

An Expression of Disappointment

Despite the serious efforts of the Swatantra Party, the National Democratic Bloc or Front as envisaged by the AICC Resolution of June 28 and which the General Council of the Swatantra Party enthusiastically welcomed at its meeting in Madras on July 21 has been sinking in the quicksand of differences within the Congress(O) leadership. The National Executive heard a report from Party President Masani when it met in New Delhi on 8th November on the efforts he had made for opposition unity. The Swatantra President said he had written letters to the President of the Congress(O), the Jan Sangh and the BKD drawing their attention to the need for an early decision both in regard to a bloc in Parliament and for an electoral alliance outside. The Executive expressed its disappointment with the absence of a positive response from the Congress(O) to their own Resolution of June 28.

The time factor is very important particularly with the possibility of a dissolution of Parliament next February. The members of the Executive felt the Party could not wait indefinitely and so, even while asking the President to pursue his efforts, it decided that the Party should accelerate the pace of nominations of prospective candidates particularly in respect of parliamentary constituencies carried by us in the 1967 elections. The following Resolution expressing the

Party's opposition to any SVD kind of arrangement but re-affirming our willingness to go ahead on the basis of the AICC Resolution of June 28 was adopted unanimously:

"Having received a report from the President of the Party on his discussions and correspondence with the Presidents of the Congress(O), Jan Sangh and B.K.D., the National Executive recorded its disappointment at the absence of any progress and the failure to bring into existence a bloc of nationalist and democratic parties and groups in Parliament in time for the session commencing on 9th November, 1970.

While approving the initiative taken by the Party's President, the Executive felt that the ball was squarely in the court of the Congress(O), which, having adopted its AICC Resolution of June 28, was failing to co-operate in its implementation.

The Executive reiterated the Party's well-known opposition to the resort to heterogeneous, hotch-potch and opportunistic combinations and once again reaffirmed its willingness to cooperate with all those parties and groups which were prepared to go ahead on the basis of the AICC Resolution of June 28 as a provisional programme of agreed action.

The need for such coming together becomes all the more urgent in view of the possibility of an early dissolution of Parliament."

Swatantra Support for T. N. Singh Ministry

Both the Central Parliamentary Board and the National Executive at their meetings on November 7 and 8, spent a considerable amount of time on UP matters. The Party had by then already given unqualified support to the Ministry formed by Mr. T. N. Singh. The question that exercised members of the Board and the Executive was whether the Party should enter the Ministry or support it from outside. A complicating factor was the fact that the present SVD Government in UP adopted a programme that had been settled as far back as January 1970 when the present partners of the SVD had unsuccessfully tried to form a Ministry. The item in that programme which was contrary to the Swatantra Party's policy was the following:

"For land redistribution, the ceiling on Land Holdings Act should be so amended as to bring about equality in land ownership and make more land available for the landless. For this purpose a Committee will be appointed which will draft the necessary amendments in the Act within three months (of the formation of the Government.)

After discussing the pros and cons, in the course of which both the Board and the Executive invited the President of the UP unit, the leader of the Party's Group in the State Assembly, the three other MLAs and the General Secretary to give their opinion, the Executive decided that a member of the Swatantra Party should join the SVD Government on the basis

of the Party not having signed the SVD Programme and not proposing to be committed to it whenever it was at variance with the Party's principles and policies, it being made publicly clear that the Party would not accept the item in the SVD programme providing for the lowering of ceilings on land. In the event of such legislation for lowering ceilings being introduced, the Swatantra member in the Ministry would leave the Government to enable the Party to oppose it on the floor of the Assembly.

Since the Party was not represented at the time the programme of the SVD was formulated in January 1970

and as it was necessary that the Party's viewpoint in respect of various policies should be adequately represented, the National Executive nominated Shri Munshi Lal, the Leader of the Party's Group in the State Assembly, and Shri B. P. Singh, MLA, to represent the Party in the Coordinating or Advisory Committee of the SVD and requested the leader of the SVD to invite these two representatives to its meetings.

Since then, on the invitation of the Chief Minister, Mr. Munshi Lal, Leader of the Party's Group in the State Assembly has joined the Government as a Minister of State.

The Campaign has Begun

The Swatantra Party has begun nominating its parliamentary candidates for the next General Elections.

The Central Parliamentary Board on November 7, renominated the following MPs on the recommendation of their State/Regional Parliamentary Boards.

Andhra

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|---------------|------------------------|
| Srikakulam | — Prof N. G. Ranga |
| Kurnool | — Mr. Y. G. Gowd |
| Parvathipuram | — Mr. V. Narasimha Rao |

Mysore

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|-------------|------------------------|
| Chitradurga | — Mr. J. Mohammed Imam |
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|-------------|-------------------------|
| Udipi | — Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu |
| Raichur | — Raja Venkatappa Naik |
| Maharashtra | |
| Chandrapur | — Mr. K. M. Koushik |

The following recommendation in respect of a prospective Parliamentary candidate (not a sitting M.P.) made by the State Parliamentary Board of Himachal Pradesh Unit of the Party was approved:

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|--------|---------------------|
| Chamba | — Mr. Budhi Prakash |
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Mr. Budhi Prakash who was our candidate in the last General Elections from the same constituency, lost that contest by a margin of less than 3,000 votes.

