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SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

RAJAJINAGAR, MADRAS

APRIL 14 & 15, 1973

Text of Resolutions

Contents

I ECONOMIC & POLITICAL

1. Economic Situation
2. Take Over of Foodgrains Trade
3. Nationalisation
4. Andhra and Telengana
5. International Relations
6. Power Famine
7. Power Crisis in Tamil Nad
8. Rights of Working Women
9. Inter-State Rivers
10. Aligarh Muslim and Banaras Hindu Universities
11. Misuse of Power by Orissa Governor
12. Handloom and Powerloom Weavers
13. D.M.K. Minister's Support for Secessionist Demand

II ORGANISATIONAL

14. Campaign to Educate People on the Realities of Congress Misrule
15. Election Strategy
16. Labour
17. Call to Youth

III CONDOLENCE

18. Condolence - Rajaji
19. Condolence - Other Stalwarts

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS1. Economic Situation

Our country's economic situation is as close to being desperate as can be. Unemployment is placed officially at 35 million today but is much more extensive, and is expected by the Planning Commission to rise to 60 million at the end of the Fifth Plan. It is accepted officially that something like 240 million of our population live below the poverty line; actually the figure is much larger. Inflationary situation is ominous today. Compared to 1949, the residual purchasing power of the rupee, for rice, for example, is as low as 19 per cent. Apart from foodgrains, shortages of other essential commodities such as cement, steel, sugar, edible oil, etc. have become almost chronic. The take-over of wholesale trade in wheat has already created chaotic conditions in the market and it is almost certain that when the wholesale trade in rice is also taken over as is now proposed, the consumer will not only have to pay higher prices, but will also find it difficult to get wheat and rice regularly without wasting hours in queues.

We face famine conditions in several States in spite of striking successes that have been achieved in the field of agricultural research. This is because since 1951 we have provided irrigation facilities for no more than 10.7 million hectares of land having utilized in the process no more than one-seventh of the irrigation potential. Had more land been provided with irrigation facilities, our ability to withstand monsoon failures without any serious consequences would have been much greater and more effective. In regard to another of the major infrastructure facilities, viz., power, the country today faces a famine. In State after State, power cuts have been imposed varying from 15 per cent to as much as 75 per cent and which may in some cases, rise hereafter to even 90 per cent.

The inevitable result of all this has been that in the past two years, our production, both agriculture and industry has fallen in many cases, save in a very few where it has marginally risen. It should have been evident by now that it is not possible to increase the national product by the State taking over all privately owned means of production, distribution and exchange. Experience of the past 25 years has proved amply that it has helped us in raising our production to a far smaller extent than would have been otherwise possible. Similarly, experience of the policies of control pursued during the past two decades has clearly demonstrated that under a controlled economy, an ordinary citizen is placed at the mercy of an administrative machinery which is both inefficient and corrupt.

It is for our people to recognise that not by slogans, catchwords and unrealizable promises can the situation be altered for the better. Poverty can be eliminated only by sustained hard work, by increasing substantially the national product, by decreasing population growth considerably and by wiping out corruption completely in high governmental circles and reducing it very appreciably throughout the country. The Swatantra Party calls upon both the Government and the people to set aside ideological predilections, and adopt and approve only policies which are conducive to the increase of production, to the effective control of population growth and to the elimination of corruption.

The Swatantra Party would recommend most emphatically

that the economy should be freed from the stranglehold of controls, which have only led to shortages, widespread corruption and inefficiency, so that competition may have an opportunity for instilling fresh life and vigour into the economy. . The Swatantra Party recognises that conditions of monopoly and economic concentration should not be allowed to exist but is satisfied that, unregulated, they would be harmful to the community not only in the private sector but also in public sector. Indeed, public sector enterprises have already shown that they have nothing more to learn in respect of profiteering and exploiting the consumers.

Experience of nationalization so far has also amply shown that it does not benefit the consumer but leads only to inefficiency, high prices and increased cost of services. The Swatantra Party deplors unreservedly the elevation of Statism and bureaucracy to the status of saviours and guardians of the consumer and the ordinary man; experience has shown unmistakably that they are in fact corrupt exploiters of the society. The Swatantra Party, therefore, calls upon the public to demand an end to the economic policies which are leading to their enslavement and to the disappearance of individual freedom of action, initiative and development. Poverty has extended under the present regime for it can be mitigated and eliminated only if production is allowed to be maximised and rights are recognised only along with the obligations which they carry.

