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A CONFIDENTIAL NOTE ON SVD

Inasmuch as, despite initial indifference of the various Opposition groups and parties to the question, it has --- in view of Congress Government's blatantly partisan and undemocratic behaviour, its attempt to crush political opposition by the state power it possesses, and mounting inefficiency, corruption and nepotism in the administration --- been decided to explore the possibilities of forming an SVD. BKD would like to make the following suggestions in regard to its programme or aims and objects, the problem of financial resources, the question of leadership and the code of conduct of the various units or constituents of the SVD Government if and when it comes into being.

AIMS & OBJECTS

(1) An honest and efficient administration where public servants and others entrusted with responsibility in regard to public affairs will not only be clean and impartial but will also apply the necessary energy and labour to the performance of their duty --- an administration in which there will be no delay, no waste and no corruption.

While SVD would like public servants to be impartially selected, intensively trained, adequately paid and fully trusted, it will insist on strict maintenance of discipline in their ranks. Otherwise, they will not be able to effectively serve the people --- the purpose for which alone they are recruited and maintained. So far as payment of dearness allowance is concerned, SVD believes in higher rates for those at the lowest rungs, with the rates falling as the salary rises, and none at all for those drawing salaries above a certain limit.

(2) Establishment of a special wing in the police or, if necessary, a separate organization by itself, of persons specially trained in the laws and procedures relating to functioning of companies, financial institutions and semi-governmental bodies which will deal with the 'respectable' offenders in the world of trade, commerce, business and finance. The ordinary police is usually trained or experienced only in the ways of the ordinary criminal --- the thief, the murderer and the dacoit --- but is unable to cope with these miscreants who are guilty of cheating, forgery, embezzlement, tax-evasion, hoarding, black-marketing, smuggling and manipulation of shares, [illegible] and foreign exchange on a large scale.

(3) Enactment of a measure on the lines of the U.P. Public[illegible]'s Inquiries Ordinance, 1967, of the days of the SVD Government, to deal with the misconduct of political workers occupying high places in the administration or public life of the State.

(4) Amendment of the law relating to municipal administration and gaon panchayats, particularly in regard to election and removal of members and the Chairman or the gaonpati. Our municipalities are reeking with intrigue and corruption today and panchayats have proved a curse, rather than a blessing to the villages.

(5) A radical change in the existing judicial system in the country taken from the British. While retaining the advantage of the present system in regard to full opportunity being given to both the parties to a legal proceeding, to establish their case, SVD proposes to overhaul the procedural law and, where necessary, the substantive law also in order that justice is really done and the guilty punished, and that delay, perjury, corruption and undue expenditure are avoided.

(6) SVD will give first priority to development of agriculture. Without it there is no stopping of food imports which have drained the country not only of its wealth but also its self-respect, and without it there can be no economic development of the country or eradication of its poverty.

(12) As the example of Japan has shown, deficiency in quality and quantity of natural resources of a country can, to a great degree, be overcome by the quality of the working population. SVD, therefore, will do all that lies in its power to improve the quality of our people.

It will vigorously work for a change in such of the values, attitudes and motivations of our people as stand in the way of economic development. No individual or nation on earth can possibly have something for nothing. We will have to pay the costs for economic development in the form of hard work, integrity in the widest sense of the term, and taxes whose burden, of course, will be equitably distributed.

SVD would also inculcate in the people a spirit of Swadeshi, that is, a spirit of reliance on our own mental and physical resources. A grim determination to stand on our own feet and to solve our national problems in accordance with our genius and economic circumstances, alone, will entitle us to the respect of the world.

(13) SVD will take steps to see that the hold of caste on our society is loosened as early as possible. Caste based on birth, has resulted in a social system which has divided our people into water-tight compartments — divided them from one another into high and low, through endless centuries, and exposed us to conquests which have left us weak and poor. In the ultimate analysis this system is largely responsible for partition of the country. It also lies at the root of the problem of untouchability and scheduled or backward classes. It runs counter to the conception of labour and creates an environment where manual work is considered degrading.

(14) SVD will pay special attention to uplift of Harijans, or, scheduled castes to whom justice has been denied for long. Particular care will be taken to see that legal and constitutional provisions in regard to protection and furtherance of their interests are scrupulously followed. So far as their economic welfare is concerned, while all cultivable land that is found surplus as a result of imposition of ceilings on large holdings or surplus to the needs of the village community or the forest and other needs of the state, may be allotted to Harijans, it must not be forgotten that the ultimate solution of their economic problem (as also of millions of other landless or unemployed and under-employed persons) will depend, by and large, on development of non-agricultural resources of the country — which will, in its turn, depend on increased agricultural production and a change in our mental attitudes or a transformation of our national psychology.