Dakala By-election

The by-election to the Punjab Assembly from the Dakala Assembly Constituency has been caused by the assassination of our General Secretary, Sardar Basant Singh. Normally therefore our Party's candidate should have contested that seat with the support of other democratic opposition parties. And the Party had a good candidate who could have succeeded.

But there was a request that we should not put up our own candidate but support the Yuvraj of Patiala who would stand as an Independent. The Central Parliamentary Board consulted the President and General Secretary of the State Unit. The State Unit agreed with the assessment of the Board that if we put up a candidate and the Yuvraj also stood, the result would

be the defeat of both opposition candidates. In order to avoid such an eventuality the Punjab Unit agreed not to press their claim to the seat. The Board decided that we should support the independent candidature of Yuvraj Amarinder Singh and the President of the Party should make this public after ensuring that the Yuvraj would not stand on the symbol of any Party and the Congress(O) and Jana Sangh would not put up their candidates.

On November 11, Mr. Masani announced the Party's decision not to contest the seat but support Yuvraj Amarinder Singh. This is one more instance of a sacrifice by our Party of its interests for the sake of opposition unity.

Sixth National Convention

Bombay will be the venue of the Sixth National Convention on January 30 and 31, 1971, at the Shanmukhananda Hall.

The following programme has been settled:

Thursday, 28th January, 1971

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| 10 a.m. | .. Central Parliamentary Board |
| 3 p.m. | .. National Executive |

Friday, 29th January, 1971

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|---------|--------------------------------|
| 10 a.m. | .. National Executive |
| 4 p.m. | .. Meeting of the Women's Wing |

Saturday, 30th January, 1971

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| 10 a.m. | .. General Council |
| 3 p.m. | .. National Convention — Inaugural Session (Open to Press) |

Sunday, 31st January, 1971

10 a.m. . . . National Convention — Delegates Session (closed to Press)
3 p.m. . . . National Convention — Political Session (Open to Press)

Notices of Resolutions

The Executive decided that notices of resolutions that any delegate desired to move should reach the National Headquarters not later than Friday, January 15, 1971.

A sub-Committee to screen and sort out the resolutions was set up consisting of the following:

Mr. M. R. Masani
Prof. N. G. Ranga
Mr. N. Dandekar
Dr. R. C. Cooper

Notices of amendments to Party Constitution

Notices of amendments to the Constitution should reach the National Headquarters on or before Thursday, December 31, 1970.

Quota of Delegates

The number of delegates from States was settled with one delegate for 10 Workers/Life Workers/Life Members subject to a maximum of 200 per State/Region. States which did not have organised Party Units were also allotted delegates' quota.

Meanwhile the Bombay Regional Unit of the Party has begun preparing for the Convention in right earnest. A Convention Committee with Mr. Lalchand Hirachand as Chairman has been set up. A Convention Organising Committee to look after the physical arrangements of the Convention has begun functioning. It has set up sub-Committees to look after accommodation, catering, volunteers, transport, publicity and press relations and of course finances. Free accommodation is being made available to delegates who desire such a facility in dormitories and halls.

Workers Meetings are being convened in various parts of the city to mobilise support and ensure maximum cooperation from the rank and file.

While conveying the programme of the Convention, the General Secretary has called upon State/Regional Units to begin straightaway the nomination of delegates. The need to ensure adequate representation for Women and Youth in the delegation has also been stressed by the General Secretary.

We are out of the Mysore SVD

The Central Parliamentary Board applauded the following resolution of the Mysore State Convention which was adopted on October 18 with the unanimous concurrence of the Party's M.L.A.s:

"In view of recent developments and the changed situation this Convention is of the view that the Party's members in the State Assembly should from now on function as a distinct group in the name of

the Swatantra Party. This Convention would welcome like-minded Independent M.L.A.s and the members of other Groups joining the Swatantra Party as associate members."

The Mysore S.V.D. formed soon after the last General Elections has been overtaken by events and had become an anachronism. With this decision the Party's legislature in Mysore can now, without inhibition, project the Party's policies on the floor of the Assembly.

Shivappa Expelled

Mr. Nugehalli Shivappa, who was elected to the Lok Sabha as a candidate of the Swatantra Party from the Hassan Parliamentary Constituency in Mysore, defied the Party's policy and whip in supporting the Constitution (24th) Amendment Bill, 1970, regarding Privy Purses. For this act of indiscipline, he was suspended by the Leader of the Party's Group Prof. Ranga from membership of the Swatantra Group in Parliament.

Mr. Shivappa who was then served by the General

Secretary of the Party with a notice asking him to show cause why disciplinary action including expulsion from the Party should not be taken against him and asked to tender his explanation on or before September 26, did not care to reply.

