

To, Shri George Lobo

Dear friend,

You will remember that at the meeting held on 30th. June 1966 at Little Flower of Jesus High Sch., Princess Street, Bombay-2, a contact committee composed of the undersigned was unanimously elected with the view that it should contact all the existing parties in order to form a united body to carry on Freedom Struggle.

We are enclosing herein a brief report of our efforts to achieve this object.

When Dr. Rama Hegde returned to India after a long absence of ten years he noticed striking changes in the Goan political sphere. Being himself a victim of the Portuguese in the Goan Freedom Struggle as long ago as in 1946, many acquaintances, friends, colleagues and sympathisers paid him courtesey visits. From the informal talks with all these, he realised that there were nearly a dozen political parties in the Goan freedom struggle with one and same objective but working without any coordination. He also formed the impression that there was a unanimous desire for uniting the efforts to achieve this noble objective. Many felt and most of his colleagues also thought that he could give a lead in this matter and in the interests of the cause he accepted the responsibility of taking such an initiative.

As a preliminary step he made an attempt to analyse the situation as he saw it and worked out tentatively a programme of which the main points were the following:-

- I---Due to the existence of several political parties there was lack of solidarity and the strength of all was undermined.
- II---Hence there was an absolute necessity for an United front.
- III---That for the time being all freedomworkers disregarding any party affiliation, should meet for an "open-hearted" discussion.
- IV---That a body representing all the parties should be created.
- V---That this body should take upon itself the task of chalking out a programme.
- VI---That this body should be dissolved upon the achievement of its

VI---That this body should be dissolved when the objective of freedom was achieved.

VII---That all the parties in pursuance of their different ideologies and aims, should be allowed to act freely, once freedom was achieved.

(Note:--The original draft of the above mentioned points, is in Marathi put in black and white by Shri Mahadeo Shastri Joshi of Poona at his instance.)

To fulfil the obligation which earnestly he had taken upon himself he immediately set out to contact the interested parties and he tried to assess their opinions. His first step took the shape of a meeting convened by him on the 30th. of June 1956 at Little Flower of Jesus High Sch., Princess Street, Bombay -2.

The first letter sent was in following terms:-

Dr. Rama Hegde,
1, Rutton Manor,
Garden Road,
Bombay 1.
27-6-56.

To

Dear Sir,

I shall be obliged if you will kindly attend a private meeting of Goan political workers where matters of common interest will be discussed. The meeting is scheduled to be held on Saturday the 30th. June, 56. at 4:30 P.M. at Little Flower of Jesus High Sch. (above M/s. Beliram Bhat), Princess Street, Bombay -2.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

(Dr. Rama Hegde)

He thought it advisable to invite 31 persons who are connected with the Goan struggle for freedom; out of which the following 26 persons attended:—

Shri Vasant Borker, Eng. T.B. Cunha, Shri Waman Desai, Dr. Simon Fernandes, Dr. Rama Hegde, Shri J. Heredia, Shri C. Kakodkar, Shri J. V. Kamat, Shri N. B. Kamat, Eng. R. G. Kamat, Shri Shamrao Lad, Shri George Lobo, Shri Lambert Mascarenhas, Dr. U. M. Mascarenhas, Shri A. X. Mendes, Shri Luiz Mendes, Shri Gerald Pereira, Shri R. da Gama Pinto, Prof. Lucio Rodrigues, Shri V. L. Shingbal, Shri S. B. D'Silva, Shri J. M. D'Souza, Smt. Laura D'Souza, Dr. Menino D'Souza, Shri J. Sukhtanker, and Shri George Vaz.

He laid before the meeting the undermentioned five proposals. No. 4 was favoured by most of the gentlemen gathered.

I---Dr. Hegde's programme.

II---That the Goa Action Committee should be enlarged. It should co-
ordinate the work of the parties either violent or non-violent.

III---That the National Congress(Goa) should be strengthened. In support of this suggestion he read out to the meeting a letter received from Shri J. J. Shukre in which it was stated that there could not be unity between violent and non-violent organisations and also between those helped by the Government and those that do not receive help from Government. So according to him the only thing possible was to strengthen National Congress (Goa).

IV---That there should be completely new body that would coordinate the work of all the organisations.

V---That he (Dr. Hegde) should enter Congress (as he had gone to the prison as its president) and then try to bring in others who are out of it.

After a frank exchange of opinions the meeting passed a resolution unanimously. We are reproducing the same for your kind perusal.

"So it was decided unanimously that a committee of three members Shri Kakodker, Eng. T. B. Cunha and Dr Hegde should be formed (if Shri Kakodker is not available then it should be of two remaining members) and that this committee after contacting all the organisations should prepare a plan of unity which then should be placed before the representatives of all the organisations for their final approval."

In pursuance of this resolution we wrote to Shri Parushottam Kakodker on the 2nd. July 1956, inviting him to join the Committee. Unfortunately Shri Kakodker in his reply dated 4th 1956 expressed his inability to join the Committee because he thought he needed more time to acquaint himself better with the present state of Goan movement.

