

சென்னை ஜில்லா
சுதந்திரக் கட்சி



MADRAS DISTRICT
SWATANTRA PARTY

Phone : 20583

Tel. Add. "SWATANTRA"

26, Halls Road, Egmore,

MADRAS-600008.

13th July 1974.

Mr. Piloo Mody, M.P.,
President,
All India Swatantra Party,
2, Lodi Estate,
New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

Kindly refer to my letters of the 25th and 27th June 1974 in reply to your letter of the 22nd June and circular letter dated 16th June 1974.

After considering in detail and as deeply as I can the contents of your circular letter I wish to state plainly what I feel about the whole matter. I would request you not to feel hurt if I am not in a position to accept your advice and canvass for the dissolution of the Swatantra party as a condition precedent to our joining the proposed new party, which you would like to call as a national alternative.

I have been an ordinary worker of the party since its inception and I have been fortunate to be near the place where our great leader and elder statesman lived for such a long time. Though I am not one of those who can claim to have had his confidence I had met him more often than most of the leaders and workers of the party at least from 1963 to the end of 1972 when he breathed his last. I was as much attached to Rajaji as I am attached to the principles of the Swatantra party even now. This background may help you to understand my views better than anything else.

I was never interested in any office in the party nor was I anxious to become a member of any legislature. Hence there is no question of my becoming a member of the new party for becoming an office holder or elected representative of the people. As far as I am concerned if it is possible to indulge in some public service or activity without losing either our self-respect or our good name I may continue to do what I can. Otherwise I shall confine myself to my business and religious activities and say good bye to

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politics, which has become really very dirty in our country.

Coming to your circular letter dated 16th June proper you must excuse me if the following few paragraphs cause you any pain. But I will not write anything intentionally to hurt your feelings.

In the first place I am afraid your letter is mainly based on a large amount of wishful thinking compounded with some amount of confusion of thought. As far as your analysis of the present political and economic situation is concerned there will be no room for much difference. But when it comes to the conclusion that you have reached you will find most of the workers of our party will not agree with you; especially the vast majority of workers in Tamilnadu will have no other alternative but to disagree with your conclusion and steps you propose to take to meet the situation.

In our country today both in the economic and political field there are in reality only two groupings. Broadly speaking we can call the first group as socialists of all sorts and the second group as protagonists of citizens' freedom and initiative or anti-socialists as far as methods and programme for achieving social justice is concerned. But it is not possible in Indian conditions to build a two party system purely on the basis of this broad division because in the socialistic camp there are bound to be 3 or 4 groupings like Moscow communists, Peking communists, Indira socialists and other socialists. But as far as the opposite group is concerned it should be possible with strenuous effort and sustained action spread over years to bring all those wedded to citizens' liberties and initiative to come together under one banner. In this grouping the Swatantra party alone provides the best and necessary leadership though in the long run this group should consist of the present Congress(0) and Jan Sangh apart from other small groups scattered here and there who are likely to accept the Swatantra party's political philosophy and programme.

As stated above the socialist camp will consist of minimum of 4 parties and the anti-socialists camp now consists of minimum ~~of three national parties like Swatantra, Jan Sangh and Congress(0)~~ of three national parties like Swatantra, Jan Sangh and Congress(0) even though Congress (0) is also mouthing socialist slogans at present and is supposed to be wedded to democratic socialism.

While in theory two party system is good and attractive, it is impossible of achievement in the near future. Hence to begin with a pragmatic approach, the Swatantra party and its leaders should try to consolidate the forces opposed to the various socialist groups and not try to bring into existence a hot-potch grouping consisting of socialists like SSP and the pseudo-socialists, industrialists and traders like Mr. Bijou Patnaik. The grouping should be based on some principle and not mere expediency because past experience has clearly demonstrated that the combinations based on expediency not only did not last but caused positive damage to the country's interests and political morality. Hence

I would ~~suggest~~ request you, in a mood of frustration not to rope in all sorts of groups with conflicting ideological orientation but try to consolidate all those sections of the people whether intellectuals, politicians or ordinary citizens who firmly believe that the State is the servant of the people and that the people are not meant to be exploited by the state and that real democracy is one where the individual citizen will be having enough freedom and initiative and equal opportunity to develop himself and make his just contribution to the welfare of the society without exploiting his fellow-citizens. We are for real social justice and ^{not} for the socialism which puts all sorts of fetters on the citizen and hampers his growth. Any compromise with any socialistic group will mean only an encroachment on our basic principles.

Hence I suggest that the first step in the formation of a two party system should be the consolidation of all the forces opposed to the statism and the other socialist dogmas. At the same time in the interests of parliamentary system if it is possible you may encourage the socialist groups to join and become a single party if they can but in my humble opinion that will not happen in the foreseeable future. There are bound to be minimum of two or three socialist parties of different hues in this country.

If you agree with my above analysis and if you are convinced that the consolidation and joining together of the conservatives,

liberals and the anti-socialists should be the first step in the attempt to bring down the number of parties and try to offer clear-cut alternatives to the electorates than you should for the time being forget hobnobbing with the SSP and Mr. Patnaik at least. Perhaps Mr. Charan Singh's BKD, Brijilal Modhok and Mr. Ram Subash Singh are nearer to us than Mr. Raj Narain, SSP or Mr. Patnaik. If the above three gentlemen are prepared to join us we can welcome them with open arms and show them every consideration they deserve.