In the light of this and on the recommendation of the Central Parliamentary Board, the National Executive on November 8, expelled Mr. Shivappa from membership of the Party for gross indiscipline and disloyalty to the Party.

Parliamentary Matters

The Central Parliamentary Board gave guidance to the Party's Group in Parliament on the attitude to be taken by it on the following issues that were likely to come up during the current session:

No-Confidence Motion: On the ground that No-Confidence Motions had become empty rituals at the start of every session of Parliament and were actually counter-productive, the Central Parliamentary Board advised the Party's Group in Parliament not to rise in support of such a motion. However, at the time of voting, the Party's M.P.s may vote in support of the Motion.

Preventive Detention Act for West Bengal: In the light of the deplorable law and order situation in Bengal and the need to curb the violent activities of Naxalites and other anti-social elements, the Central Parliamentary Board called upon the Party's Group to support as a special case the Government's move for a Preventive Detention Act in Bengal. The Board reiterated the Party's call for banning the Communist Parties as the really effective way to restore law and order in Bengal. The Board felt that it would have

been better if Government had brought in a specific measure to curb Naxalite activity. At the same time, the Board made it clear that the Party would not support the enactment of a Preventive Detention Act for the whole country.

Impeachment of President: The Party's Group in Parliament was advised not to support any move to impeach the President.

Powers of Governors: The attitude the Party's Group should take in regard to Bills tabled by Dr. Ram Subhag Singh and the D.M.K. was then considered. The Board was not in favour of any amendments to the Constitution in this regard. While holding the view that prescribing statutory limits delineating the powers of Governors was not desirable, the Board was of the opinion that what was needed was the establishment of codes or conventions or Instruments of Instructions on the role of the Governor on the lines recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission, the Governors' Conference and the Conference of Presiding Officers, that the Assembly alone should decide whether a Chief Minister enjoyed the confidence of the House concerned.

Political Resolutions

(The following Resolutions were unanimously adopted by the National Executive on November 8)

Attorney General's Opinion on UP Crisis

The National Executive views with grave concern the new doctrine propounded by the Attorney-General Mr. Niren De, in his Opinion to the Governor of the UP Mr. B. Gopala Reddy, last September and accepted and acted upon by the Governor, the Prime Minister and finally the President himself by which, as revealed by the Governor on September 29, "the Chief Minister of a coalition government cannot be treated at par with the Chief Minister of a single party majority Government in the matter of removal of Ministers or re-constitution of Council of Ministers which involves a fundamental change in the complexion of the Government."

The Executive notes that there is no warrant or foundation for this doctrine which is being sought to be grafted on the Constitution to suit the convenience of the ruling Congress Party. This very doctrine was propounded in January 1970 by Mr. Jyoti Basu and was given short shrift by the Bengal Chief Minister,

Mr. Ajoy Mukherjee, and rejected by public opinion at large.

In view of the fact that the Attorney General's Opinion has been partly published in the form of answers to the Governor's queries in the Governor's Report to the President, which is now a public document, and other extracts have appeared in the press, it is only fair and proper that the full text of the Opinion be made public so that the constitutional position may be clarified once and for all by informed discussion.

Corruption

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party pointedly draws the attention of the nation to the recent report by the Chief Vigilance Commissioner to the effect that controls and licences are responsible for corruption in the country.

The Central Government by its licence, permit, quota raj is primarily responsible for the seething corruption in our public life. The Swatantra Party in the

last decade since its inception is the only political party that has pin-pointed this malady and has exposed Government policies responsible for it. Due to such policies and the resulting economy of shortages, the bureaucratic and political world has become a happy hunting ground for the corrupt and dishonest.

The Swatantra Party reiterates its demand that controls and licences should be dismantled as soon as possible in view of the Vigilance Commissioner's Report, and that a non-political quasi-judicial commission should be established to administer and review the working of such minimum controls, licences etc., from time to time as are found absolutely necessary in the interests of national economy.

Unemployment

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party is deeply concerned about the growing unemployment in the country which has become a cause of continuing despair in every household as a result of the Central Government's ruinous economic and industrial policies. The colossal failure of the ruling party at the Centre has resulted in a fall in per capital real income during the five years ending in 1969-70, decline in industrial production, spread of absolute poverty levels in the rural areas from 52 per cent in 1960-61 to 70 per cent of the population in 1967-68, decline in exports and inflation resulting in massive unemployment.

In the face of such marked failures, the dangling of a carrot at the recent Patna AICC of a monthly income of Rs. 100 for every family by 1975 is a cruel hoax on the Indian citizen. The ruling party has absolutely no clue as to the capital needed to create these employment opportunities resulting in Rs. 100 per family income. The nation demands concrete policies instead of foolhardy and cheap slogans. The only way in which employment opportunities can be created is through increased production and priority to labour-intensive activities like road building, transport and housing. The myth of false promises should be exploded once for all and the Party therefore calls upon all democratic and nationalist parties to call this bluff and engage in a constructive and concerted action of sound fiscal, economic and industrial programme to help solve this chronic problem of massive unemployment.