2. Take-Over of Foodgrains Trade

The Swatantra Party views with the gravest concern the decision of the Government of India to take over the wholesale trade of wheat immediately and of rice a few months later. Since it presupposes the introduction of full rationing and controls, in effect, it bans open market in foodgrains. The last meeting of the National Executive of the Party had warned the Government and the country of the consequences of going forward with this decision. That warning, it is to be regretted, has gone unheeded and the country is already witnessing the first fruits of the takeover in the States where it has taken place. The price of wheat has risen steeply everywhere, and, what is more, wheat has disappeared and is not obtainable at fair price or ration shops. The greatest sufferer is thus the ordinary consumer. The next suffering will be that of the farmer who will be called upon to sell his wheat at procurement price fixed by the Government of India, a price which is lower than the price at which e.g. bajra was procured this year by the State of Gujarat. Then there will be those who were employed in the wholesale trade. Fairly considerable number of these will be without employment. Finally, the economy of the country, as a whole, will be seriously upset.

Food Corporation of India's failure to procure efficiently even a small quantity of 10 million tons cannot be denied. Its cost of procurement is known to be many times higher than that of the wholesale trade. The take-over of the wholesale trade involving 40 million tons of marketable surplus wheat and rice, with an administrative machinery which is grievously run down, is to set out on an adventure which can, as is the experience of all other items taken over by the Government in the past, only end in further rise in prices and disaster besides aggravating corruption to an incredible extent.

Convinced that the process of take-over of foodgrain trade will lead ultimately to collectivization of agriculture, the Swatantra Party pledges its support to the cause of farmers and traders with the intention of safeguarding the interest of consumers and calls upon the people of the country to stand solidly behind them in their present hour of crisis.

The Swatantra Party further calls upon the Government of India to reconsider this question even at this stage and to let the wholesale trade continue to function, on its giving solemn undertaking that it will abide by all regulations and directives in regard to distribution and prices formulated after taking into account all relevant regional factors.

3. Nationalisation

The Swatantra Party views with grave concern the spate of nationalisation and take-overs that have taken place in recent months, for they divulge a tendency which will do great harm to the country's economy.

After every act of nationalisation and take-over, the Prime Minister keeps retorting: "It is not Government's policy to nationalise for the sake of nationalisation". That is what was stated after the General Insurance was nationalised. Not long afterwards the coking coal mines were taken over. Then within months, non-coking mines were nationalised although it had been expressly stated only a short while earlier that that was not the Government's intention. Indian Copper Corporation was taken over on the specious ground that it was not exploiting the copper mines fast enough. Indian Iron was taken over on the ground of inefficient working and on similar grounds some 86 textiles mills' management was taken over. It is evident that underlying nationalisation there is neither principle nor policy. The predilections, prejudices and megalomania of individual ministers alone explain nationalisation in these particular instances. A cynical attempt has been made in every case to show that the take-over was in public interest but in effect they have operated entirely against public interest.

The Swatantra Party deprecates such misapplication of funds and creation of large official empires. They involve not only a heavy burden on the public exchequer and widen the area of inefficiency and losing public sector enterprises on the one hand, but also discourage private enterprises' initiative and investment on the other. The Swatantra Party calls upon the public to express itself firmly and unambiguously against such gross abuse of power in its name and invites the people to note further that this expansion of public sector is taking place in spite of the remarkably poor record of already established public sector enterprises which show a total investment exceeding Rs 5,000 crores, a loss of Rs 50 crores every year.

If it is the intention that the Economy must grow and grow rapidly, it will be possible only by encouraging the private sector which has a definite and important role to play. Therefore the establishment and expansion of public sector should under no circumstances have the effect of stultifying private sector, and must instead so function as to stimulate it.

14. Andhra and Telengana

The National Convention of the Swatantra Party calls upon the Prime Minister to accede immediately to the demand of the people of the two regions of Andhra and Telengana for separation or in the alternative to dissolve the Assembly and hold a referendum so as to ascertain the wishes of the people in a democratic way.

