

Lecture Notes for talk to the
Progressive Group - 26.7.62

630

I

After 15 years of Nehru Administration, India at brink of bankruptcy,
her frontiers violated, military defeat ^{humiliation} ~~staring in her face~~
(and without a friend in the world)

Change of government needed, but no alternative govt. available

Sense of national humiliation at enduring constant diplomatic rebuffs
and military setbacks from communist Chinese

Read in paper
In recent photographs of Krishna Menon and his two buddies, what
are they toasting?

3
Perhaps the liberation of India?

Lecture Notes for talk on 'Party Politics in India' at the Harold Laski Institute of Political Science, Ahmedabad, on 26.6.62

I

Necessity of Party System

Parties essential in democracy

Issue raised by J.P.

Nehru: "I am entirely in favour of the party system of Govt."

(AICC session, Ind. Exp. 6.6.62)

Cannot go all the way with J.P. - Danger - Non-party = one party

"How to locate the best man?"

Nelson Rockefeller: "To call politics dirty is to call democracy dirty."

Cynicism spreading - gulf between profession and practice.

Limits of party system

World trends

I. Silone

S.P. - Party with a difference

"The Swatantra Party is a Party with a difference. It believes that the present trend followed in India and elsewhere by which political parties dominate more and more the thoughts, activities and lives of their members is one that needs to be reversed. The Party holds that democracy is best served if every political party allows freedom of expression to its members on all matters falling outside the fundamental principles of the Party. The S.P. therefore gives its members, whether in Parliament, legislatures or elsewhere, the fullest liberty on all questions not falling within the scope of its Principles and Statement of Policy. ~~In particular, members of the Party will, in contrast to the way in which dissenting members of certain other parties are treated, be given an opportunity to express themselves in regard to the formulation of the Party's policies.~~"

Also re: students and trade unions

"The Party is of the view that in free India, while students even before graduation should acquire some knowledge of the various trends in political thought, they should, while engaged in college life, abstain from active participation in the furtherance of any political party. Whatever other parties may be doing, the Swatantra Party is of the view that there should be no encouragement given to the division of students into groups related to the political parties of the country although they may be free to express and discuss their views in their own College Unions. Students above the prescribed age are no doubt eligible for membership of the Party and are welcome if they seek it. Students may form study circles for the appreciation of political and economic problems but, in the interest of discipline, the Party is of the view that it should not encourage the formation of political groups inside universities and colleges."

"The Swatantra Party is not satisfied with the present position of trade unions. Most of them are managed by outsiders and many of them are playthings in the hands of political parties. The Party is keen that trade unions should grow as independent organisations of workers controlled and managed by themselves. Being opposed to the domination of trade unions by political parties, the Swatantra Party will not join the race to establish control over trade unions, though its members will be always ready to help in all possible ways."

Municipalities and Panchayats

Describe situation re: (a) Village Panchayats
(b) Other local bodies

Complication Caused by indirect election

AICC decision welcome, but enforcement the issue

e.g. C.M. Stephen from Kerala had at recent AICC meeting in Delhi in June mentioned that Kerala Congress had turned down communist offer to keep out of Panchayat elections because they cannot be trusted

Therefore policing essential - As in Nucleus Bond

Sarva Seva Sangh or All India Panchayat Parishad

Learning - Otherwise will break down before long.

Need for Opposition

Pagun Bha of General Election
Need for Opposition

EFM
Quote Durbin - Acid test of democracy

c.f. Soviet Constitution

Generally accepted, but neo-fascist trends in certain new countries e.g. Ghana, Egypt, Indonesia. *Tanganyika*

- 'Developing country needs one-party government'

e.g. Indira Gandhi in Kenya snubbed by KADU

Missing element in Indian democracy - Political Vacuum

Political Vacuum - Disillusionment (C.R.M. Rao (Janata 17/6/62): "The

X S.P. only possible alternative.

In 2½ years caught up with C.P.I.

Rajni Kothari (in Seminar of June 1962)

"...the role of the Swatantra Party seems to be significant. Its very rise, let apart its spectacular successes (not fully reflected in legislative returns), has made political controversy more ideologically-oriented and divisions within the Congress Party more crystallised. It has also filled an important gap in the country's political organisation: the availability of an opposition party which can channelise all dissenting elements from the Congress. A party so much like the Congress and so different: that is the crux of its achievement. This will become more clear with the passage of time...."

Not best solution, because power gravitates to Centre but better than present

Transition into N.D. Kant

Failing everything, electoral understandings to avoid split vote

S.P.'s efforts failed in 1962, but efforts must continue

Amir Khan & others not to be taken into account. The solution

III

Ideological Pattern

Terminology of 'Left' and 'Right' now meaningless

Have thought so for over a decade now

Delighted that on June 13, P.M. asked about Left and Right wing elements in the Cabinet, replied: "These terms do not ~~have~~ *fit* in our politics."

Quite, but this also applies to parties which P.M. cheerfully classifies as rightist and reactionary.

Nelson Rockefeller, likely Republican candidate for President in 1964 quoted in Time Magazine, June 15: "I think these words — Liberal and Conservative — have little meaning in relation to present day problems."