Henderson-Brookes Report

The National Executive has noted the publication in a recent book by a foreign journalist of extensive extracts from the Henderson-Brookes Report on the reverses suffered by our Army in the war unleashed by Communist China in October 1962. It may be recalled that the then Defence Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, had told the Lok Sabha on September 2, 1963, while making a brief statement on the Report, that "by the very nature of the contents it would not be in the public interest to lay the report on the table of the House. Nor is it possible to attempt even an abridged or edited version of it, consistent with the consideration of security, that would not give an unbalanced or incomplete picture."

The publication of the extensive extracts has not only rendered this ground of secrecy untenable, it has at the same time rendered it imperative that in the national interest the people of India should be vouchsafed the information so long denied to them which is available to others.

Soviet Maps

The National Executive deplors the deliberate attempt being made by the Union Government to mislead the country by declaring, through its official spokesman on October 30, that the latest Russian maps shown to the Foreign Secretary are an improvement on the previous ones. Admittedly these very maps show Aksai Chin as indisputably Chinese territory while the rest of the territory claimed by China, which fortunately is under our occupation, is shown under as an unsettled boundary and under dispute. This deliberate differentiation shows that far from altering its pro-Chinese stand, the Soviet Government has finally rejected the Indian protest, though it has chosen to cover up the rejection with patently insincere assurances of goodwill. The Government of India is playing the Russian game by itself giving the false impression that Russian attitude has improved.

The Executive regrets to note that though the matter has been pursued since 1955, the Russian attitude has not changed while the Government of India has persistently misled the people.

The Executive calls upon the Government to publish as a White Paper the exchange of diplomatic communications with Russia on this subject so that we might know the truth.

Chanda Committee Report

The Central Parliamentary Board of the Party on November 7 condemned the rejection by the Government of the Chanda Committee Report recommending the conversion of A.I.R. and T. V. Services into autonomous Corporations.

A resolution adopted on the subject said:

"As far back as May 1966 the General Council of the Swatantra Party had welcomed the recommendation of the Chanda Committee that All India Radio and TV Services be placed in the hands of autonomous bodies and had requested Government to give effect to the recommendations as early as possible and in particular before the General Elections of 1967.

The Party's Election Manifesto for 1967 reiterated the Party's opposition to all attempts at the establishment of monopoly or official control over the various media of mass communication.

The Government of India's announcement last month, after prevaricating for over four years, of their rejection of the recommendation of the Chanda Committee to convert All India Radio into an autonomous corporation deserves to be condemned. The argument advanced by the Minister for Information & Broadcasting that Government had come to the conclusion that in the present political situation it would not be proper to convert All India Radio into a corporation is wholly untenable. So is their view that the Chanda

Committee had dealt with this important question "in a perfunctory manner".

While the Swatantra Party has for many years now publicly criticised the misuse of All India Radio, this medium of mass communication has since the Congress split and the ascendancy of the Government led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi been made on the one hand a forum for disseminating biased and lopsided information and on the other to provide a forum for the Ruling Congress and its friends to indulge in unabashed propaganda.

In the Party's view it is precisely because of the present political situation that it is essential to ensure the impartiality of AIR.

Control of AIR in the light of the transistor revolution particularly in the countryside is an advantage that should not be the monopoly of any single party or person, the desire for which the Party suspects is the real reason for the rejection of the Chanda Committee's recommendation.

The Central Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party denounces the decision of the Government and reiterates the demand which is almost unanimous that Radio and Television be freed from Government control and placed under the control of autonomous corporations. It calls upon the Party's members in Parliament to raise a discussion of this matter in both Houses during the forthcoming Session."

Organisational Matters

The National Executive discussed matters relating to Party organisation in several States.

Orissa

The President of the Orissa Unit of the Party and Chief Minister of that State, Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, reassured the Executive that he was confident that the Swatantra-led Government in Orissa would complete its full term of office. The Party had earned a good name in the State as the Government led by it had not only provided political stability but had also given a clean and honest administration.

Gujarat

Members of Parliament elected from constituencies in Gujarat and who are members of the National Executive reported on their impressions after visits to their constituencies. They found that the people generally resented the action of the defectors in betraying the electorate and joining a party whose candidates they had not favoured in the last General Elections. Though the MLAs may have defected, the

people assured the M.P.s of their continued support to the Swatantra Party.

Rajasthan

The defeat of the majority of the Party's candidates in the recent Municipal Elections in Rajasthan was attributed to the absence of leadership and lack of guidance to the Party's unit and members in that State. The President, Mr. Masani, has been requested to meet the President and leading office bearers of the State Unit and discuss with them ways and means of revitalising the Party. Meanwhile, elected members of Parliament from Rajasthan were asked to step up work in their own constituencies.

Punjab

The void created by the assassination of the General Secretary of the State Unit, Sardar Basant Singh, has been filled. The new General Secretary Sardar Bhupender Singh Mann who was invited to meet the Executive, took it into confidence and outlined various steps he was contemplating to develop the Party's organisation in the State.

