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Youth for George Fernandes Committee

Dear Friend:

You are aware that George Fernandes and twenty-two others are facing trial in a Delhi Court charged with a conspiracy to overthrow Mrs. Gandhi's government. The case against them has come to be known as the Baroda Dynamite Case.

An unscrupulous government, which Mr. Fernandes rightly calls a fascist-monarchist dictatorship, is sparing no efforts and is pouring all its resources to secure the conviction of Mr. Fernandes and his co-accused. Over 575 witnesses have been lined up and thousands of pages of documentation prepared to make this Conspiracy Case a court room extravaganza. All over the world, Indian embassies and other hired agents are drumming up a campaign in a desperate effort to confuse world opinion over the issues involved in this case. Our Embassies and High Commissions have been issuing regular "backgrounders" to the world press and to others concerned, painting Mr. Fernandes as the Devil incarnate, who is trying to destroy the "heaven" the Nehru dynasty has made of our country.

Nearer at home, Mr. Fernandes is being subjected to constant humiliation and harassment which, of course, is to be expected from a dictatorship. He is brought to court handcuffed and chained, and is kept under heavy police guard and is locked up in prison in the Maximum Security Yard. Since June 12, he has not been allowed even one single meeting with his lawyers, while Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship keeps trumpeting to the world that Mr. Fernandes is being given a "fair trial".

There is no denying that Mr. Fernandes has today come to symbolise the nation in chains. And in his person it is the entire nation that is on trial. Those of us who know Mr. Fernandes are aware of his total commitment to democracy and socialism. The struggles he has waged in defence of the rights and in furtherance of the aspirations of the working and toiling people of our country are a part of the history of our nation. The personal sufferings he has undergone and the sacrifices he has made in upholding his convictions have few parallels. He has led movements of the youth for jobs, of the homeless for houses, of the landless for land. In his single-minded devotion to the cause of civil liberties, he has led a world-wide campaign against the government's atrocities towards the Naxalites. He spoke up for Mujib before Mrs. Gandhi would make up her mind. He campaigned for Salvadore Allende of Chile, Angela Davis of the United States, and the patriots who defied the Russian jackboot in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Today, when Mr. Fernandes is on trial, it becomes the patriotic duty of every Indian to rush to his defence. What stand he will take on the charges brought against him is just now a matter of much speculation. But of one thing we can be certain: it will be a stand that will do us proud and will show George Fernandes, in the full splendour of his indomitable will, utter fearlessness, and tremendous strength of character.

A National Defence Committee, with Acharya J.B. Kripalani as Chairman has been set up for the defence of Mr. Fernandes and his co-accused. Several illustrious people, including former judges of the High Court, legislators and parliamentarians, writers and workers, legal luminaries and students, professors and trade unionists have joined this Committee. Lawyers from all over the country have offered their services to stand up for the defence of Mr. Fernandes. The Committee is raising funds to meet the expenses of legal defence and to keep the people informed of the progress of the trial through publication of bulletins etc. In Europe, America, Japan, and Australia, in parliaments all over the world, concern has been expressed over the treatment meted out to George Fernandes. Defence Committees have been set up in several European and American countries by Socialists and others concerned with human liberty and freedom. Eminent lawyers from England have offered to fly to India and stand up in defence of Mr. Fernandes.

We have set up a national Youth for George Fernandes Committee to help supplement the efforts of the National Defence Committee. We are organising branches of this Committee all over the country to raise funds, to disseminate news of the trial, and

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to educate the people in general, and the youth in particular on the fundamental issues involved in this trial.

The enclosed document, which is the text of a declaration made by me in the Court, will give you some idea of the size of our problem. But I can only say that to make freedom a priceless gift, some of us have to pay a heavy price.

This is an appeal to you to take courage in your hands and join the Youth for George Fernandes Committee and to play your role in the struggle for the restoration of freedom and democracy in the country as a pre-requisite step towards the establishment of a socialist and egalitarian society.

With greetings,

(Dr. Girija Huilgol)

General Secretary.

Chairman: Mr. Ravi Nair.

Vice Chairman: Mr. Than Singh Josh.

Please address your letters to:

The Secretary/ Chairman,
Youth for George Fernandes Committee,
16-17, Vithalbhai Patel House,
Rafi Marg,
New Delhi-110001.

True copy of Affidavit on stamp- Paper worth Rs2.

AFFIDAVIT

AFFIDAVIT OF Dr. Miss Girija Huilgol D/o Capt. R.P. Huilgol, aged 25 years resident of A15/11, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057.

I, the above named deponent do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:-

That the deponent is a Medical Graduate from the MAULANA AZAD MEDICAL COLLEGE, New Delhi and is presently working as a House Surgeon in Irwin Hospital, New Delhi.

I note that the CBI has mentioned my name as a prosecution witness in their case against George Fernandes and his colleagues. I also note that they have circulated a large number of statements allegedly made by me to their so-called Investigating Officer.

Ever since the arrest and subsequent detention of my father, Capt. R.P. Huilgol, former Director of Operations, Indian Airlines, on March 28, 1976 on the alleged offence of having sheltered George Fernandes in our house, my entire family has been subjected to the most vicious forms of harassment, torture, and blackmail by the CBI officials and other police agencies. My brother, Chandra Kumar, was arrested and tortured and asked to make statements which had no bearing on reality. The harassment and torture I have been subjected to is a long story which will be told some day.

I was taken into custody on March 30, 1976, in Dhulia, and from that moment onwards I have been, and still am, under constant investigation and interrogation. In the course of the never-ending interrogations, I was told that I would be detained under MISA and my mother and brother too would be picked up, and our family ruined; that I would have to spend the rest of my life in prison. On the other hand, I was also told that if I agreed to give evidence against George Fernandes and his friends and colleagues, my father would be released, the prosecution against my father would be withdrawn, and I would be substantially helped.

Even at this moment, I am being subjected to constant threats and terror. I am still being told that the freedom of my father depends on my "cooperating" with the CBI by giving evidence against George Fernandes and his friends and colleagues. I have been told that my own freedom and liberty, as also that of my mother and brother also depends on my saying and doing things that the CBI would want me to say or do.

I want to state most emphatically that there is no question of my giving evidence against George Fernandes and his colleagues, men whom I respect and admire for their courage for conviction. Today, I am more than

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ever convinced that we are living in a dictatorship that has to go. Only in a dictatorship could my family and I have been subjected to the terror and blackmail that has been and still in our lot during these six months and more.

With this statement, the CBI will finally know that there is no question of my succumbing to their blackmail. They and others will now have no qualms in subjecting me to further terror and blackmail. They may deny me my own freedom, and my father, mother, and brother may be subjected to grievous hurt. All this is the price some of us have to pay to restore to the country the democratic values and the freedom which have been trampled under the high heels of the dictatorship of Mrs. Gandhi. And I am prepared to pay that price.

I shall now devote my time and energy to help organise the defence of George Fernandes and his friends and comrades.

Sd/-
D e p o n e n t

V e r i f i c a t i o n :-

I, the above named deponent do hereby verify at Delhi on this 16.12.76 that the contents stated in the above, Affidavit are true to my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-
D e p o n e n t

Delhi/Dated: 16.12.76

Solemnly affirmed before me read over & explained to the deponent.

Sd/- dt. 16.12.76

Oath Commissioner, Delhi

Mohan Lal Sud

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