

Swatantra Newsletter

ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE SWATANTRA PARTY, 143 MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD, BOMBAY 1 • TELEPHONE NO: 252076

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Why the Newsletter?

The idea behind the Swatantra Newsletter is to ensure that our active members, organisers, regional and other Party Offices are kept informed of the Party's activities throughout the country.

A perusal of the contents of this Newsletter will give an idea of the happy growth of the Party from the "grassroots" upwards. This augurs well for the future of our Party's organisation.

Taluka Samities and District Committees of the Party are developing in many parts of India. Men of integrity and honesty of purpose are taking charge of these units. In keeping with our Party's principles, units at the lowest levels are encouraged to take the initiative and thus ensure the democratic structure of the Party.

At the same time, it is very necessary that the various units should develop an integrated outlook and a sense of coordination. The Newsletter will, it is hoped, serve to help such a development. It will serve as a link between the various units of the Party by keeping each other informed of the work done and the progress registered by our Party in the various States. It will emphasise the national structure of the Party and thereby remove any sense of isolation that might inhibit our active members and organisers in the initial stages of building the Party organisation in any particular area.

The Hyderabad meetings of the Central Organising Committee and General Council.

The Central Organising Committee and General Council of the Party met at Hyderabad from the 8th to the 10th of December 1959.

The Minutes of those meetings have already been circulated. The General Secretary has in the course of his "Letter No.1" underlined the important decisions taken at the two meetings at Hyderabad. That letter has been sent to all State Offices and to members of the General Council and Central Organising Committee. The text of the important resolution on National Defence adopted by the General Council is to be found at the end of this Newsletter. (Annexure A)

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The next meeting of the Central Organising Committee will be held at Bangalore on February 5, 6 and 7.

Central Office

Following the decision of the Central Organising Committee to locate the headquarters of the Swatantra Party at Bombay, the Central Office has moved to Bombay from Madras and is located at 143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay-1. (Telephone No. 252076)

National Convention

It has been decided to accept the invitation of the Bihar State Swatantra Party to hold the Party's next National Convention at Patna. Consequently the Convention of the Swatantra Party will be held at Patna on Saturday and Sunday, 19th and 20th March, 1960. The General Council will meet on March 18.

The General Secretary visited Patna on December 29 and 30 to consult the Bihar Swatantra Party's Working Committee on various details concerning the preparations for the Convention.

News from the State Parties:

Andhra:

Organisational work is proceeding apace in Andhra. The Party has now Convenors in 15 of the 20 districts. Meanwhile, 4 district committees, 3 town committees and several constituency committees have already been constituted. The Chairman of the Andhra State Swatantra Party, Shri G.V. Subbiah, extensively toured the Krishna District and formed constituency committees in the area.

The Andhra State Swatantra Party has two offices. While the headquarters of the State Party is located at Vijayawada, a branch office has been set up in Hyderabad. Andhra reports a brisk membership-enrolment drive.

Assam:

Several professors and teachers are among those taking keen interest in the Party's activity in Shillong, where we have a district branch. Our Party has been concentrating on organising the tribal people and it has been reported that the response has been encouraging. The Swatantra Party's Principles have a special ring for the tribal folk who are very much attached to the small plots of land they own and easily understand and welcome our Party's

principles and policy regarding land. They also very much appreciate our accent on freedom and self-employment. The Shillong branch of the Party has printed the 21 Principles of the Party in Khasi, the local language.

Bihar.

The Bihar Rajya Swatantra Party has launched an ambitious enrolment campaign. Setting before itself a target of one lakh members by 31st January 1960, the Party has already 47,000 members on its rolls. A meeting of the Working Committee held on the 2nd November 1959 resolved to depute its members to tour the different areas of Bihar to accelerate the drive.

An important development that is bound to affect Bihar politics is the decision of the Bihar Jan Congress to merge with the Swatantra Party. The merger strengthens our Party in Bihar and poses a serious challenge to the ruling Congress Party which is riven by factionalism.

