

3/6/68

Gujarat row still pesters Swatantra Party

"The Times of India" News Service

MADRAS, June 2.

THE general council of the Swatantra Party which concluded its two-day session here today, could not go a long way in patching up the differences in its leadership on Gujarat affairs.

On the contrary, the crisis appears to have deepened, and may continue to dog the party's steps for a long time to come.

Contradictory assessment of the situation were made by the party's general secretary, Mr. N. Dandekar, and Mr. M. R. Masani, at the conclusion of the general council meeting.

While Mr. Dandekar expressed satisfaction that the party, admittedly at the cross-roads before the Madras session, had "crossed over to right path now," Mr. Masani was emphatic that "the party is still at the cross-roads."

Mr. Dandekar claimed that the party crisis in Gujarat was a "closed chapter now," but, in Mr. Masani's view "it is a new situation."

Only 69 of the 170 members attended the two-day general council meetings. In the absence of the chairman of the party, Mr. N. G. Ranga, the vice-president, Prof. M. Ruthnaswami, presided over the meetings.

At his official briefing, at the conclusion of the general council meeting, Mr. Dandekar refused to disclose who had moved the two resolutions, defeated at yesterday's meeting, which might have paved the way for Mr. Masani's return to the national executive.

About the future role of Mr. Masani in the party, Mr. Dandekar said "he will be an ordinary member of a very high standing," adding that Mr. Masani would continue to be the deputy leader of the Swatantra Party in the Lok Sabha.

According to Mr. Dandekar, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, who took an effective part in the deliberations, was "unhappy" that Mr. Masani had declined to accept election to the national executive.

"BAD SHAPE"

Mr. Masani, meanwhile, told newsmen shortly after Mr. Dandekar's press conference, that the fact that 100 members were absent at the general council meetings was "an indication of the party being in a bad shape."

About the "severe action" by the parliamentary board against some of the rebel members in Gujarat, Mr. Masani said "the main culprits have escaped, while small men have been punished."

Mr. Masani said the rejection of the two resolutions at the general council meeting, yesterday, left him with no alternative but to decline the offer of re-election to the executive seat vacated by him.

About his future Masani said he said he believed his task was "to educate and arouse the members of the party and to appeal to the considerable fund of idealism within the party ranks so that this demoralisation that has crept into the party may be eliminated."

He said that the party's recent reverses in the Haryana elections, the bye-election in Rajasthan and the panchayat elections in Gujarat, provided a warning.

The general council of the party also urged the Centre to postpone the mid-term elections in West Bengal. It said that this was not the time to subject the State once again to electioneering campaigns. "The prime need in West Bengal is a stable Government, and this is impossible so long as the communist parties are to carry on their war against our democratic institutions."

The general council endorsed the decision of its national executive that the party's legislators who defect should be expelled.

Crisis

8/6/68

Swatantra tells DMK Govt. Curb growing Red influence in State

By Our Staff Reporter

The Swatantra Party has called on the Madras Government to curb the growing influence of the communists in the political and economic life of the State.

In a resolution adopted at the two-day meeting of its general council which concluded in Madras on Sunday, the party asked the Government "to handle the situation firmly."

The resolution said the widespread strikes inspired and conducted by the communists in vital sectors of industry, transport, banking and insurance "have done grave damage to industrial peace and prosperity in the State."

The party noted "with deep concern and anxiety" the growing influence of the communists among the peasants and in trade unions in Tamilnad, where they have fomented rural and industrial unrest on an alarming scale throughout the State.

Mr. Dandekar, General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, who released the resolutions of the general council to the press was asked if the Tamil-

nad Swatantra Party would ask the DMK, in the light of the resolution, not to co-operate with the communists in the civic elections.

Mr. Dandekar said the resolution had nothing to do with election alliances. It would also not affect the Party's friendship with the DMK, he said.

In another resolution the council "noted with anxiety" the virtual breakdown of law and order in Kerala "engineered by the communists, with the connivance of the State Government," and said the bandh, gheraos and other incidents were organised to bring about widespread terror in the State, similar to the conditions prevalent in Calcutta and Naxalbari under the UF Government.

The council called upon the Central Government to take immediate steps to "ensure the security of life and property in the State."

The council demanded the postponement of the mid-term elections in West Bengal "in the interests of the large majority of peaceful and loyal inhabitants of West Bengal."