Swatantra Youth

A Youth Wing of the Party at the National level has now come into existence. A Preparatory Convention of Swatantra Youth met in Bhubaneswar from October 23-25. Over 150 delegates from 12 States attended.

The Chief Minister of Orissa and President of the Orissa Unit, Shri R. N. Singh Deo inaugurated the Convention. Joint Secretaries of the Party Mr. Harihar Patel and Mr. Madhu Mehta, Mr. Rajballabh Misra Working President of the Orissa Unit, and Shri Ghasiram Majhi General Secretary of the State Unit helped guide the deliberations. Mr. K. P. Singh Deo, M.P., presided over the 3-day Convention.

Apart from Resolutions relating to the objectives of the Youth Wing and its organisation the Convention adopted the following resolutions on matters relating to problems of youth:

"This Convention resolves to impress upon the Government of India not to meddle with the educational system in the country and set up uniform standards for the entire country in the field of education."

"This Conference expresses its grave concern over the lethargic attitude of the Central Government in solving the growing unemployment problem and resolves to urge upon the Government of India to commence practical programmes for job oriented small scale industrial units and loan facilities for the self employed rather than dangling before the frustrated and impoverished masses of India utopian carrots like Rs. 100 per capita income within five years."

"To save the country and its infant democracy from totalitarian forces and communist subversion this convention urges upon all Youth organisations affiliated to various national political parties to force their leaders to shed their mental reservation in forming a broad based democratic alliance."

"This Conference resolves to request the Swatantra Party to fight both inside and outside parliament for reforms in the field of education and to ensure student discipline by enabling them to participate in a responsible manner in the administration of such institutions."

"This Conference urges upon the Central and various State Governments to provide the students with adequate facilities for extracurricular activities and allocate special funds for the same."

"This Conference resolves to urge upon the Central Government to take immediate and effective steps to maintain law and order in the country and prevent

shameful activities of vandalism like disfiguring and destroying the statues of our revered national leaders and appeals to all nationalist youth organisations to come together and chalk out a programme of frustrating the attempts of these mischief makers."

The Convention unanimously nominated the following delegates to form the National Steering Committee of Swatantra Youth.

1. Shri Tribikram Tripathy	<i>Convenor</i>
<i>Members</i>	
2. Shri K. P. Singh Deo	Orissa
3. Shri K. C. Kathirvelu	Tamilnadu
4. Shri Vinod Sharma	Delhi
5. Shri M. K. Khandekar	Maharashtra (Bombay region)
6. Shri D. S. L. Gowda	Mysore
7. Shri Joseph J. Karoor	Kerala
8. Shri Harishanker Vimal	Uttar Pradesh
9. Shri N. Mohammed Hussain	Pondicherry
10. Shri Sobhnath Chowbey	Bihar
11. Shri J. S. Patel	Gujarat

Joint Secretary Madhu Mehta observed in a report he submitted to the General Secretary: "The 150 young men whose ages ranged between 18 and 35, who got together at the preparatory convention displayed sufficient enthusiasm to launch the Youth Swatantra movement. The delegates from Delhi, Orissa, Mysore and Tamilnadu showed great enthusiasm and remarkable intelligence. This is not to cast a reflection on the other delegates. Without an exception everybody stood for a more dynamic and aggressive approach at the state, district and primary level, particularly against the growing menace of the Naxalites and the Communists. This is indeed a healthy sign, but this enthusiasm, this desire and craving to carry to the people fresh and new ideas, independent thinking and the ability to question slogans should be very actively encouraged by the party, and immediate steps in this direction must be taken."

Welcoming this development and promising the Youth Wing its full support, the Executive requested the President and General Secretary to take appropriate decisions in respect of recommendations made by the Convention.

The first such decision has already been taken by the President and the General Secretary in respect of the name of the Wing which will be known as "Swatantra Youth".

Women's Wing

On his visit to Bangalore last month to inaugurate the State Convention of the Mysore Unit, the President, Mr. Masani, also inaugurated their Women's Wing on

October 17. This function, reported Mr. Masani, was very impressive. Mr. Masani had while inaugurating the Mysore Unit's State Convention observed:

"Women have a very important role to play in our national life. I am always surprised at the obtuseness of our politicians who go chasing minorities who may have 5, 10 or 15 per cent of the vote in a particular State, but who forget that half the electorate consists of women whom they consistently neglect. I am glad that the Mysore Unit of the Party is set-

ting an example in putting their priorities right."

Commending the initiative taken by the Mysore Unit, the National Executive hoped that other State Units would follow the Mysore example. It is likely that a National Women's Wing of the Party may come into being on the eve of the National Convention.

Conventions Galore in Mysore

The Mysore Unit has been very active these last few months. It has had as many as three Conventions.

The first of these was the inauguration of the Women's Wing of the State Unit on 17th October in Bangalore. The second was that of the State Unit's Youth Wing that afternoon at Hassan and the third was the Third State Convention of the Mysore Unit held on the 18th in Bangalore. All three were inaugurated by the Party's President Mr. M. R. Masani.