The original 11-member Working Committee of the Bihar Rajya Swatantra Party has been enlarged to 16 to include important members of the erstwhile Jan Congress. Shri Ram Binod Singh, M.L.A., was unanimously nominated as Vice-President and Shri Janki Nandan Singh, M.L.C. one of the General Secretaries. Shri Ambika Prasad Singh M.L.A., Shri Rup Lal M.L.A. and Shri Ram Rakshya Upadhyaya were also coopted as members of the Working Committee. Shri M.R. Masani, General Secretary of the Party announced this important development during his visit to Patna on 29th and 30th December. Mr. Masani also addressed a public meeting organised by the Party in Bihar on "Why Swatantra?" During his press conference at Patna, Mr. Masani said that the Swatantra Party was the last hope for the survival of democracy in our country.

Meanwhile, there is intense organisational activity. The President of the Bihar Party, Shri Kamakhya Narain Sinha, addressed workers' meetings in the Hazaribagh and Palamau districts on the 8th and 17th of November respectively. The Hazaribagh meeting resolved to enrol 35,000 members, while the meeting at Palamau undertook to enrol 10,000 members before the scheduled date. The President also visited the Shahabad and Gaya districts where district committees were formed. District-wise meetings of prominent members of Patna, Shahabad, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Champaran, Saran and Purnea were held at the State Office in Patna between 19th and 24th November 1959.

The Bihar Rajya Swatantra Party will play host to the second Convention of the All-India Party scheduled to be held at Patna. In this connection, a Reception Committee has been formed with Shri Jaleshwar Prasad, the Bihar Party's Vice-President, as Convenor.

Bombay

The Bombay Office of the Party has been active, especially during the last few weeks. The unit is concentrating on ward-wise activity. Ward offices have

been set up wherever premises were available. The emphasis of the Bombay Unit has been on "service". In the last newsletter mention was made of the Swatantra Service Centre and various committees that had been formed to help citizens. Recently a Citizens' Committee has been sponsored by our Party to protest and campaign against a proposal by the municipalised Bombay Electric Supply and Tramway Undertaking to increase Bus and Tram Fares. The proposed fare increase would cause considerable hardship to the poor and middle class who use these means of transport.

The nucleus of a Volunteer Organisation is being established.

During the recent strike of the BEST workers, the Citizens Committee of our Party organised a "free lift" service to members of the Public. This gesture was widely appreciated. The Bombay Office published an interesting pamphlet entitled "Who Is Outdated?" in which an interesting comparison is drawn between the principles of the Swatantra Party and those of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany. The comparison reveals the remarkable identity of thinking predominating the two manifestoes, especially when one realises that the latter is a party wedded to socialism. It is an effective refutation of Mr. Nehru's characterisation of our Party as being in the 19th century. A booklet entitled "Towards Doom?" being the first in a series to be regularly published, has also been brought out. This booklet records Rajaji's speeches and statements analysing the validity of Mr. Nehru's assertion that if India followed the Swatantra Party the country would be doomed, and shows that, prejudices and predilections apart, it has no basis in fact.

Gujarat

Heavy rains and devastating floods during October and the first half of November hampered the Party's organisational work in the region. The Party has, however, now embarked on intense organisational activity. The President of the Gujarat Regional Committee, Shri Bhailalbai Patel, toured Baroda, Broach and Surat districts. As a result of their efforts and the enthusiastic work put in by active workers in these areas, district offices have been opened at Kaira, Baroda and Surat. A district committee has also been formed at Rajkot with Shri V.G. Hathi, Advocate, as Convenor. Cutch, hitherto considered a Congress stronghold, gave an enthusiastic welcome to the setting up of a District Committee with Shri B.N. Anantani, Bar-at-Law, as Convenor. Broach has acquired a brand new jeep, being a gift from Shri Jagdishbhai Amin, a leading citizen. Taluka Samities were formed in Nadiad, Anand, Karzan, Sankheda, Padra, Savli, Naswadi, Chikhli, Bardoli, Valad, Navsari, Gandevi and in almost all the talukas in Surat District. In connection with the Party's organisational work a meeting of Party workers was held on 27th December at Ahmedabad under the Presidentship of Shri Bhailalbai Patel.