The National Convention expresses its appreciation of the heroic struggle relentlessly waged for over five months paralysing the administrative machinery and rejecting the authority of the Prime Minister to run the State.

The Convention congratulates Swatantra legislators who have tendered their resignation from the Legislature with a view to personal sacrifice and calls upon all legislators both Congress and non-Congress to follow suit and express their resentment at the contemptible manner in which the Prime Minister is treating the people's movement in Andhra. Anything short of this is an act of treachery against the people of Andhra.

The efforts of the Prime Minister to hoodwink the people by persuading legislators to toe her line by promising help and position are bound to fail. Her attempt to treat the whole problem as a Party one and the people's movement as one of law and order is to be condemned. The fact that out of 14 constituencies in Telengana, the Congress (R) was rejected outright in ten seats in 1971 mid-term parliamentary poll in spite of the so-called Indira wave clearly demonstrates that the people of Telengana were strongly for separation. It is a matter of disgrace that out of ten elected persons, eight people let down the Telengana people by joining the Indira Congress.

The National Convention warns that the Prime Minister's manoeuvre to continue to strive for unwanted integration against the wishes of the people of both the regions are fraught with dangerous consequences.

The five-point formula, the Prime Minister had so laboriously worked on, has pleased neither Andhras nor Telenganas with the result that today it is dead as a dodo.

The National Convention while paying tributes to students, NGO's Class IV employees, Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers and the large number of women who participated in the movement, condemns the hiring of women of doubtful character to beat and harass decent ladies.

The blood bath unleashed by the CRP deployed by the Prime Minister in the Andhra area has no parallel in the recent history of free India. It is indeed significant that the Prime Minister has lost all confidence in the local police.

The massacre of more than 300 persons, the torture of lakhs of innocent Andhra people and the loss of property are all things for which the responsibility squarely rests on the Prime Minister. The National Convention while paying homage to the 300 and more martyrs who had laid down their precious lives for their cherished goal of a separate state of Andhra, conveys its deep-felt condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

The members of the Swatantra Party are called upon to stand by the people of Andhra and Telengana in their hour of trial.

5. International Relations

The Defence of a Nation is the prime responsibility of a Government and a sound foreign policy is its principal weapon. The Swatantra Party feels that the present Government has in practice aligned itself on almost all occasions to the detriment of national security and has established a partisan relationship with the Soviet Union against our self-interest.

The Swatantra Party has always expressed the view that it is the prime responsibility of India to establish the friendliest relationships with its immediate and near neighbours and in particular with Pakistan and now with Bangladesh. We should have established the closest rapport with Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal, our other companions in the sub-continent.

Our relationship with countries in South-East Asia should have had as its objective the creation of an area of peace amongst countries, cooperating in a spirit of mutual confidence and amity.

But with our concluding the ill-advised defence treaty of 1971 with the Soviet Union, we have come to occupy an unhappily isolated position in the countries of the world.

Even worse, the impact of this policy has had an adverse influence on our domestic policies driving it in a suicidal direction and has provided an opportunity to give the Soviet bloc a stranglehold on our foreign trade and economic life of the country and to the communist fifth column to infiltrate and subvert our country's government and institutions.

As a matter of fact our alignment with the Soviet Union serves as part of the latter's policy of containment of Communist China which while benefitting the Soviets also limits our options in the promotion of our national interest. In effect our foreign and domestic policies have ceased to be independent and are dictated to by the requirements of that infamous Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty. The immediate objective of our foreign policy should be to ensure the speedy normalization of relations between the countries of our sub-continent. Soon after the last General Elections a new situation emerged in East Bengal culminating in the creation of Bangla Desh and the remarkable victories of our armed forces. Having won the war, the Government of India has failed to win the peace. The accord that was generated at Simla has not been pursued to its logical conclusion. On the one hand the Government of India has held up the release of the bulk of the POWs and on the other Pakistan has failed to repatriate the Bengalis to Bangla Desh. Therefore, what is immediately required is a phased programme of repatriation of the POWs and the Bengalis particularly now that the elections in Bangla Desh are over.