The State Unit's Women's Wing was attended by over a hundred and fifty ladies. Mr. Lobo Prabhu, M.P. and Mr. Madhu Mehta and Dr. H. V. Hande, both Joint Secretaries were present. The President of the Women's Wing is Mrs. J. Mandanna.

The State Youth Wing was attended by over 300 young men. After inspecting the Youth rally held at Hassan the President requested Mr. Madhu Mehta and Dr. H. V. Hande to meet the young men and guide them. The function was presided over by the State President Mr. N. K. Ganapaiah.

The Third State Convention of the Mysore Unit of the Party was held in Bangalore. Mr. Lobo Prabhu, M.P., presided over the Convention. Mr. Madhu Mehta and Dr. H. V. Hande and Mr. Piloo Mody addressed the Convention which was attended by a large number of delegates.

While inaugurating the State Convention Mr. Masani expressed his happiness "because the work the Mysore State Party has been doing under the leadership of Mr. N. K. Ganapaiah, with the cooperation of Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan and many others, is one that extorts admiration from those of us at National Headquarters

who watch the performance and progress of our organisation in different States".

A summary of Mr. Masani's inaugural address is given at the end of this *Newsletter*.

Five resolutions were adopted.

The first of these called upon the Party's members in the State Assembly to withdraw from the S.V.D. and to function in the name of the Swatantra Party.

The second called for a crash programme to cultivate waste and barren land which if given adequate finance and enterprise could be reclaimed.

The third pointed out that the purpose of nationalising text books which was to bring down their price with the use of good paper, better types, timely release and uniform distribution had not only been a miserable failure but even the subject matter was of poor quality. The resolution demanded a revision of this policy by allowing private publishers to resume publication of text books.

The fourth resolution demanded that land reforms be finalised by the withdrawal of provisions which entailed dispossessing owners in favour of Government without otherwise altering the rights offered to tenants in the way of fair rents and security of tenure.

The last resolution demanded that private bus services be allowed to compete with the nationalised transport service so as to relieve the hardship on the travelling public. It pointed out that in the nationalised transport service high fares, discourtesy, overcrowding and pilferage and above all recurring annual losses had become routine.

"An Accord Rooted in Dishonour"

The spectacle of erstwhile Swatantra M.L.A.s who till the other day sought to topple the Congress(O) government of Mr. Hitendra Desai in Gujarat now joining that Party and the leadership of that Party warmly welcoming them would have been amusing were it not so cynical.

The following selection from pronouncements by Shri Jaideepsinhji erstwhile leader of the Swatantra Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly; of Mr. Hitendra Desai, Chief Minister of Gujarat and Mr. C. C. Desai, M.P. who was expelled from our Party, should be

instructive to students of politics as a case study in political opportunism:

"We do not have any sympathy for this government (Gujarat)" said the former leader of the Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly. Shri Jaideepsinhji was speaking to the press (*Sandesh* 18th February 1970). He was moving a resolution which said that the Gujarat Government had failed to maintain law and order and had misused its administrative machinery to strengthen its Party and wipe out the opposition parties.

The *Jai Hind* of 22nd April reported that Mr. Jai-

deepsinhji had described the Congress Ministry as "anti-people and undemocratic." According to him Mr. Hitendra Desai had disregarded all values of public life and that he was responsible for the defection of ten opposition MLAs after the 1967 general election, through threats and inducements.

The *Times of India* of 20th April reported Mr. Hitendra Desai as saying "We will go to the people to show them how feudal and capitalist elements are working." He was commenting on the defection of six Congress MLAs. While affirming that he would never enter into a coalition with the "feudal" Swatantra Party, Mr. Hitendra Desai said that what should cause concern to the people was the "manner in which the defections were manoeuvred".

A day later he accused the *Swatantra Party* of having put aside all values of public life in their bid to secure the defection of Congress MLAs. (*Statesman*, 21st April).

On the 23rd of July the *Indian Express* reported Mr. Hitendra Desai as saying at a meeting of the GPCC that the Congress would prefer to sit in the opposition than ally with the Swatantra and the Jan Sangh.

Mr. C. C. Desai in the course of his reply dated March 21, to the show cause notice served on him by the Swatantra Party had this to say "the recent contemptuous statements of Shri Morarji Desai and Shri Hitendra Desai about the Swatantra Party bear eloquently against your (Mr. Masani's) peculiar, blind, pro-Syndicate stance. A party that desires to be more socialist than socialists and which goes on condemning and harassing the Swatantra Party at every opportunity regarding it as untouchable, cannot earn any esteem from any of us and deserves no mercy from us."

As Mr. A. D. Gorwala the editor of *Opinion* put it in his issue of October 6: "It is difficult to decide whose is the greater discredit, of the sixteen ex-Swatantra members of the Gujarat Legislature who have joined Congress(O) or of Hitendra Desai, Chief Minister of Gujarat and his party. Only a short while ago the former were sparing no pains in their effort to topple the latter's Government, working with the Congress(N) for that end. Only a short while ago, the latter were declaring with all the force at their command, that nothing would make them have any truck with the former; never, oh never, would they come to any accommodation with them. And now, hey presto, closely the them embrace! Of Hitendra and his old Congress, of the ex-Swatantrites who have joined it in the local legislature, what is undoubtedly true is that

'A merciful Providence fashioned them hollow

In order that they might their principles swallow.'