During the latter half of December Shri Bhailalbai toured the Sabarkantha District with Shri Dadubhai Amin M.L.A.

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The people in this district are agitated over the proposed "Hathimathi Project" which would affect the holy "Bhuvaneshwar Temple" and "Bhrugukund". Many devotees have been on fast to protest against the Government's move to construct the project, which would involve removal of the holy shrines. Intervening in the matter, Shri Bhailalbhai Patel persuaded those on fast to give it up and promised to take the matter up with government authorities. However, even to this day many ladies are continuing the fast until Government gives up the project.

Numerous public meetings were held throughout the State. Shri K.M. Munshi addressed a 5,000 strong public meeting at Nadiad in November as also a meeting of party workers at Anand. Similarly public meetings were held at Dahegaon, Daskroi, Chaloda and in Ahmedabad City.

The President of the Bahadurpur Taluka Congress Committee in Baroda District, Shri Chunilal Amin, has resigned from the Congress and joined our Party.

Maharashtra:

The Poona District Committee of the Party played host to a number of distinguished party functionaries. Shri Seshagiri Rao, a former Deputy Auditor General of India (Retired) and now a member of the Executive of the Mysore branch of the Party visited Poona and held discussions with Shri K.R. Koshti who has been appointed as our Party's Convenor for the Maharashtra region. Raja Kalyansingh of Bhinai also visited Poona and met our Party workers there.

Shri M.R. Masani, the General Secretary, was at Poona on the 16th and 17th December 1959. On the 16th, he addressed members of the Poona City General Library, an institution 113 years old, on the subject "Future of Democracy in India". On the 17th, Shri Masani addressed the first public meeting organised by the Party with Dr. N.B. Parulekar, Editor, 'Sakal' in the Chair. This was largely attended by a cross-section of citizens including a number of students. The subject was "Why Swatantra?". There was on the spot enrolment of members and Mr. and Mrs. S.V. Venugopal announced a donation of Rs.1,000/- to the Party on the completion of Mr. Masani's speech.

Madras:

November was a month of intense activity for the Madras State Swatantra Party. Five District Conventions were held and at every Convention there was tremendous enthusiasm. The first District Convention was held at Tanjore. This Convention, which was attended by well over 5,000 delegates and visitors, was inaugurated by Shri M.R. Masani and Shri N.G. Ranga presided. Rajaji, who attended the Convention, exhorted the citizens of Tanjore to join the Swatantra Party. He said that it was the sacred duty of citizens to join the Party and fight the "Adharma" of the Government. A public meeting held later in the evening was attended by over a lakh of persons.

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Kumbakonam, a taluk in Tanjore district, presented Rajaji with a purse of Rs. 10,000/- at a public meeting held on 20th November 1959. Trichinopoly, where the next district Convention was held on 21st November, was attended by over 5,000 delegates and visitors. The Convention was presided over by Prof. N.G. Ranga and was inaugurated by Shri B. Ramachandra Reddy. A public meeting held the same evening was attended by over 80,000 people. Tirunelveli was the venue of the next District Convention held on 22nd November 1959. Attended by over 6,000 delegates and visitors, the Convention was inaugurated by Shri K.S. Venkatakrishna Reddiar, the Madras State Swatantra Party President. Rajaji, Prof. N.G. Ranga and Shri B. Ramachandra Reddy addressed the delegates. A public meeting held the same evening and attended by over a lakh of people was so impressive that a local daily reported: "Palayankottai grounds where the Swatantra Party meeting was held, had never accommodated such a large gathering as yesterday. It exhibited that the district has warmly welcomed the new Party and its leader Rajaji."

The Ramnad District Convention, was the next to be held on the 23rd November 1959 at Rajapalayam. Over 6,000 delegates participated in this Convention. A unique event that took place at Rajapalayam was a spontaneous reception given by agricultural labour of both sexes to Rajaji. Labourers working in the fields left their work to give a thundering ovation to Rajaji. When Rajaji appealed to them to join the Swatantra Party, he was repeatedly cheered signifying their enthusiastic support to the Party. A public meeting held the same evening drew over 15,000 people a large majority of whom were women.