The Swatantra Party calls upon the Government of India to pursue the peace with vigour and help in bringing about a detente between Pakistan and Bangla Desh as part of its effort to create an area of permanent peace in the sub-continent.

6. Power Famine

There is a power potential of 40 million kws at 60 per cent load, which waits to be commanded. At the same time, the capacity already established is one-third idle while the transmission losses are 18 per cent, reaching 30 per cent in the U.P. The shortage of power this year cannot be blamed wholly on the monsoon as only one-third of power is hydel, dependent on rain. It is due also to poor maintenance and operational inefficiency, which led to a considerable portion of established capacity to remain unutilised. The cut in consumption is calculated to cause a loss of Rs 1,000 crores worth of industrial production. It is inconceivable that 25 years after Independence the country should have had to face a power famine such as it has been facing during the last few months. In State after State there has been power cut varying from 15 per cent to 75 per cent. What is even more distressing is the fact that the Union Minister for Power admits that this shortage of power will continue for some years yet.

Though the country has a reserve of 94,140 million tons of coal, only 72 million tons were mined in 1970. Since then, the take over first of Coking Coal Mines and recently of all mines has reduced production and induced shortage for which the blame was laid on the Railways but was not accepted by them.

Oil also has been the subject of politics. Only 6.81 million tons are produced in the country and 11.65 million tons have to be imported. Import has become difficult because of oil politics and in any case, at higher prices. Off shore supplies in Cambay have not been tapped so far because competent foreign agencies were ignored.

Power is one of the most important of infrastructure facilities and it is most important that adequate power generation capacity is established well ahead of the demand for it, which doubles itself every five years. If this is to be realised there should obtain a greater sense of urgency and the Swatantra Party recommends strongly

concerning

(a) that the Government of India should take power urgently to resolve all pending inter-State disputes/sharing of waters of a number of rivers; (b) that treating each dispute as involving a precious national resource, and as soon as it is resolved, the Government of India should take consequential action without delay; (c) that crash programmes should be adopted for developing idle hydel potentials and for development of thermal power near coal pit head; (d) that having regard to the fact that indigenous manufacturing capacity of power equipment is known to be of the order of 8 to 10 million kws during the period of five years, and that the additional power that is estimated to be required during the Five-Year Plan is of the order of 20 million kws, import of equipment necessary for the generation of 10 to 12 million kws to fill in the gap should be permitted readily and provision of necessary foreign exchange made; (e) that in order to accelerate the extraction of inland and off shore deposits of oil, foreign collaboration should be welcomed.

7. Power Crisis in Tamil Nad:

The National Convention calls upon the State Governments and the Central Government to take urgent steps to solve the serious power crisis engulfing different parts of the country and especially Tamil Nad. It is a matter of disgrace that the Governments at the States and Centre seem to be totally unaware of the resultant acute lay off in the industrial sector throwing millions of workers out of employment, producing serious food crisis as a result of poor power supply to pump sets, and causing large scale inconvenience to domestic consumers. The National Convention warns the Government that if a solution is not available within the next few days women, workers and peasants will revolt against the Government.

8. Rights of Working Women:

The Swatantra Party deplors the existing working conditions of women and demands:

- (1) that equal wages for equal work should be paid to working women;
- (2) that the provisions of the law regarding maternity leave and creches should be effectively enforced;
- (3) that the income of women should not be clubbed with that of their husbands for purposes of taxation;
- (4) that women who cultivate land themselves and/or with their husbands should not be prevented from holding land in their names. Moreover the new act of Tamil Nad that gives the right to the tenants to buy off the land they till from the owner should not apply to the lands tilled by widowed women and minor children.

9. Inter-State River Waters:

That control of all inter-State Rivers in the country should be assumed by the Central Government through a statutory Commission with a view to avoiding disputes between the States and assuring equitable distribution of the waters of such Rivers in the best interests of the Nation as a whole and that, if necessary, the Constitution may be suitably amended for that purpose.

10. Aligarh Muslim and Banares Hindu Universities:

The Swatantra Party appeals to all students and representatives of Aligarh Muslim and Banares Hindu universities to come together and form a Joint Action Committee to fight the menace of constant governmental interference on their campuses in their educational and student life.

