



Swatantra Party

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26th June, 1974.

My dear Masani,

I was not able to meet you while you were in Bangalore during the first week of this month. I attended the General Council meeting of the Swatantra Party in Delhi on 9th and 10th of this month. Among the 8 opposition parties which have decided to merge into a new party, Swatantra Party alone is an All India Party. If Congress (o) joins this group it will be very good. Under the present circumstances, it is too much to expect favourable response from the Jansangh.

While I was travelling to Delhi from Bangalore, Nijalingappa and Ramakrishna Hegde were travelling in the Plane in which I was going to Delhi. Nijalingappa and I were sitting together and we had a long chat. Nijalingappa wants to have a single opposition party with a National Alternative and he is prepared to merge Congress (o) with the new set up. But how far the other leaders in his party are willing to do so is yet to be seen. Even after 27 years if we are not able to place before the country a strong opposition party with a National Alternative, democracy may not continue for long.

I read the statement of policy of the proposed new party supplied to us in Delhi. Immediately I asked Madhu Mehta to send a copy to you. I hope you have received a copy of the statement of policy of the proposed new opposition political party. To me, it looks very fair and it could be a proper National Alternative provided the paragraphs relating to agricultural policy, food policy and minorities are redrafted to the satisfaction of the farming community and others. Piloo has asked me to send a note on agricultural policy.

We will be holding the 7th national executive committee meeting of the F.F.I. at Vellore, Tamil Nadu on the 13th and 14th of July and I regret I will have to miss the Seminar arranged by the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bangalore on the 12th of July. My son Ravindranath will be attending as a delegate. At the Executive Committee meeting of the F.F.I. in Vellore, we will be able to prepare a note on agricultural and food policy and send it to Piloo.

If Jayaprakash Narayan is willing to lead a strong united opposition party as an alternative to the ruling congress, I am sure all classes and masses will wholeheartedly support. In that event the congress (o) also may join the new movement. Jayaprakash Narayan himself does not place a clear cut picture of the future set up. Since you are a good friend of his, you may do well to advise Jayaprakash Narayan to take up the leadership on the lines said above and set up a strong National Alternative in which case, we will still be able to do something and save the country from utter economic chaos and anarchy.

The F.F.I. is strengthening itself steadily with several strong state level farmers' Associations affiliating to the F.F.I. I am devoting much of my time and energy to strengthen the F.F.I. After I returned from Jaipur attending the 6th National Executive Committee meeting of the F.F.I. I was laid up for three weeks with virus flu and again there was a relapse of flu in a mild form. I am now getting better. I would like to know your opinion on matters mentioned in my letter. Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,

N. K. GANAPATHI