Since Congress(0) and Jan Sangh are not prepared for any merger it will be necessary to accommodate their views, if you want a consolidation of the anti-socialist forces and since the Congress (0) has already indicated its willingness to consider a federal type of arrangement we should also consider this suggestion sympathetically and persuade Jan Sangh also to accept the federal set up proposed by us and the Congress (0). To attempt for anything ^{more} less will not be wise and will not succeed also under the present conditions.

Your argument regarding difficulties over the working of federal set up are more valid in the case of the proposed merger. The failure of the merger of the SSP factions with the now almost extinct PSP is a warning to us that we should avoid hasty unprincipled mergers advocated by you and some friends now. If avowed socialists like PSP and the former SSP led by stalwarts like Mr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Mr. Fernandez and others found it impossible to work together how can you imagine that people like you, Mr. Raj Narain and Mr. Patnaik could get on well in the new party as one homogenous team? The new party even if it is born will be seriously threatened with infant mortality. Already there are reports in responsible newspapers like Hindustan Times, the Hindu and the Indian Express that Mr. Bijou Patnaik is seriously attempting to get closer to Mrs. Nandini Satpathi and Indira Gandhi. The Indian Express has already editorially commented on the behaviour of Mr. Bijou Patnaik. Mr. Patnaik is sure to desert you and your friends if Indira Congress offers him the Chief Ministership of Orissa. Whatever you may think, I have absolutely no confidence in the man, his integrity or probity. His past stares you in your face and you cannot afford to wink at it.

It is possible that you have more information about certain individuals and situations than what we in Tamilnadu do not have but I believe that Tamilnadu as a whole is endowed with more common sense which usually leads to a right decision.

Your theory now is that political parties should not have any ideology and since the ruling congress is a coalition of all sorts of people the alternative also should consist of all sorts of people representing the entire political spectrum of India if the opposition is to be effective. But you forget the fundamental fact that the ruling congress is held together because of the unlimited power at its disposal and its command of huge financial resources. Without common ideals and motivations it will be almost impossible for a motley crowd of disgruntled and frustrated elements to function as a united national alternative. You yourself have stated in the last paragraph of your circular dated 16th June on page 2 "We must fight to gain predominance of our principles and policies. That is why, to keep Swatantra philosophy alive and enhancing its propaganda, the Swatantra members should remain together and join the new party en masse to flood it with our ideas". The SSP also is openly proclaiming to do the same. You would have seen in the newspapers the proceedings of the SSP convention held recently in U.P and Bihar. So it is evident that some of the parties will be joining the new party with mental reservations and mutual-mistrust and bickerings will commence with the birth of the ~~new~~ new party. I am amazed to find an experienced politician like you advocating working of parliamentary democracy by political parties without any ideology but only based on programmes. Perhaps such a thing is possible in the United States where the difference between the Democrats and Republicans is almost nil

but your proposition is out of bounds in UK and will not be accepted where the difference between the conservatives and labour are so fundamentally based on certain political philosophies only. Can you show a single country where democracy is functioning on the basis of your novel suggestions? I am also surprised that of all people a gentleman of your standing has chosen to advocate not only "persuasion and reasoning" but also "threatening, cajoling and even brow-beating" to achieve the object you have in view. I do not want to make any further comment on this idea of yours but to all of us who have been brought up in Indian tradition and culture and especially to

to those of us who value the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi and who have in a however limited manner and with all our feelings try to follow Rajaji's footsteps the very idea is extremely repugnant.

I am aware that Indian politics has descended to even lower level but I have every reason to expect that leaders of our party will not give up persuasion and reasoning and resort to threatening and brow-beating for the sake of gathering political strength.

Lastly I firmly believe that honest, self-less, dedicated service to the party and country will produce good results not in the short run but in the long run only. We have to forget about political gains or personal aggrandisement and at least some of the workers and leaders should be prepared to sacrifice their comforts, business and even family for the sake of building up the party and serving the country in truly patriotic way. I do not see any other short-cut to success.

I entirely agree with you that the ruling congress party should be displaced from power as soon as possible but unfortunately your present attempt will not succeed and is bound to fail much sooner than any of your opponents can imagine. The only other alternative is mass non-violent action as is now being tried in Bihar. If this movement succeeds in Bihar perhaps the exit of Indira Congress from power will come about sooner than what we can hope for at present.

I do not agree with all that Mr. Jayaprakash Narain says about party-less democracy and a few other things for bringing about a change in the political field and for pushing out Indira congress from power but I do not see any other worthwhile alternative than what Mr. Jayaprakash is preaching and practising at present in Bihar.

I once again request you to ponder over the whole thing more calmly and take a final decision. Let me make it clear that I will not be a party to the dissolution of the Swatantra party and I will not become a member of the new party contemplated by you.

The resolution of the Tamilnadu Swatantra party offers you a reasonable alternative but this will take at least a few years to succeed and become a real alternative to the ruling congress.

I seek your permission to send a copy of this letter to both

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Mr.G.K.Sunderam and Dr.M.Santosham. I also wish to inform you that I propose sending out a circular letter to all the General Council members and a few important members of our party on this burning problem.

Thanking you and with my personal regards,

Yours truly,


(V.S.Srikumar)

P.S: I am also in receipt of your letter dated 23th June 1974 for which I think no separate reply is necessary.

c.c: Mr.M.R.Masani, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Rd., Bombay.