(15) Disease and ill-health not only result in loss of working time but also sap energy and induce lethargy as also lower receptivity to new ideas. SVD will, therefore, work for more medical facilities, whether Ayurvedic, Unani, allopathic, homoeopathic or naturopathic, and for an increase in their efficiency.

Preventive measures will also have to be taken along with curative ones. Sanitary conditions, particularly, in villages need looking after : usually there are no latrines even for women, whether public or private. SVD will strive to remove or abolish this stain on our society at the earliest.

SVD will also take steps, particularly in the towns to ensure that pure articles of food and medicines are available and that adulteration is put down with a strong hand.

(16) As our financial resources are limited, SVD will concentrate on enforcing universal compulsory primary education organizing technical education so as to produce the necessary personnel for technical jobs, and making provision for scientific research. Higher as also secondary education — atleast for some time to come — shall be left to private initiative and effort, with minimum public assistance needed to induce and supplement such efforts and, exceptwhere the needs of a region or a district vitally demand it, institutions for higher education shall not be allowed to multiply.

Social controls will be applied on all privately-run educational institutionalwith a view to improving the quality of education and service conditions of teachers.

Land revenue on howsoever small an area, cannot be given up or abolished so long as we are not able to develop our non-agricultural resources or sources of non-agricultural income and employment. It is only in that event that land revenue can be substituted by agricultural income-tax. Exemption of a limited area from payment of land revenue or its substitution by income-tax today will create untold problems of corruption, legal and administrative difficulties, further fragmentation of holdings which are already small, etc., etc. Nor, as everyone of us knows, are the peasantry themselves very anxious about the exemption. On the other hand, land revenue has to be increased in such regions of the State where, owing to lack of settlement operations, it has not been increased for the last more than sixty years or so, and the rate of revenue payable today is comparatively very low.

LEADERSHIP

It is for all the members of the Opposition to choose a leader or the man who will head the Government. The choice can be made either by election or consultation amongst representatives of the various parties and groups. So far as Charan Singh Ji is concerned, he has already declared in a general meeting of the Opposition members held on August 26 that he was not a candidate at all. BKD Legislature Party has not yet been consulted in this regard, but it might go to the extent of keeping away from the election or selection of the leader altogether.

CODE OF CONDUCT

But it is not the programme or the personality of the leader alone that matters : There are other questions equally vital to the functioning of government that call for an answer. Shri Charan Singh had set out these questions in a letter which I addressed to members of the then SVD on Jan.25,1968. One cannot do better than reproduce them here in full :

(1) Shall we or shall we not punish those public servants who are found guilty of indiscipline, refusal to work and attempts to paralyse the administration (despite the handsome emoluments that they receive)? If we do not — and public servants being the main agency of Government — Government can render no service to the people.

(2) Has a political party, particularly one which is a partner in Government, the right of staging a Satyagrah or organising a mass movement against the Government? Should any of the ruling parties launch an agitation for seizure of private buildings or lands of private persons even if they have managed to keep large areas in fraud of the law or public lands belonging to the village community or the Forest Department? Such a course will bring democracy into contempt. The only right and proper course is to have the necessary law enacted by the Legislature and get it executed through the executive and the judiciary.

(3) Shall we or shall we not prosecute persons who may contravene the law though it be as a result of an agitation mounted by one or more of the constituent units of the SVD?

Law as it stands today or as it may stand tomorrow, is the basis of all civilized society and if disrespect for law is allowed to spread, there will be anarchy.

An allied question is whether prosecutions that may already be pending in a law-court, shall be withdrawn on political considerations? If executive discretion takes the place of judicial decisions, there will be end of democracy.

(4) Should a political party or should it not be entitled to advocate 'gherao' and arrest of Ministers, whether of the Union or the State Govt.?

Whereas under a Government that knew its job and meant sincerely to carry it out, p erhaps, the proportion of tax to income in Uttar Pradesh should have been far greater,(if not just the reverse as it is today) till the State had passed out of the woods or, at least, crossed the misery line :

Statement showing per capita taxation in each State as percentage of per capita State income in 1964-65.

State	Per capita taxation	Per capita income at current prices	Per capita taxation as percentage of per capita income Col.2 x 100 / Col.3
1	2	3	4
	Rs.	Rs.	
1. Andhra Pradesh ..	17.58	402.55	4.37
2. Assam " ..	14.75	394.00	3.74
3. Bihar " ..	9.76	279.37	3.49
4. Gujrat ..	21.00	424.00	4.95
5. Jammu & kashmir ..	8.51	-	-
6. Kerala ..	19.00	369.58	5.16
7. Madhya Pradesh ..	13.30	408.20	3.26
8. Madras ..	20.81	439.40	4.74
9. Maharashtra ..	26.13	524.00	4.99
10. Mysore ..	16.69	NA	NA
11. Orissa ..	8.97*	304.45*	2.95*
12. Punjab (including Haryana) ..	23.13	586.00	3.95
13. Rajasthan ..	14.70	394.00	3.73
14. Uttar Pradesh ..	10.24	365.12	2.80
15. West Bengal ..	21.14	388.00	5.45
ALL INDIA ..	-	421.50	-

*These figures relate to the year 1963-64 as the State income figures for the year 1964-65 are not available.