"This is not the time to subject this State once again to electioneering campaigns," it added.

In a resolution on floor crossing, the council endorsed the decision of the national executive that party legislators who defect should be expelled. It called for a convention among the parties in power not to reward defectors with Ministerships or other offices and thus make it unprofitable to cross the floor.

The council also endorsed the decision of the executive to support the demands of the hill people of Assam for a wide measure of autonomy.

In another resolution the general council said the British withdrawal from the Singapore base in about three years' time would create a power vacuum in South-East Asia. The initiative taken by the Prime Minister of Singapore seeking a mutual security agreement among the free countries of S. E. Asia deserved every encouragement, it added.

Soviet 'pressure'

The party hoped that the Central Government would "resist the pressure" from the Soviet Union to halt such a co-operative effort for mutual defence and security.

It warned the Central Government of "the dangerous implications of its short-sighted policies which will bring the threat of Chinese Communist imperialism even closer to our own doorstep."

The council congratulated the people of Czechoslovakia on "their courage" to "remove the symbol of tyranny" and hoped that the trend towards "liberal policies" would be maintained despite the "attempts of the Soviet leadership to put the clock back."

The council, in another resolution, urged the Centre to adopt a "positive policy" on Indians in Kenya. "Every effort must be made to bring pressure on the Governments of Kenya and Great Britain to give Indians of British nationality, who had settled down in Kenya, a fair deal." It said those

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... saying "who said what," he replied, "I am sure Rajaji is unhappy that Mr. M. R. Masani declined to be re-elected to the national executive of the party."

He stated that Mr. Masani was of the view that action taken for discipline against the Gujarat partymen was "inadequate". He, however, did not spell out what should be done. The general council discussed the matter in the form of two resolutions. The resolutions were defeated by "a fairly substantial majority." Sixty-nine out of the 170 members were present.

Mr. Dandekar added: "The general council got rid of a lot of poisons from its body. After all, in a situation like this lots of people have lots of views. They have been aired It has been a very healthy exercise. Of course, at times there were very heated discussions."

He said out of the twenty Gujarat members, nine were present.

Asked how the party was going to utilise Mr. Masani's services, Mr. Dandekar said Mr. Masani's services could be utilised in the mid-term elections in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. He could be used for training party workers.

Mr. Masani would continue to be the deputy leader of the party in Parliament.

Asked about the absence of Mr. N. G. Ranga at the general council meeting, Mr. Dandekar said Mr.

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18 एवं 25 मई, 1968

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प्राण जाहिं पर वचन न जाहिं

एम० आर० मसानी, संसत्सदस्य

मेरे मित्र तथा स्वतन्त्र दल के महा सचिव के रूप में मेरे उत्तराधिकारी श्री नारायण दाण्डेकर ने कुछ समय पहले प्रेस से कहा था कि दल की राष्ट्रीय कार्य-कारिणी की तथा दल के केन्द्रीय संसदीय बोर्ड की सदस्यता छोड़ने का मेरा निश्चय अडिग था। जिन कारणों ने मुझे यह निश्चय करने तथा उस पर अडिग रहने के लिए विवश किया है, उनका शिकार केवल स्वतन्त्र दल ही नहीं है अपितु शेष दल भी हैं। इसलिए, जनसाधारण को इन कारणों से परिचित कराने के लिए मैंने इस लेख का सहारा लिया है।

हाल ही में हुए राज्य सभा के चुनावों में गुजरात स्वतन्त्र दल को जो पराजय का मुख देखना पड़ा है वह स्वयं में कोई अभूतपूर्व घटना न हो कर उस विघटन की प्रतिनिधि घटना है जो आज हमारे जनजीवन में प्रविष्ट हो चुका है। 126 जनवरी 1968 के स्वराज्य में मैंने इस दिशा में संकेत भी किया था। राजनीतिक दलों में मुखरित नयी प्रवृत्तियों—दल-बदल बचन-भग, अनुशासनहीनता, मतों एवं स्थानों का क्रय-विक्रय के फलस्वरूप आज का जनमानस राजनीतिज्ञों के प्रति निराशा से भर उठा है।

पश्चिमी बंगाल एवं उत्तर प्रदेश के अनेक प्रमुख जीवी अपने प्रदेशों में जल्दी चुनाव नहीं चाहते। इसका कारण यह है कि वे दलीय सरकारों के प्रशासन से ऊब

