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Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held in
Bombay on April 16, 1971.

Present :

Mr. M.R. Masani - (in the Chair)

Mr. R.N. Singh Seo
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel
Maharawal Laxman Singh of Dungarpur
Mr. G. Latchanna
Mr. H.M. Patel

By Special Invitation

Mr. N. Dandekar
Mr. P.K. Deo
Mr. Liladhar Patel

1. The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held in New Delhi on March 20, 1971, were confirmed.
2. Arising out of the minutes, the General Secretary, Dr. Cooper reported that the National Headquarters had already remitted Rs.1,500/- as its contribution towards meeting the liabilities amounting to Rs.3,000/- of the Party's Parliamentary Office in New Delhi. The leader of the Party's Group in Parliament, Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, drew the attention of the Board to the fact that the Parliamentary Office premises which was standing in the name of Mr. Viren Shah had now to be vacated. In addition, he pointed out that there were already arrears of rent in respect of this office for about 10 to 12 months.

After considerable discussion, the Board decided to authorise the General Secretary to pay the balance of the liabilities amounting to Rs.1,500/- and to make it very clear that the National Headquarters was in no position to take on any further liabilities or any future commitments of the Parliamentary Group and its office.

3. Orissa Developments

The President, Mr. Masani, recalled the decision of the Central Parliamentary Board at its meeting in New Delhi on March 20 and reported on the subsequent discussions he had had with Mr. Singh Deo over the telephone and his letter to Mr. Singh Deo of March 23. Mr. Masani said that both in his telephone conversations and in his letter, he had discussed at considerable length the choice before the Party's Legislature Group viz., either a coalition with the Utkal Congress or to sit in the Opposition which might culminate in President's Rule. He had also pointed out that it might be in the larger interests of the Party not to enter into a coalition but to remain in Opposition on the ground that the Orissa electorate had not given our Party a mandate to rule.

Reporting on the circumstances leading to our Party agreeing to enter into a coalition with the Utkal Congress and the Jharkhand Party with a non-Party man as Chief Minister, Mr. Singh Deo pointed out the following :

- (i) The decision to stay in opposition might have resulted in demoralisation in the Party's ranks, with consequent defection of some of our MLAs.
- (ii) The State Executive and the Legislature Group which discussed this matter were both of the view that to sustain the Party's morale and to avoid the possibility of yet another mid-term poll which would become inevitable in view of the decision of the Congress (R) not to enter into any coalition but to form if possible a government on its own; it was necessary for the Party to take the initiative in forming a coalition government. A quick decision was called for before President's Rule was reimposed.

Mr. Singh Deo pointed out that the coalition partners had agreed on a Common Minimum Programme (attached Annexure A).

The Central Parliamentary Board noted the action taken by the State Party Unit and Legislative Group in Orissa.

4. Gujarat

The President, Mr. Masani, recalled that at the last meeting of the Board Mr. H.M. Patel had been left to handle certain developments within the Party's Group in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Patel recounted in some detail the circumstances in which it was decided at a meeting of the Party's MLAs when he visited Ahmedabad in late March that, in order not to create further dissensions among the Party's MLAs, no whip should be issued to the Party's MLAs either to support or oppose the Hitendra Desai Ministry.

Mr. H.M. Patel added that he had thereupon informed Mr. Hitendra Desai that even if 11 of the 21 Swatantra MLAs did not extend their support to him in the event of a motion of no confidence, the remaining 10 would support him and ensure the survival of his Ministry. Unfortunately, however, the Congress (O) was itself so demoralised by defections that Mr. Hitendra Desai chose to resign.

The Leader of the Party's Group in the Assembly, Mr. Liladhar Patel, reporting on the developments after Mr. Patel's departure from Ahmedabad, pointed out that when on 29th March he had met the Party's MLAs the feeling among some of them was that since Mr. Hitendra Desai had not sought our support we were not obliged to go to his rescue. At the same time the Party's legislators were not in favour of President's Rule. It was in this context that Mr. Liladhar Patel met the Chief Minister who agreed to a remission of land revenue on small holdings which was an important plank in the Swatantra Party's policy. Although this was welcomed by our MLAs, some of them nevertheless announced their intention to support any move that may be made to topple the Hitendra Ministry.

In the light of this development another meeting of our MLAs was convened and in order to keep the Party together a resolution was adopted that the Swatantra Group would negotiate with both the Congress (R) and Congress (O) in regard to our support. Subsequently 5 MLAs of the Party defected.

When the Hitendra Desai Government resigned Mr. Patel, in order to prevent President's Rule and to give time to Mr. Hitendra Desai or some one from his Party to form a government, wired to the Governor of Gujarat and the President of India staking his claim to form the government on the ground that he had the support of the MLAs belonging to Congress (O). He explained the circumstances

to the Chief Minister and offered him the Party's unconditional support in case Mr. Hitendra Desai was called upon to form the government once again. It was on the basis of this assurance that Mr. Hitendra Desai had formed a new Ministry; and our Party's Group which has now an effective strength of 16 stands committed to supporting Mr. Hitendra Desai's Ministry unconditionally. Mr. H.M. Patel clarified that this unconditional support involved no commitment in regard to any arrangements with the Congress (O) for the Assembly elections early next year. In regard to 5 MLAs who defected from our Group Mr. Patel said that two of them were likely to come back.