The Swatantra Party would earnestly advise the two student bodies to demand an identical bill for both Universities which while preserving the historical character and traditions of the two institutions will guarantee the autonomy of the universities and ensure the democratic framework and functioning of their academic and social life.

In furtherance of this objective, the Swatantra Party demands that the Aligarh Muslim University (Amendment) Act, 1972, be scrapped forthwith and the institution run according to the statutes amended up to the Amendment Act LXII of 1963 till such time as a new Act be passed by Parliament, which can also serve as a model for adoption by all other universities in the country.

11. Misuse of Power by Orissa Governor:

The Swatantra Party notes with grave concern the misuse of the institution of Governors in subverting the Constitution and in butchering democracy in the State of Orissa.

12. Handloom and Powerloom Weavers:

power-
loom

The National Convention is shocked at the nonchalant attitude of the Central and State Governments over the most crucial problem of handloom and weavers. The National Convention calls upon the State Governments and the Central Government to immediately solve the problem of lakhs of handloom and powerloom weavers who are forced to starve on account of non-availability of yarn.

If this is not immediately solved, the National Convention strikes a note of warning that there will be widespread uprising by the handloom and powerloom workers in different parts of the country and the responsibility for such a situation will squarely rest on the shoulders of the respective Governments.

13. DMK Minister's Support for Secessionist Demand:

This National Convention of the Swatantra Party brings to the notice of the Government of India, and in particular to the Central Intelligence Bureau that the recent Dravida Kazhagam (of which the DMK is an offshoot) Conference held at Arcot in North Arcot District of Tamil Nad on April 7 and 8, 1973 in which five Ministers of the DMK and even many officials of the government of Tamil Nad participated and in which Mr. Anbil Tharmalingam one of the five Ministers presided, declared that their aim and demand is the formation of a separate Independent Tamil Nad (according to a press report which appeared in the Tamil Daily Alai Osei of 10th April 1973). This Convention demands a thorough and immediate probe into this matter and strict action against the organisers and the participants.

II.

ORGANISATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

14. Campaign to Educate people on the realities of Congress Misrule:

Due to the wrong and faulty policies of the Government, prices of consumer goods of daily necessity are rising day by day. Also due to the wrong economic and industrial policies of the Government, unemployment of educated young men and women is progressively increasing. People in general and workers, farmers and persons in the fixed income group like teachers, clerks, and the government employees, in particular, are hard-pressed due to the abnormal rise in the prices of consumer goods.

Mass media like radio and television which are government departments are being misused by the ruling party not only to suppress but also mislead people in regard to the real state of affairs in the country.

The Swatantra Party is firmly of the view that as a first step, it is necessary to educate people in regard to the kind of policies which alone will help in reducing unemployment and combat inflation. But as the opposition parties are denied access to the mass media to enable them to propagate their point of view, it becomes necessary for them to seek other avenues for educating the people.

For this purpose, the Swatantra Party calls upon the Party's President and the General Secretary at the National Headquarters to evolve a suitable line of action in the next two months to meet the situation.

15. Election Strategy:

In view of the fact that the Party's greatest electoral success was scored in 1967, when candidates were set up well in advance, to nurse their constituencies, the Party will begin preparations for the next Parliamentary and State Assembly elections in a similar manner, positioning its candidates at least 12 or preferably 18 months before the date of election. Candidates will be directed not only to follow the traditional tactics of enlisting members and supporters but to make themselves unofficial grievance bureaus, taking up the grievances of the people and attempting to redress them, by bringing them to the notice of the relevant authorities. When necessary, matters pertaining to the Central Government can be brought to the notice of Swatantra Members of Parliament for suitable action.

As publicity and popular projection are the main hurdles before the Swatantra Party, members at all levels of the Party should make fuller use of the only forum available to them, the daily and periodical Press. In the event of letters, articles, or releases being consistently suppressed, action should be initiated against the press concerned, under Article 13 of the Press Council Act.