Harold Laski, worried at left and right wing quarrels in Labour Party, once observed: "Too much preoccupation with the wings was likely to disturb the flight of the bird."

Terms derived from seating arrangements in French Parliament over a century ago - semi circular

Have lost all meaning

If belief in autocracy sign of being right and belief in fullest human liberty sign of left, then Communist Party in the country extreme right, democratic socialist parties moderate right, conservative parties moderate left, and liberal parties extreme left.

In India, Sarvodaya extreme Left, while Nehru Govt. well to the right next only to Communists.

Swatantra Party aggressively left-wing by this test.

'Leftist' - umbrella-word.

A.D. Gorwala (Opinion, May 23, 1961)

"What an umbrella-word is leftist! How many take shelter under its shade! Is a well-known medical man a communist? Well, er...he is leftist. Is an equally well-known writer, a scientist, a Communist? You know, the apologist will say, both of them are leftist...Is Krishna Menon a communist? Pat comes the answer, He's a leftist. Are journals which persistently support the Soviet cause Communist? No, they are always leftist."

Suggest leave these words alone and try to understand the real content of a Party's programme

How then should S.P. correctly be described?

Believers in Statism, like Communists and Nehru-socialists, call it reactionary while unattached elements consider it conservative in the good sense of the word.

While first description false and mere term of abuse, second description fairly near the mark since some elements in the Party can be so described.

Also S.P. would conserve all that is best in India's traditions
- spiritual and social

But not Party of Statism
More accurate description - Liberal and Gandhian

Economic policy of minimum government and maximum individual freedom comes from Gandhiji's thinking

- "That government is best which governs the least."

- "I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress."

Rural basis - All seats from rural areas.
Also derived from Western Liberalism

Individualist school of economists not conservative but liberal
e.g. Hayek, Ropke and others

Resolution at the Liberal International Congress at Gardone,
Italy, October 1st to 4th, 1959.

"The IX th Congress of the Liberal International held at Gardone, Italy, from October 1st to 4th 1959, welcomes [the message from Professor N.G. Ranga conveyed to it by its Patron, Mr. Minoo Masani, regarding] the formation of the Swatantra (Freedom) Party in India, and trusts that this Party will prove a staunch and successful upholder of the values and policies of liberals, which are so necessary for the development of the good life, for friendly relations between the peoples of the East and of the West and essential to the peace of the world."

Not generally known in India that Conservative Parties, e.g. in England and Christian Democrats in Italy and Germany incline to be more statist ~~parties~~ ^{necessary} than liberal parties in social and cultural spheres though not in economic

Individualist Liberal Parties individualists in all spheres.

Human being capable of rational choice - Faith in people.

L.T. Hobhouse in a book called Liberalism says:

"Liberalism is the belief that society can safely be founded on this self-directing power of personality, that it is only on this foundation that a true community can be built.... Liberty then becomes not so much a right of the individual as a necessity of society."

Prof. N. Parkinson: "The word 'liberal' means generous or open-handed. Generous with what? With freedom and political responsibility."

Lord Samuel "The central doctrine of Liberalism is that it is the duty of the State to secure to all its members, and all others whom it can influence, the fullest possible opportunity to lead the best life. Progress can only be progress towards that."

re Self-government, social reform, democracy and free trade, all tend the same purpose. Peace, Retrenchment and Reform are the means by which that end can be reached.... 'The trunk of the tree of Liberalism is rooted in the soil of ethics.'"

Myself elected patron of Liberal International before S.P. formed

Programme of Party shown to liberals at Liberal International at a Convention in Gardone in Italy in 1960

Many ~~shocked~~ ^{surprised} why Rajaji calls it conservative

① 'Pure milk of liberalism'

~~Offer to affiliate~~

Message of greetings on eve of general elections

Gulf between liberals and democratic socialists in West narrowing

Woodrow Wyatt's suggestion for Lib/Lab merger in England

c.f. S.P.'s programme and New German Socialist Programme

Read extracts from 'Who is Outdated?'

(Pb - re Swintley)

General trend in West away from collectivism towards pragmatic

individualism

Nasser: "I am against M-L. I have studied it for years, as a doctrine. Even true of iron curtain countries completely foreign to us."

Yugo. talk of market

Djilas: (New Class) - "Communism as an ideology has mainly run its course. It does not have many new things to reveal to the world."

Now even Russia

China adopts S.P. priorities last month

Age composition of British House of Commons:

<u>Age-group</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>
20 - 29	9	1
30 - 39	62	18
40 - 49	140	55
50 - 59	118	106
60 - 69	35	57
70 plus	3	20

Conservative Revival in U.S. campuses:

"Students, students, turning Right
On all campuses in sight,
Which unlikely left-wing scheme
Made you swim against the stream?

...

What the reason? Where the blame?
Are they too numerous to name?
What your anger? What dead air
caused you to abjure, forswear?

...

Students, students, turning Right
On all campuses in sight,
We greet you with this happy song --
But what the hell took you so long?