As set out in the resolution passed by the meeting of 30-6-56 we, on behalf of the Contact Committee. requested the various political parties to help the Committee. With their valuable suggestions for devising a solution that would be both practicable and acceptable to all. Of the unity proposals received six aimed at coordination among the existing political parties, four contemplated the revitalising of the National Congress

(Goa) and two advocated an enlargement of the Goa Action Committee.

After weighing all possible cos and pros, the Committee sincerely felt that there were at least two major political parties which might come to some form of understanding with regard to the coordination of their

respective efforts to oust the foreigners from Goa. So in good faith and in the best interests of the movement, the Committee held joint talks with these two parties. During one of these talks it appeared that it had become necessary to obtain a certain amount of information from the existing political parties in order to ascertain the strength and genuineness of each party because it was contended that only genuines could form a coordinating committee.

At this meeting, Dr. Hegde made it clear that, although he accepted their decision to allow representation on the coordinating committee, only to "genuine" parties, he would not be willing to serve on a coordinating committee on which all the eleven originally invited parties should not be represented.

The Committee therefore, wrote the following letter to the various political parties to comply with the request embodied in the letter.

---OXO---

Dr. Rama Hegde,
1, Rutton Manor,
Garden Road, Bombay 1.
28th. July 1956.

The Secretary,
Bombay.

Sir,

In continuation with the Unity talks the Committee met the several political organisations to assess their opinions.

The Committee will be highly obliged if you could enlighten it in the following matters:-

- a) The year and month when your organisation was founded.
- b) Its present membership and during the last year, as well.
- c) Its work outside and inside since its inception.
- d) Whether it has its own constitution, if so a copy should be furnished to the Committee.

The Committee would like to add that the information supplied by you will not be rigidly judged and will be considered as most secret and confidential.

With regards,

For The Committee,
(Dr. (Rama Hegde)

~~to be taken into consideration to come to a decision.~~ ~~Because~~ of the joint meetings with the two major political parties, the committee suggested and revealed the names of the six political parties which it thought advisable and fit to be represented on a coordinating body. One of these parties readily accepted the suggestion of the committee and confirmed the same later in a letter to the committee. The other major political party however reserved its opinion as the stalwarts of the said party could not be consulted immediately due to their busy activities far away at the Indo-Goa border.

Subsequently the representatives of that party wrote to say that they could co-operate only with the National Congress (Goa)-Belgaum, as it was the only other genuine party.

To finalise the talks the Committee next issued a circular dated 22nd August '56 calling a meeting of all the twelve political parties to be held on the 25th August '56 at the Goa Hindu Association Hall, Bombay. (The Committee came to know of the existence of Daman Praja Parishad). The Committee however did not send the circular to one of the parties as the said party did not show any inclination to co-operate with the committee.

Just a couple of hours prior to the commencement of the meeting one of the major parties came with a suggestion that the meeting should be postponed if possible in the light of a telegram received by the office of the said party from the border. The telegram which was read out to the meeting later read:-

O SE BELGAUM 24 22 LAD ARTIST NEW BHATWADI BOMBAY 4
 INFORM DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY LAWANDE SHAMRAO CN BORDER
 RETURNING MONDAY TRY POSTPONE MEETING IF POSSIBLE-
 SABURAO.

The meeting debated at length the advisability of postponing the meeting based upon the absence of a single political party. The house expressed its reluctance towards such postponement. But, as the representative of the party which moved the postponement motion agreed to convey and advise his party not to be very intransigent regarding the test for genuineness it had laid down, it was decided to postpone the meeting with the hope that the said party might come to reasonable understanding.

that the committee heard from the the party. The letter was disheartening. The letter clearly showed that this party thought that there was not a single party which could stand the test suggested by that party, apart from the National Congress (Goa).

The Committee obviously could not wait any longer. It notified on the 4th Sept.'56 of the resumption of the postponed meeting on the 5th Sept.'56 at the Goa Hindu Association Hall, Bombay-4.

This meeting discussed the problem and gave it a definite shape, the sense of which was to be conveyed to the Goa Action Committee and all other parties including Dm̄ Praja Parishad existence of which, Committee came to know at the last moment.

Sense of the House:-

1-Considering the background and the circumstances in which the Goa Action Committee was set up and also considering the work done by its constituent units on its behalf and as such the prestige it has this meeting is of the opinion that the Goa Action Committee should be enlarged by taking in the representatives of other Goan Political Parties, Daman Parishad and Diu Parishad.

2-Considering the influence Dr. Rama Hegde and Shri Purushottama Kakkar hold on Goan masses and their experience in Goan politics, to give both of them representation on the said Committee.

As required by this decision we wrote to remaining 11 political parties and to the Goa Action Committee conveying the sense of the House and requesting it to take necessary steps.

Bombay, 3th October 1956

Eng. T. B. CUNHA

T. B. Cunha

Dr. RAMA HEGDE

Rama Hegde