NA Not available.

Yet, this Government has been engaged in throwing away resources that already exist and is not prepared to effect economy by retrenchment largely because of the fear of political consequences. While in view of the increasing population, not only alternative but additional resources are necessary.

(10) Shall the constituent units of the SVD behave as representatives exclusively of their own parties — their workers and supporters — and not as representatives of entire people? I must be forgiven if I say that the larger p art of their energy and attention has been, till date, devoted to agitations and destructive criticism, to demands of students, organized labour and Government employees, to furtherance of their particular ideology and projection of the image of their respective parties mostly at the cost of other partners in Government. If this continues, then history will record that we were not true to our charge.

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For, only a month ago, one of the constituents of SVD passed a resolution for 'gherao' and arrest of the Prime Minister and her production before a so-called p eople's court, and two of the Central Ministers had to cancel their programme of visiting Allahabad because its Youth Wing of the town had passed a resolution of 'gheracing' them if they did.

(5) Shall we or shall we not allow the Police to enter the University campus if decisions like the arrest of the Prime Minister are sought to be executed, or other crimes like burning of post-offices etc. are apprehended, within its precincts, and the Vice-Chancellor is obviously unable or unwilling to prevent them ?

Perhaps, not all the constituent units of the SVD are clear in their minds about the answer.

(6) Should ruling parties behave as if responsibility for peace and good governance of the State was not theirs ?

If democracy has to succeed, even the opposition parties, while making statements or taking up a posture, have to keep in mind that they may have — and the p eople may rightly expect them — to act up to the same if and when they come into power. Only very recently, one of them has off-hand "condemned the police firings and lathi charges in Modinagar, Azangarh, Varanasi, Rae Bareli and other places in the State and demanded a judicial inquiry into the police excesses at these places." There was no question of excesses and, where necessary, inquiries had already been ordered. It is forgotten that the police or the bureaucracy is not an enemy but Government's own instrument of service of the people. No Government in the world has done without the police or the bureaucracy nor will it ever be able to do. How the police or the bureaucracy will conduct itself, depends upon our own efficiency or what we expect of it. Constant or unbridled criticism will only serve to demoralise it.

(7) Shall the Chief Minister or shall he not have the right to reshuffle the portfolios or to drop a Minister if he thinks that public interest so demands?

'True, in a Coalition, discretion of a Chief Minister to choose his colleagues may not be so unfettered as in a one-party Government. But if his right to drop a Minister or to allocate and reallocate the portfolios, is made dependent on the consent of the Minister concerned or that of somebody else, then the authority of the Chief Minister will be greatly compromised and he cannot be held responsible for good conduct of government.

(8) Has any of the constituent units of the SVD or a leader thereof the right to publicly criticise the Chief Minister or to publicly demand his resignation?

If yes, then it will make the Government ridiculous. The obvious way out is to ask the Chief Minister in private to voluntarily resign or to bring up a vote of no-confidence against him in a general meeting of the SVD or before such other forum as rules may provide .

(9) Shall the Government or shall it not raise and husband its financial resources in order that people may have more and better food, raiment, shelter, medical and educational facilities, transport and communications, electricity etc.?

The answer can only be in the affirmative. Today, excepting two States, we are the poorest and, at the same time, taking per capita incomes as the base, the lowest-taxed in the country (vide Statement on the next page).

Text-books will lay more stress on patriotism, hard work, courage, integrity, performance of one's duty and other moral values than has been done hitherto. For, without these qualities, no human being can make a good citizen and without good citizens no country can make real progress.

SVD proposes to take all necessary steps for preparation of Hindi text-books on scientific, technical and other subjects for higher studies as soon as possible.

Short of making it second official language, in which event its teaching will have to be made compulsory for every student, SVD stands for giving all encouragement to Urdu.

(17) SVD holds that while we will, and should, make all efforts to increase our agricultural and industrial production, we shall also have to so plan that our population does not increase at a rate which negates or largely negates these efforts. Work in the sphere of economic production and population control shall have to go on simultaneously, both being equally important.

Control on population growth being in the interest of the nation, SVD will so frame a law or devise a programme that all classes and sections of our people make an equal contribution. The control or the contraceptive is confined almost wholly to the intelligentsia today.