The fifth District Convention took place at Coimbatore. This Convention was inaugurated by Shri P.T. Rajan, a leader of the former Justice Party. Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, Rajaji and other leaders of the Madras State Swatantra Party participated in the deliberations. In his Presidential address Prof. Ruthnaswamy debunked the myth that was being deliberately generated in the country that socialism was more modern than the Swatantra Party's creed. He pointed out that in India society had progressed from the age of Village Communities and the Joint Family to the age of the Individual Proprietor and the Individual family. Prof. Ruthnaswamy drew the attention of the delegates to Mr. Nehru's assertion that Cooperative Farming had the support of the Linlithgow Commission. What the Commission spoke of, was only Cooperative Credit, Purchase and Sales and better Living Societies. He commended to the audience the advice of a contemporary Prime Minister who said: "Verify your references" and hoped that Prime Minister Nehru would do likewise.

In December, Rajaji's birthday was celebrated throughout Tanilnad and especially in Madras City where five big meetings were held and top-ranking leaders of the Swatantra Party and other parties participated.

The Membership campaign is in full swing and reports have been coming into the State Office of the progress in every district.

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Orissa:

District Committees have been constituted at Balasore, Ganjam, Cuttack and Mayurbanj.

The Balasore District Committee has formed a sub-committee to collect funds for organising the Party in the area. Shri B.P. Mohapatra has been appointed Secretary of this Committee. At Ganjam, the District Committee is headed by Shri M. Mohapatra ex-M.L.A. and former President of the District Congress Committee of Berhampur. Mr. M. Panigrahi, Advocate, is its Vice-President and Shri Satyanarayan Padhi, Advocate, Secretary. In addition, a Town Committee has also been formed. An intensive membership drive has been launched in this district with encouraging results.

At Cuttack, a meeting was convened in the Town Hall by Shri G. Jena, the regional Secretary on 22-11-1959 with Mr. H. Kanungo in the Chair, Shri Krishna Chandra Misra, Advocate was unanimously chosen Secretary of Cuttack District Committee. Enrolment of members is proceeding briskly.

The Mayurbanj District Committee is headed by Shri Rahasbehari Das with Shri P.C. Das as Secretary. Mayurbanj reports good response from the rural population. Shri Harihar Das M.L.A. has resigned from the Congress and joined the Swatantra Party.

The Orissa Swatantra Party is optimistic about its future. Although handicapped by a press completely controlled by the Ganatantra Parishad-Congress United Front, it believes that, as the Swatantra Party's organisation penetrates into the rural areas, it will be able to rally the people.

Punjab:

November was a month of intense organisational activity for the Punjab State branch of the Swatantra Party. Extensive tours were undertaken by leaders of the Punjab Party to spread the message of the Party and to consolidate the goodwill created for it at the time of the State Convention of the Party held at Patiala on the 25th October 1959.

The Punjab Party reports that, although it started its activities rather late, the response has been very encouraging and it is expected that, especially after the failure of the ruling party to deliver the goods and its involvement in a number of questionable acts, the broadbased principles and casteless creed of the Swatantra Party will be readily welcome among the people. Rajaji's slogan "Protect Farm and Family" has evoked good response from the peasantry in general in this region. Resolutions passed at the State Convention condemning the proposed Cooperative Farming and State Trading have appealed to the people both in the urban and rural areas.

On 17th November the Swatantra Party organised a meeting at Jullundur attended by Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke M.P., Raja Kalyan Singh and Raja Maheshindra Singh M.L.A.,

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Choudhury Karam Singh was appointed as the District Convenor for the Party in Jullundur.

Raja Maheshindra Singh, who is organising the Patiala Division comprising 5 districts, undertook an extensive tour of the Sangrur district. He visited as many as 80 villages and addressed meetings at Sunam, Malerkotla, Lehragagga and Chhajli. Ad hoc Committees were formed at all these places and enrolment forms distributed to the Convenors. A district office has been opened at Saungrur with Brigadier Pritam Singh as Convenor.

Two largely attended public meetings were held at Ambala City by the Party. The meetings were held to facilitate the formation of a District Committee.

