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DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CENTRAL
ORGANISING COMMITTEE ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 1963 at
9.45 A.M. AT KALKI BUILDINGS, MADRAS.

Present:

Prof. N. G. Ranga, M.P. (in the Chair)
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. K. M. Munshi
Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal
Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, M.L.A.
Mr. P. K. Deo, M.P.
Mr. K. B. Jinaraja Hegde
Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddi
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, M.P.
Mr. Saw Ganesan, M.L.A.
Mr. G. Latchanna, M.L.A.
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, M.P. and
Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P.

By Special Invitation

Mr. N. Dandekar,
Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh M.L.A.

The minutes of the meeting held on February 9 were confirmed.

The General Secretary reported on the discussions the preceding day at the meeting of the Parliamentary Board in regard to proposals for inter-oppositional unity and reported on the correspondence he had had with Acharya Kripalani.

A letter from the Bombay unit of the Party in regard to participation in the agitation planned by other opposition parties in the city was considered. Arising out of the discussions, the following broad principles were laid down:

- opposition
- (a) Wherever the purpose of such an agitation is legitimate, the State unit may use its discretion whether to join with other democratic parties or to go it alone in such agitations.
 - (b) At present, participation in direct action (viz. civil disobedience) is not permitted. This, however, does not preclude State units from joining other democratic opposition parties in a one-day token strike.
 - (c) Our party should not join any agitation which would benefit the Communist Party.

Considering Mr. Piloo Mody's letter of July 15, suggesting that the Compulsory Deposit Scheme be challenged as to its constitutional validity in the Supreme Court, the Central Organising Committee requested Mr. K. M. Munshi to look into the matter.

The Central Organising Committee took up for consideration the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill due to come up before the impending session of Parliament. After discussion, it was decided to prepare up a draft resolution for consideration in the afternoon.

The General Secretary reported on the recent developments in the Punjab leading to an electoral understanding between democratic opposition parties, including our Unit, arrived at with Acharya Kripalani's help to contest forthcoming by-elections in the State. The Committee welcomed such a development and commended it as a good example to be followed in other States as well.

The position to be taken by the Party towards a no-confidence motion in the forthcoming session of Parliament was then taken up for consideration. After considerable discussion, the C.O.C. decided to empower the Party's Parliamentary Group to define its attitude, in the event of such a motion coming up, in the light of discussions with other non-communist opposition groups in Parliament.

Discussing the present political situation in the country arising out of the continuance of the Emergency, the Central Organising Committee reiterated the resolution of the General Council passed at its meeting in Bombay on February 10. It was decided to bring up a draft resolution for discussion in the afternoon, reiterating earlier decisions of the Party on the subject.

In a reference to the controversy over the Voice of America agreement, the C.O.C. supported the agreement and felt that the commitments entered into by our Government should be honoured. The C.O.C. also welcomed the proposed Joint Air exercises between the Indian, U.S. and U.K. air forces.

Scheme For Active Membership

The concept underlying the note circulated to members of the Central Organising Committee by the General Secretary was unanimously accepted in principle.

The scheme was then discussed in detail and approved in the form attached (Ann. A). A sub-committee consisting of Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. K. M. Munshi and Mr. M. R. Masani was appointed to draft the necessary amendments to the Party's Constitution arising out of the adoption of the scheme. The scheme and draft amendments should be placed before the next meeting of the General Council and National Convention for adoption.

After considering the invitation of the Rajasthan unit to hold the next meeting of the General Council in Jaipur sometime in November or December, the C.O.C. felt the need to hold the National Convention at the same time and place.

The General Secretary was authorised to try and arrange for a venue for the meetings of the General Council and National Convention in one of the following places in that order of preference: (1) Jaipur (2) Delhi (3) Bangalore. The meetings should take place in the first half of December. The C.O.C. stressed that the Convention should be held at a reasonable cost and expensive items such as a shamiana should be avoided and that the sessions should be held in a hall.

Mr. R. N. Singh Deo related the circumstances under which he had accepted the Orissa Chief Minister's invitation to enquire into charge of corruption against the Deputy Chief Minister of the State and the reasons which compelled him to withdraw from the enquiry.

The General Secretary then reported on the correspondence with Mr. Satyanarain Misra and others in regard to Mr. R. N. Singh Deo's acceptance of the commission to enquire into the charges of corruption against a State Minister in Orissa. The Committee took note of the correspondence and approved of the General Secretary's action.

The C.O.C. noted with approval the tabling of a resolution tabled by our Party's group in the Orissa Legislative Assembly calling for an enquiry into charges of corruption against certain ministers.

Financial Report

In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer, the General Secretary drew the Committee's attention to the unfortunate state of finances of the Central Office and the fact that since June, the Central Office's account had been overdrawn and there were no funds available with the Treasurer to meet the needs of the Central Office.

The General Secretary at the same time mentioned the efforts being made by the Hon. Treasurer and himself to collect funds to maintain the Central Office of the Party and other purposes. Various problems concerning the collection of funds were also mentioned by Mr. N. Dandekar and the General Secretary.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch.

The adjourned meeting met at 2.30 p.m.

A draft resolution entitled "Maintenance of Democratic Processes" was then discussed and, after certain amendments were made, unanimously adopted (Ann. B).

Another resolution on the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill was then taken up for discussion and was unanimously adopted in the form attached. (Ann. C)

The General Secretary reported that, in the event of his having to go abroad during the months of September and October, Mr. N. Dandekar had kindly agreed, as on a previous occasion, to take charge and look after the affairs of the Central Office.

The meeting then terminated.