The Party had lost "recognition" in the Assembly because the minimum strength for recognition was 17. Mr. Lildhar Patel therefore requested the Board to permit him to readmit at least one of the two members who sought re-admission. In the light of the discussion, the Board heard and noted the reports of Mr. H.M. Patel and Mr. Lildhar Patel. In regard to Mr. Lildhar Patel's request the Board decided that in order to restore the Party's recognition in the State Assembly it would permit one or two members who defected to be re-admitted; but no other MLAs who had defected from the Party either now or last year should be taken back.

5. Recommendation of the Orissa State Parliamentary Board regarding by-elections

The State President of Orissa, Mr. R.N. Singh Deo, said that the Orissa Parliamentary Board would be meeting on 20th to consider the forthcoming by-elections in the State. Meanwhile the Orissa State Executive had decided to contest the by-elections from the Mayurbhanj and Koraput Parliamentary constituencies and the Khoksara Assembly constituency. This was noted.

In respect of the Koraput Parliamentary constituency, Mr. R.N. Singh Deo enquired whether the Andhra State Unit would have any objection to Mr. Narsimha rao Dora of Andhra being the Party's candidate. Mr. Latchanna said that while personally he had no objection, he would discuss the matter with his colleagues in the State.

6. Review of the Party's performance in the recently concluded session of Parliament

Mr. Dahyabhai Patel reported on the Party's work in the recently concluded session of Parliament. He pointed out that because of our reduced strength, the time allotted to our speakers in the Lok Sabha had been considerably curtailed. Nevertheless, our members gave a good account of themselves.

Mr. Dahyabhai pointed out that Mr. Laljibhai Ialia who was elected as a Swatantra candidate to the Lok Sabha from the Udaipur (ST) Parliamentary constituency had defected to the Jan Sangh. The Board deplored this breach of faith on the part of Mr. Laljibhai Ialia.

The meeting then terminated.

COMMON PROGRAMME OF THE ORISSA UNITED FRONT

Whereas Orissa has been suffering from continued negligence and injustice at the hands of the Centre, we the Coalescing Parties determined to fight this injustice and remove the regional imbalance from which the State suffers : : inspite of its natural bounty, have forged THE ORISSA UNITED FRONT to engage ourselves in the stupendous task of rapid economic re-construction of our State. The Orissa United Front undertakes to implement the following progressive and people-oriented programme for the State of Orissa:

1. Combined efforts should be made for the establishment of a Second Steel Plant in Orissa in the 4th Plan, and rapid development of Paradeep Port and expansion of Industry and Township in the Port area. Steps will also be taken for early establishment of operating Ports at Gopalpur and Chandbali.
2. A massive Rural Electrification Programme will be taken up to provide lift irrigation facilities and accelerate agricultural development and expansion of small industries with a view to create large-scale employment opportunities.
3. Expansion of Irrigation Projects and early completion of the incomplete Irrigation Works.
4. Land Reform Measures to be implemented immediately.
5. A special Development Board shall be formed for the development of Scheduled areas by implementing the recommendations of the Dhebar Commission and other Commissions from time to time with special emphasis on the upliftment of the Adivasis and Harijans. Priority shall be given to the following programmes:
 - (a) Leasing out available land to the landless and recovering the land illegally transferred from their ownership.
 - (b) Releasing them from the clutches of the Money Lenders.
 - (c) Regular payment of stipends to the Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste students, and special education, health and employment facilities for them.
6. To safe-guard the interests of the Labour and ensure election through secret ballot in Trade Union Affairs.
7. To safe-guard the interests of the low-paid employees of the Government and Semi-government institutions.
8. Grant of merit-cum-poverty scholarships to poor and meritorious students.
9. Due consideration should be given to the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan and Kothari Commissions with a view to improve the service conditions of the Teachers, teaching facilities, quality and system of education.
10. To take up massive labour intensive public works like construction of roads, irrigation projects and river draining schemes with a view to ensure flood control, prevention of soil erosion and salinity and river valley development, etc.
11. To provide drinking water supply and medical facilities, and link roads in the rural areas.

12. To intensify the Youth and Students Welfare activities
13. To meet the challenge of unemployment, determined efforts will be made through Crash Programmes.
14. Improving and strengthening the Panchayat Raj Institutions and Co-operative Movements and revival of the Zilla Parishads.
15. Develop infra structure rapidly and accelerate the pace of industrialisation in the State by establishing industries in Public, Private and Joint Sectors. More autonomy will be devolved on the Public Sector Corporations for better and efficient management of the said concerns.
16. The entire Government machinery be drastically re-oriented so as to make the farmer-producer the apex unit to which all the Government Departments dealing with research, irrigation, nucleus seeds, fertiliser, insecticides, storage, marketing, processing and credit facilities be tuned to optimise production and bring about an agricultural revolution in the State. To attain this goal a high power autonomous authority is envisaged. To further encourage the farmer agro-based industries such as Jute Mills, Sugar Mills and other processing units would be set up. To further assist the farmer selective Fertiliser and Insecticide Plants would also be established in the State.
17. To make all-out efforts for removal of regional imbalance from which Orissa suffers the most and to fight for increase in the Plan Provision for the State in the light of Dr. P.S. Lokanathan's recommendations.

Sd/- R.N.Singh Deo

For and on behalf of the
Swatantra Legislature
Party, Orissa.

Sd/- Sidhilal Murum

24-3-71

For and on behalf of
the Jharkhand Legis-
lature Party, Orissa.

Sd/- Nilamoni Routroy

For and on behalf of
the Utkal Congress
Legislature Party,
Orissa.

Bhubaneswar,

The 24th March, 1971.