A big rural conference was held at Riya in Amritsar District. A little before the conference, Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman M.P. toured as many as 200 villages to publicise the Conference which was held on 28th November 1959 under the presidentship of Shri Dahyabhai Patel M.P. The Conference was inaugurated by Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke M.P. It was a demonstration, if there be need for one, of the growing popularity of the Swatantra Party in the Punjab.

At Chandigarh, the Capital, an ad hoc committee has been constituted with Shri Justice Gurnam Singh, retired Judge of the Punjab High Court, as Chairman and Shri Ved Prakash Kukana as Secretary.

Rajasthan:

An ad hoc committee has been formed for Rajasthan with Raja Kalyan Singh of Bhilai as Chairman and Shri Ved Pal Tyagi as Secretary. For organisational purposes Rajasthan has been divided into six regions with a Convenor for each viz. Jaipur, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kotah and Bikaner. It was further decided at this meeting that the six Convenors and the Chairman of the ad hoc Committee should draft a scheme for the setting up of a permanent organisation in Rajasthan.

A feature of our Party's popularity has been the enrolment of sitting members of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly as members of the Swatantra Party.

West Bengal:

The West Bengal Unit of the Swatantra Party reports steady progress in its membership drive. Building up of Party Organisation is also proceeding apace. The Party has been able to enrol intelligent members who have already started taking keen interest in the Party's activities.

A Unit of the Party has been formed in Barrackpore in the Titaghar area. A feature of our Party's functioning in this area is the fact that a large number of mill and

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factory workers have been showing considerable interest in our Party's activities. Two more district units have been formed in Cooch-Behar and Jalpaiguri. In Calcutta City a unit of the Party has been formed in Burra Bazar. Traders and small businessmen are evincing keen interest in the Party and are actively participating in our activities.

Our Party reports good response from students and youth. They have been organising study circles in various parts of Calcutta City in which both teachers and students are participating.

The West Bengal Unit of our Party organised well-attended meetings in Calcutta and the districts of West Bengal on the issue of Chinese aggression. The analysis of the speakers on the Chinese threat to India's frontiers was very much appreciated. College teachers, lawyers and public men addressed these gatherings.

Mr. M.R. Masani, General Secretary, visited Calcutta early December. He held two meetings of members, sympathisers and supporters of the West Bengal Unit of our Party. The first meeting which was held at Alipore was attended by barristers, physicians, college and school teachers, businessmen and traders, writers and industrialists. They asked a number of questions to which Mr. Masani gave convincing answers. The other meeting was with the members of the Committee of the Party in West Bengal.

Our Party in West Bengal has been doing very good work in the matter of cooperating with the Bharat Seva-shram Sangh for relief work in the various flood-affected areas of the State. The self-less work of our Party workers was widely appreciated.

A Request:

Regional Units of the Party are requested to send in reports of their activities by the 5th of every month. This would greatly facilitate the expeditious publication of our Newsletter every month.

Suggestions Invited:

Suggestions are invited from members, active workers and regional offices on how to make the Newsletter more effective and useful.

(FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY)

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ANNEXTURE 'A'

"A draft resolution on National Defence recommended by the Central Organising Committee was placed before the meeting and after discussion, it was adopted nem con. The text of the resolution is:

"The General Council of the Swatantra Party welcomes the manner in which Parliament has given expression to the strong feeling in the country that a firm and vigilant policy should be followed in dealing with the Chinese Communist aggression against India.

"When our territorial integrity has been violated and our soil occupied, the concept of non-alignment has little meaning. Our policy needs to be reviewed and brought into closer relations with the realities of the international situation.

"The General Council is of the opinion that the measures for ensuring the country's security and defence should include the following:

- (1) The settlement of outstanding issues with Pakistan and serious consideration of the offer made by Pakistan for the joint defence of the sub-continent;
- (2) Consultations with the countries of South and South-east Asia with a view to concerting measures for the security of the region;
- (3) Vigilance against infiltration and fifth-column activities; and
- (4) The abandonment by Government of ideological adventures in domestic policy."

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