patel and the General Secretary, Dr. R.C. Cooper, to settle the Election Manifesto of the Party in the context of the commitment made by the General Council at its meeting on July 21, 1970 accepting and responding positively

to the AICC (O) Resolution of June 28, 1970."

In the discussion that followed, the members desired that the preamble should be brief but that the following points should if possible find a place.

- (1) employment (housing and roads)
- (2) prices
- (3) production (taxation and controls)
- (4) support prices for agriculturists
- (5) law and order
- (6) Constitutional liberties and Fundamental Rights
- (7) clean and good government
- (8) rural welfare, small scale and cottage industry
- (9) minorities and backward classes and tribals
- (10) backward areas and regional imbalances
- (11) Village roads, drainage, water supply and rural housing
- (12) Eradication of poverty (production)
- (13) Need to give the common man the feeling that Swatantra Party feels seriously about him.
- (14) point out that the Irrigation Flood Committee has recommended 1000 crores to provide an insurance fund against national calamities.

It was decided that the draft should be circulated to members of the National Executive who should be given a week to comment on the preliminary draft. It was hoped that the Drafting Committee would then be able to release the Manifesto by January.

The meeting then terminated.