(18) The use of alcohol and other intoxicants leads to crime, poverty, breaking up of homes, decline of health and erosion of moral values. SVD, therefore, believes in gradual prohibition of the use of all intoxicants by education and persuasion as also by law.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Additional financial resources which the State requires with a view to make up the lag in economic development as compared with other States and to meet the requirements of yearly increases in our population, can be found only in two or three ways, viz., by better husbanding of our existing resources or economising on our present expenditure and by rationalizing the present tax structure or raising fresh taxes. So far as the first source is concerned, SVD will have to plug all the loop-holes in the existing taxation laws so that nobody is able to avoid the payment of the tax which may be rightfully due from him and the collection machinery will have to be made more efficient so that nobody is able to evade the payment of tax which has been assessed upon him. Also, arrears of loans and taxes that have piled up, will be cleared with expedition.

Such schemes as will not give us short-term benefits or are expected to come to fruition after a long time only, will have to be given up. The administrative machinery will have to be rationalized : Which term includes not only integration of some of the departments or sections of departments but also abolition of some of them altogether. Hands in large numbers will have to be retrenched. We can serve our people better for the retrenchment. Barring the police, at least, one-fourth of the present personnel are surplus to our real needs and are sitting almost idle. Fifty per cent of the jobs in future can be reserved for the retrenched personnel who will be eligible till they attain the age of 45 years.

It is only after a climate of economy, integrity and efficiency in all branches of administration has been created that SVD Government can or should resort to the second alternative, viz., of raising fresh taxation if any avenues are still open, and increasing existing rates of taxation.

There should be no question of throwing away an existing resource under the plea that an alternative resource is available, for, as we are all aware, all the existing resources together are insufficient for our purpose, and we need additional resources if we are to make progress or even to maintain the present deplorable standards of life.

Increase in land area not being possible and employment of more labour in agriculture not being in the interest of our people individually or as a whole, the limited area of the land that Nature has given to us, has to be made to yield more and more produce (per acre) — which means, in other words, that the effect of the low land-man ratio in the country which is further declining every year owing to massive increases in our population, has to be offset or cancelled by investment of more and more capital and by unceasing improvement in farming technique brought about as a result of ever-advancing scientific knowledge.

SVD will, therefore, try to reach as much capital, whether in the form of resource facilities (such as improved seeds, fertilizers and means of irrigation) or otherwise, and as much scientific knowledge as may be available with Government, to the largest number of the peasantry, and otherwise bend all its energies towards development of agriculture.

It will prefer small irrigation works to large ones. Further, it will take steps to see that all available organic manure is utilized or made to contribute towards increased agricultural production. Alternative fuel in the villages will have to be provided in order that cattle-dung is released from the hearths or chooliahs for use in the fields. In any case, improvements in our existing chooliahs will have to be effected so that whatever fuel is used, is economised. Today, a large part of the energy that is generated, goes waste.

Finally, in this connection, SVD proposes to reach electric energy to every village so that, with its aid, agricultural production is increased, more and more farmers and other persons take to non-agricultural occupation either as a whole-time or subsidiary employment, and modern amenities become available to the villagers also.

(7) SVD will ensure that common lands belonging to the village community are administered efficiently and in accordance with law. Schemes for consolidation of holdings and conservation of soil will also be pursued with vigour

(8) The upper limit to the area of land that anyone man or worker may possess in our country, where land is the limiting factor, should be governed by his physical capacity, that is, by the fact that, if he holds more, the land will not be gainfully utilized, or, which is the same thing, it will not produce more in the total. Inasmuch as experiments indicate that, under conditions of bullock or non-mechanised farming, the upper limit is reached in the neighbourhood of 27.5 acres, SVD will heavily tax the area that an adult person (including the spouse and minor children) holds or owns in excess of this limit.

(9) If it becomes inevitable, a levy will be imposed on big cultivators in consideration of a remunerative price. This is necessary in order that non-agriculturist sections of our society may continue to have assurance of food — the first necessity of man. The levy will be realized directly by Government or by the F. C.I., but not through the traders. At the same time, in order that traders may not fleece the consumer and thus hold the general community to ransom, Government will take all anti-hoarding and anti-profiteering measures that may be open to it under the Constitution — and enforce them with all severity.

(10) In the field of industry, SVD will pay more attention to the establishment of small industries and will also encourage handicrafts or village industries which will give more production and provide more employment, per unit of capital investment. The aim of SVD will be that more and more persons are employed in the non-agricultural sector. This aim is complimentary to the SVD aim in the field of agriculture that more and more food and raw materials are produced with fewer and still fewer persons on the soil.

SVD is opposed to the introduction of automation and use of electro-computors except, perhaps, in special cases where speed and accuracy are essential and are unobtainable otherwise.

(11) While SVD will not allow industrial workers to be ill treated and exploited, it will impress upon them that if productivity has to rise, a change in their attitude towards work is necessary.