चुके हैं तथा वर्तमान राज्यपालीय प्रशासन से सन्तुष्ट हैं क्योंकि वह तुलनात्मक दृष्टि से अधिक स्वच्छ है और जनजीवन में कम हस्तक्षेप करता है। यदि यह प्रवृत्ति समूचे राष्ट्र में फैल गई और संसदीय लोकतन्त्र के बदले ऐसा शासन लागू हो गया जैसा कि आज पाकिस्तान, इण्डोनेशिया और ग्रीस में है तो ज़रा सोचिए कि फिर स्वतन्त्र दल का क्या अस्तित्व बचा अथवा अन्य दलों का क्या अस्तित्व बचा।

जब श्री दाण्डेकर ने स्वतन्त्र दल की राष्ट्रीय कार्यकारिणी के अन्य सदस्यों की यह इच्छा मुझ तक पहुँचाई कि मैं अपना त्यागपत्र वापस ले लूँ तो मेरे मस्तिष्क में मैं उपरिनिखित विचारधारा घूम रही थी। श्री दाण्डेकर को उनके पत्र का उत्तर देते हुए मुझे यह बात सख्त कहनी पड़ी थी कि उनका अनुशासनीय कदम उठाने वाला प्रशासन मात्र भासू पोछने के बराबर था और दल की पराजयानुल स्थिति की ओर से आँखें मूँदने जैसा था। यह केवल नैतिक दृष्टि से ही गलत नहीं है अपितु दल के प्रति लोगों की खोई आस्था को पुनर्जाग्रत करने में भी अक्षम है। इससे दल के भीतर अनुशासनहीनता के पनपने की सम्भावना है जो किसी भी दृष्टि से कल्याणकर नहीं हो सकता।

गुजरात की दुःखद घटना में अन्य दलों की भूमिका भी कुछ सराहनीय नहीं कही जा सकती। गुजरात विधान सभा



के कांग्रेसी विधायकों ने उद्धोषणा की कि जो भी स्वतन्त्र दल के अधिकारी उम्मीदवार के विरुद्ध खड़ा होगा, उसे वे अपना द्वितीय प्राथमिकता मत देंगे। कितना अच्छा रहता, यदि मुख्य मन्त्री महोदय प्रतिपक्ष के नेता को अपना नैतिक समर्थन देते और गाँधीवादी विचारधारा के सच्चे अनुयायी अर्थात् स्वतन्त्र उम्मीदवार को विजयी बनवाते। लोकतान्त्रिक अनुशासन की दृष्टि से उनका यह कदम अधिक श्रेयस्कर सिद्ध होता। भविष्य में स्वतन्त्र दल कांग्रेस की इस सद्भावना का उत्तर दे कर इस कृतज्ञता का बदला चुका देता।

बन्धुवर श्री घटलबिहारी वाजपेयी ने 13 अप्रैल को राजकोट में पत्रकारों से बातचीत करते हुए कहा था कि गुजरात स्वतन्त्र दल के महा सचिव ने कुछ स्वतन्त्र विधायकों के साथ जनसंघ में शामिल

Sunday Standard

2/6/68

Masani declines party post

By Our Staff Reporter

Mr. M. R. Masani, MP, on Saturday, declined to give consent to be re-elected to the National Executive of the Swatantra Party from which he had resigned following the indiscipline among Gujarat legislators that led to the defeat of the party's official candidate in the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha.

However, Mr. Masani assured the party general council at its meeting in Madras, that he would continue to work for the party both in Parliament and outside.

At the meeting, the general secretary, Mr. N. Dandekar, had proposed that Mr. Masani be re-elected to the National Executive of the party, if he agreed.

Earlier, the Council discussed two resolutions—one calling upon the national executive to create conditions to enable Mr. Masani to accept the membership of the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary board, and another calling for the appointment of a committee to inquire into certain allegations against the leadership of the party in Gujarat and initiation of disciplinary action against Mr. C. C. Desai. Both resolutions were put to vote and declared lost.

The two-day meeting of the general council which began at Srinivas Sastri Hall, Mylapore, was presided over by Prof. M. Ruthnaswami, vice-chairman, in the absence of Prof. N. G. Ranga. Sixty-nine out of 170 members attended.

Prominent among those who attended were the founder-leader, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, and Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, Chief Minister of Orissa.