Were we a mature democracy, this utterly unprincipled behaviour would be remembered by the voters and none of those concerned would get their suffrage in future. Even as we are, the latter end of these adept turn-coats may be worse than their beginning. Truly the conduct of both sides has been unconscionably shabby."

The Gujarati daily *Jai Hind* observed editorially in its issue of October 7: "It is surprising that those persons who a few months ago tried to move heaven and earth to topple the Hitendra Ministry have themselves joined the Syndicate Camp. How will enlightened public opinion react to this? Those MLAs who have recently joined the Congress were elected by the people because they stood for elections on opposition ticket. The main question is, how far is their defection justified, because they have done so without taking the voters into confidence."

Mr. Tushar Bhat writing in the *Economic Times* of October 13 had this to say: "The joining of the Parishad members has been a little queer in as much as that these very legislators were leading the forces of opposition during the 'operation topple'. They even broke away from the parent Swatantra Party, being angered among other things by the National Executive's withdrawal of permission to oust Mr. Hitendra Desai, without consulting them. Again these were the legislators who, time and again, lashed out at the socialist programmes of the Hitendra Government, branding them State Capitalism. They have now embraced the Congress(O) ideology, socialism etc."

"... some horse trading did precede the admission of the Swatantra defectors to the Congress(O). For instance the Baria group and Mr. Hitendra Desai are stated to have reached a tacit agreement over the allotment of tickets and constituencies in the next General Elections and the sharing of election funds. Such an understanding finally brought even Mr. C. C. Desai, who till a few months was championing Mrs. Indira Gandhi's socialism into the Congress(O) fold.

"... The rank and file of the Congress(O) has not forgotten that the 15 new entrants till recently worked vigorously against the Chief Minister, encouraged defections with a view to toppling the Ministry and even defied their own Party mandate to desist from doing so. . . . This section of the party (Congress-O) seems to share with Mr. M. R. Masani his assessment of the Baria Group's admission to the Congress(O) as a 'display of opportunism by both sides unparalleled in the political life in India.'"

S. VISWAM in the *Statesman* of November 18.

The Central Parliamentary Board discussed this issue. The following resolution indicates the strength of feeling of members of the Board who while expressing their deep sense of disappointment with the action of the Congress(O), characterised it as being in cynical disregard of all values of public life:

"After considering the situation in Gujarat arising out of the defection from the Party of certain MLAs, including the former leader of the Party in the State Assembly, the Central Parliamentary Board denounces the defectors for not keeping faith with the electorate and the Party and congratulates all those MLAs who have remained loyal to the Party despite pressures of various kinds brought to bear on them.

2. The Board notes that among the reasons given by the defectors for leaving the Party was their dissatisfaction with the decision of the National Executive taken at its meeting in Madras on July 20 that the freedom of action given to them to overthrow the Hitendra Desai Ministry was withdrawn and all attempts at toppling were banned.

3. In this context, it is amusing that a large majority of those very defectors, along with the two MPs who were expelled from the Swatantra Party for gross indiscipline and disloyalty to the Party have been welcomed with open arms by the very Party whom the defectors were engaged in toppling only a few months earlier. In this connection, the Swatantra Party takes a serious view of this unfriendly act of the Gujarat Congress(O) and the Congress Parliamentary Party in taking into their Party defectors and expelled MPs from the Swatantra Party while discussions are still proceeding at the national level on the basis of the AICC(O) call on June 28 for a consolidation of nationalist and democratic forces. The Board expresses deep sense of disappointment with this action of the Congress(O) which is in cynical disregard of all values

of decent public life. The General Secretary was requested to convey the Board's views to the General Secretary of the Congress(O).

4. The Board is left, in the face of these developments in Gujarat, with no other alternative but to call upon the Swatantra Party in the Gujarat Assembly to continue to play its legitimate role as the leading Opposition Party in the State Assembly by functioning as vigilant critics of the policies of the Gujarat Government and by moving cut motions, motions of censure, adjournment motions and the like which are a part of Parliamentary procedure and putting forward the Party's position on relevant issues on the floor of the Assembly.

5. The Party calls upon the electorate of Gujarat, particularly in those constituencies from which the defectors were elected, to express their displeasure over their representatives having broken faith with them and to see that all defectors get the treatment they deserve at the next election in the event of any or all of them being foolhardy enough to venture to face the electorate again."

Patna Session of the Ruling Congress

Judging by comments in the national press the Patna Session of the Ruling Congress scheduled for three days but concluded in two in October was an unmitigated failure if not an outright disaster. Conceived as it was in indiscipline, treachery and expediency, Mrs. Gandhi's party found at Patna that the chickens of irresponsible promises and alluring slogans had already begun coming home to roost. Slogans, catch-phrases and dramatic actions have so far been the principal weapons in the armoury of her party. The people have had their fill of slogans and now demand something more concrete and tangible.