ANNEXURE A

Scheme For Reorganisation Of Party Membership

Adopted By The C.O.C. In Madras On August 4, 1963

1. Every person above the age of 18 who subscribes to the principles of the Party, pays the prescribed fee and expresses his readiness to work for the Party will be eligible for membership of the Party.
2. Work for the Party will be deemed to include:
 - (a) Introducing new members;
 - (b) Collection of funds;
 - (c) Acceptance of executive responsibility;
 - (d) Preparation or distribution of literature;
 - (e) Organisation of meetings, study circles and other functions;
 - (f) Honorary work to help with the running of the Party Office;
 - (g) Attending to civic and other grievances on behalf of the Party and securing their redress;
 - (h) Working, when called upon, as prospective candidate of the Party for Parliament or State Assembly.
3. Decisions in regard to enrolment of members shall normally be taken by the State Executive Committee. While no application for membership may be rejected outright by the State Executive, the State Executive may recommend to the Centre that an application be not accepted and an appropriate body at the Centre will consider the matter and decide whether or not the applicant should be enrolled as a member.
4. Each member of the Party will pay a subscription of Rs. 10/- per year, or a life membership fee of Rs. 100/-. The State Unit will be given freedom, in special cases, to collect these fees, if they so desire, in reasonable instalments. Those who have already become permanent members of the Party under the present system by the end of 1963 will be entitled to be exempted, if they so desire, from paying further subscription as Life Members.
5. Membership of the Party will continue so long as a member pays his dues. Each member of the Party will be issued an identity card.
6. There will be another category of Associates of the Swatantra Party, consisting of those who indicate in writing their adherence to the principles of the Party. No fee will be payable by such Associates. Associates of the Party will have no right to vote in any Party elections. Meetings of such Associates will, however, be convened from time to time and they will be given an opportunity to be consulted and to make suggestions.
7. In place of 250 members, which is the minimum for the formation of a Constituency Committee under the present Constitution, 20 members will suffice.

ANNEXURE B

SWATANTRA PARTY

Maintenance Of Democratic Processes

In view of the reports of fresh danger from Communist China confirmed by Government statements and the repeated claim of the Prime Minister that there should be no internal controversies regarding Government policies during this emergency, the Central Organising Committee recalls the previous decisions of the Party and reiterates the Party's view that the declaration of Emergency should not be made into a charter for winding up Parliamentary Government and that the Opposition should carry out its responsibility of criticism whenever it is necessary. The press and statesmen of the country should not hesitate to speak or write as they feel and advise the Government and guide the people from time to time.

The operation of the Defence of India Act and regulations needs now as before, to be closely scrutinised and watched so as to ensure that it does not curtail the fundamental rights, democratic processes and the rule of law more than is strictly necessary in furtherance of the actual defence effort.

4th August 1963.

ANNEXURE C

SWATANTRA PARTY

Resolution On The Constitution (17th Amendment)

Bill Adopted By The Central Organising Committee At

Madras On August 4, 1963

The Central Organising Committee examined the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill 1963 and came to the conclusion that it is a most dangerous attempt to erode still further the fundamental rights given by the Constitution without a mandate from the electorate. By extending the word 'Estate' to include every form of landed property owned by the most humble peasant in full freehold right, the Bill seeks to hold the sword of Damocles over the majority of the population of India in respect of what they consider to be their most sacred possession. The expropriatory principles so far applied to Zamindars and other feudal landlords and intermediaries are now sought to be extended to ryotwari holders, who are full owners of the land, as well as to every other type of land ownership. The attempt to give retrospective effect from 26th January 1950 to this distorted definition of Estate which was all along used to cover intermediaries between Government and the true owner of land makes this amendment a gigantic fraud on the Constitution and on the people of India.

The fact that this amendment to the Constitution is sought to be made in order to undo the recent judgement of the Supreme Court of India makes it all the more reprehensible, being unabashed disrespect for the law and the independence given by the Constitution to the Judiciary.

In view of the extended interpretation of a public purpose to cover doctrinaire experiments in land reform, the Central Organising Committee cannot help coming to the conclusion that this Constitutional amendment is designed as an instrument held in terrorem over the peasants of India by which the collectivisation of the land could be legally enforced. Those in authority who seek to copy the system of collective farming which has been a signal failure in Soviet Russia and which has brought Communist China to famine now seem determined to move on from the deception of cooperative farms to coercive methods. If this amendment becomes law, the smallest peasant can be faced with the brutal alternatives of surrendering his land to the so-called cooperative farms or of being expropriated by law on payment of nominal compensation which he cannot challenge in a court of law.

The Central Organising Committee regrets that, at a time when according to Government reports the Chinese Communist forces are concentrating on our frontiers threatening another invasion and when the need for national solidarity is pre-eminent, the Congress Government should propose to inject into the public life of the country one more issue of a highly controversial nature such as this which affects the masses. It even now hopes that this attack on the lands and liberties of the people will be

abandoned and that the energies so spared will be diverted to the urgent tasks of foreign policy and defence.

The Swatantra Party was established in 1959 to defend farm, family and freedom in this country. This new amendment, which seeks to destroy the farm and through it the family and freedom, cannot but meet with the strongest opposition from the Swatantra Party. Members of the Party in Parliament will naturally oppose this amendment and seek to prevent its passage. In order to strengthen their hands it is necessary that public opinion should be educated and the implications of this amendment explained. The C.O.C. calls upon the units of the Party in the States, districts, talukas and villages to launch an intensive campaign to educate the rural people about this matter and to give expression at public meetings and otherwise to their protest. It is hoped that a large number of people will send petitions to Parliament urging that this amendment be dropped. Since the amendment in question is likely to come up for discussion at the session of Parliament commencing 13th August, the issue is one of urgent importance and should be treated accordingly by all members of the Party.

4th August 1963.