(William F. Gavin in
National Review 13/3/62)

S.P. therefore in forefront of world ideological trends

As up to date as Nehru Socialism, out-dated

Frank Moraes (Indian Express, May 28, 62):

"When will Mr. Nehru and his henchmen who dutifully echo his economic and political incantations realise that they are at least three decades behind the times and that they do not lead the vanguard of thinking but bring in the rear?"

Nehru Socialism and Planning attempt to reconcile irreconcilables

Political democracy and economic communism

Leopard without spots

Calling it middle way only justified in the sense that falling between two stools is midway between sitting firmly on one of them.

1962
N.G. Goray, Poona, June 8: "If this is socialist taxation, we must admit that we have yet to learn a good deal about socialism."

Owing to preoccupation with methods, Indian socialists have lost sight of objective

Lenin's objective of free and equal society acceptable to me. I adopt S.P. programme because it is the quickest and most painless way of reaching that objective. I have an idea larger and larger number of Indian socialists will come over to S.P. as this fact becomes clearer.

But say critics - 'Look at composition of S.P. in Parliament or at leadership in certain States - Feudal'

That brings us to next topic.

25

IV

Reality of Party System?

Nature of electorate - 4/5ths illiterate

Problem of communication

As big as Western Europe — But no Television

Ideology vs. Organisation

It is the machine that counts

e.g. last elections

S.P. message well received, no resistance

But Conveyor belt inadequate

How to reach millions? Hence limited extent of appeal

Elements of Power

Religion

Caste - "Biggest party in India" J.P.

Parochialism = local influence

Cult of Personality

Patronage

Fear of Authority — Gandhiji "This country has to learn to say 'no.' "

Money — Debate on Companies Bill, 1961 — *Swatantra*

P.M. (Press Conference, March 21) : "Their victory has nothing to do with the Swatantra Party and its programme."

But this true of all parties

How many of 51 million who voted Congress support Soviet planning or appeasement of China

Congress goose and Swatantra gander

What follows?

What Is To Be Done?

"Educate our Masters"

*- An N. Surajam Sena
of Guntur*

No escape or shortcut

Alternative not non-party democracy but dictatorship

Current practice re. nomination of candidates -

religion and caste on eve of nomination day

clever-clever game

Result: General calibre low

Choice superficial

Since birth of S.P., have argued for early nomination

Delighted P.M. at AICC on June 6¹⁹⁶² in Delhi also made same suggestion

Trust ruling party will set good example

Organisational factors making for success in 1967:

- (1) Tentative choice of candidates at least four years before general elections so as to give the candidate chance to nurse constituency. Final choice to be made a year before nomination day in the light of experience.
- (2) Credibility of candidates — Choice of good men sincerely in agreement with the Party's policy and the uncereemonious rejection of men of the appropriate caste but of dubious loyalty and character.

Quote G.S. Report to Patna Convention, March 1960:

"We should be careful not to depend on dubious elements. Our enthusiasm and eagerness to see the Party grow should not lead us to welcome people in our fold without due discrimination. In the pursuit of importance and numbers, the weightage that needs to be given to quality should not be overlooked.

"People are tired of the old faces and the old voices. They look for new thinking. It will be good policy for us to attach more value to new and unknown people, preferably the young, whom we can infuse with our message and enlist among our ~~members~~ workers It is less harmful to have no unit in a particular place or district than to have a bad one."

CA in Swargya

- (3) 25 nP. members unimportant. The building up of a cadre of workers through and round whom the organisation can be built up at grassroots level and the message of the Party carried to the doors or homes of the electorate.

Lord Coleraine (son of Bonar Law): "What does win elections is the existence of a relatively small core of party supporters who are themselves convinced, and are therefore able to convince others, of the rightness of their cause."

(Lib. News. 31.3.62)

- (4) Maintenance of a high level of discipline within the Party and the ejection of those who place their personal interest above loyalty to and discipline of the party.
- (5) Broadbased social basis
- (6) Collection of funds from thousands of middle class and small people instead of relying on a few big contributions from those with means.
- (7) Finally, the creation in the mind of the electorate of the image of the Party as one that is made up of good men and true animated by a desire to serve the people - an image created over a period of months and years by the good sense of the policies, the energy, intelligence and unity with which those policies are advocated, supported by the discipline and enthusiastic determination of party members.

I am convinced that if these six components are missing, no beautiful Manifesto, no amount of money, no amount of local influence, no caste support and no cleverness can enlist the support of the electorate in 1967.

The choice before all parties including my own is whether or not they are prepared to abide by these standards.

/not only I know there are clever people in the country who think that in a backward country conniving at indiscipline, disloyalty, mishandling of funds and turning a blind eye to caste and communal considerations help in building a party. I flatly reject this/as morally unworthy but also as pragmatically unwise.

Management Consultant by vocation.

Efficient and clean management is as essential to the growth of a Party as to the growth of a business. Conniving at badmashi in politics is not only anti-social like black-marketing and evasion of tax in business, but, in the long run, will not pay.

Party means to end if my country fights wrong

Prof. Tawney's answer to Ramsay MacDonald: "Your Party has the right to demand any service of you but not to dishonour you."