16. Labour:

The Swatantra Party reiterates that it has always stood for the formation of Trade Unions and has been encouraging collective bargaining by workers whether in fields or factories. This was in fact clearly laid down as the 18th item of the statement of principles enunciated at the Preparatory Convention of the Party in August 1959. The Swatantra Party had, however, insisted that Trade Unions must be free from political interference or domination and therefore urged its members to encourage independent Trade Unions. Unfortunately, despite its genuine efforts the Swatantra Party notes that not only the communists but even other political parties have been increasingly exploiting the workers for political gains. The Swatantra Party has been unable to prevent this trend. The Party's insistence that Trade Unions be managed by workers themselves, without outside interference, is also being misunderstood by certain sections of workers as a sign of lack of interest on the part of the Swatantra Party in labour problems even though it is a well known fact that Swatantra Party members both in Parliament and the State Legislatures have always been in the forefront to take up the cause of labour. The Party therefore gives a mandate to all its members to take up the following tasks:-

1. Swatantra Party members must launch a massive programme of explaining to the workers that the communist parties do not really believe in collective bargaining, that they only use workers to paralyse the entire administration and then come to power, and once in power, they will not allow workers either to talk of bonus or collective bargaining (both of which are essentially concepts of a Democratic and Liberal society and therefore only the Swatantra Party has a right to talk of them) and that this can easily be predicted from the manner in which workers' movement are ruthlessly crushed in Communist China and Russia (Let it be remembered that there is no opposition parties even to voice the grievances of workers in Public forums in these countries).
2. The members of the Swatantra Party should promote the formation of Trade Unions and participate in their activities and guide the workers properly so that their just demands are protected and they are prevented from exploitation by unscrupulous political parties.
3. The National Convention calls upon the members of the Swatantra Party to participate actively in the struggle for justice of workers in farms, factories and offices.

17. Call to Youth:

The Swatantra Party calls upon the youth of this country to break their shackles with the past and to lead the movement to safeguard democracy and the free way of life granted to us by the Constitution. It is only by fighting against all forms of injustice - social, economic, administrative and political - that we can save this country from totalitarianism, hypocrisy, corruption and maladministration.

It is the youth of this country, still burning with idealism who alone can fight with open hands and an open heart against past misdeeds and can bring back the misguided multitudes from the wrong path of socialism which is sabotaging democracy and ruining the economy of the nation.

The Swatantra Party reiterates its demand that the voting age be reduced to 18 years to afford the youth the opportunity of full participation in the building of the nation.

III.

CONDOLENCE RESOLUTIONS

18. RAJAJI

This National Convention is meeting for the first time bereft of its founding father Rajaji. Words cannot describe the anguish and sorrow of the Swatantra Party in what will turn out to be the greatest loss to the country after Gandhiji's death.

Rajaji was an intellectual giant. His foresight was legendary and he had the courage of his convictions.

Rajaji's public life cannot be classified into any one category of activity. He was a statesman; a politician and a political philosopher, a literatureur par excellence. Rajaji was equally at home with national and international affairs as well as trivia. He was Gandhiji's conscience keeper and after Gandhiji's death, the conscience keeper of India itself.

From Governor-General to Home Minister to Chief Minister to private citizen, Rajaji carried all this with a grace and modesty which should serve as a lesson to all men of public life. In the last few years of his life, Rajaji's was the voice of dissent - loud and clear. Dissent without which democracy itself is meaningless.

Rajaji is dead. Long live Rajaji for the Swatantra Party which is the embodiment of his battle for Dharma is determined to pursue his policies which alone will lead the country to Prosperity through Freedom.

The National Convention bows its head in homage to its founding father.

19. OTHER PARTY STALWARTS

The 6th National Convention of the Swatantra Party records with profound sorrow the passing away of several stalwarts of the Party including the following:

1. Sardar Darshan Singh Bheruman
Former President of the Punjab Unit who died as a result of a fast unto death that he had undertaken on the Chandigarh issue.
2. Sardar Ram Singh, MP - President of the U.P. Unit.
3. Shri Bhailalbhai Patel - The illustrious President of our Gujarat Unit.
4. Raja Giriraj Saran Singh of Bharatpur, MP.
5. Sardar Basant Singh, MIA - General Secretary of the Punjab Unit who died at the hands of a cruel assassin.
6. Mr. K.M. Ramaswamy Gounder - Chief Whip of our Group in the Tamil Nadu Assembly.
7. Mr. G.S. Adimoolan - Deputy Leader of our Group in the Tamil Assembly.