Comments in national dailies have been highly critical of every aspect of the Session. Even fellow travelling and communist journals have been critical, but for their own reasons.

The most devastating summing up of the proceedings was provided by *Hindustan Times*' correspondent who reporting under the headline "Gloomiest, most disorganised show put up by the Congress(N)" observed "It is difficult to draw up a balance sheet of the AICC(N) session which was, perhaps, politically the gloomiest, economically the least productive and organisationally the most disorganised show put up by the party in recent years."

He went on to write: "Where does the Congress(N) stand at the national level after Patna? It will not be rash to say—alone!" The correspondent pointed out that "never since she took over as Prime Minister, have her partymen heard Mrs. Indira Gandhi speak somewhat pessimistically about the future of the adventure

she has embarked upon and the chances of its success. . . . For the first time, too, the delegates found her on the defensive and explaining at length that the charge that her party was going communist was unfounded. She referred to attempts to 'malign us and to tarnish our image,' but the aggressiveness with which she usually attacks her political rivals, particularly the Congress(O), was lacking."

"... To the amusement of many delegates, observed the correspondent, Finance Minister Chavan said "the definition of the word 'Unemployed' had yet to be evolved." This was in the face of the Working Committee's amendment to the resolution taking out those who had 'no ostensible means' of livelihood from its purview and including only those who had 'no means' at all. This was a confession, perhaps, for the first time, by the ruling party that there are millions in the country with 'no' means of livelihood. The question how do they live remained unanswered."

The resolution on organisational affairs, according to the correspondent "failed to enthuse". Delegates appear to have pointed out the gap between Ministerial exhortation for austerity and their own high living. "... The impression was that the leadership would do nothing to alter the existing structure based on 'bogus membership' which was on the verge of collapse. The party was 'dead as wood' and 'on the verge of extinction' was the counter-verdict of the rank and file to statements from the leaders. The hiatus in the thinking of leaders and the rank and file thus remains as does in their mutual relations" observed the correspondent.

Drawing attention to the gross misuse of official

machinery the correspondent wrote "The organisation had to rely heavily on the Governmental machinery. According to reports about 60 Under-Secretaries, a contingent of magistrates and hundreds of peons were put on the job. A special magistrate was stated to have been deputed to supervise the kitchen and Government vehicles were requisitioned to transport delegates.

"Not that this has not happened before, but that it was done in such a 'crude manner' that hardly any delegate or newspaperman failed to notice that it was a Government-managed show. As if this visible evidence was not enough, the secretary of the Reception Committee, Mr. Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav, listed the various Government departments which had made the arrangements for the session and thanked them over the loud speaker before the AICC ended." And what impression did the delegates carry back home? According to the correspondent they were "packing for home with the feeling that they have been outmanoeuvred by their enemy. They still do not feel that the party's objectives are clear. Mr. Jagjivan Ram has advocated a middle of the road course and, at the same time, spoken proudly of the party's understanding and adjustment with the mini-front in Kerala. And Mrs. Gandhi has denied that her party has anything to do with the Communists. Confounded, most of the delegates do not know what their leaders are talking about."

A caustic editorial in the *Economic Times* of October 15, described the proceedings as the "Ritual at Patna". "The AICC Session", wrote the editorial "does not appear to have broken any new ground. In fact, the main economic resolution and the major speeches are concerned with principle, not details of policy. Leaders talked of a battle for socialism, and a fight to the finish against poverty. All these catch-phrases have the faint, musty air of a bewildered giant tilting at imaginary windmills. Leaving these out, what really has the party to offer to the people in practical and concrete terms? Abolition of privy purses and the take-over of the credit system have brought nobody anywhere near the millennium. And the discourse on land reform has by now become an unabashed display of hypocrisy. This is surely no way for any political party or organisation to establish its credentials in the eyes of the public.

Referring to the demand made by speakers at the session for curbs on conspicuous consumption, the editorial asked "The public would like to know what progress the Government and the Ministers have made in living up to their own exhortations. Huge 'ceiling-free' bungalows, pomp and paraphernalia all of which are reminiscent of a feudal system are very much there for everybody to see as a standing indictment of the pretensions of the men in power. This is not to deny the existence of conspicuous consumption elsewhere—this is also something which needs to be curbed. But austerity, like charity, should begin at home. A monthly

expenditure of several thousands incurred on each person in power bears no comparison in the poverty of a half-employed nation working half-time. Yet, the ruling Congress can promise nothing more than a mere Rs. 100 a month per head—and that, too, five years hence, a long enough period of waiting, one, besides, during which anything might happen to blur the memory of the mesmerised."

Mr. Chavan came in for ridicule in the *Hindustan Times* editorial of October 16, which described as a "curious dictum" Mr. Chavan's premise "that it is no longer possible for economic and political strategies to be differentiated from each other." As for instance "Mr. Chavan's conceding the (economic) principle of nationalisation of general insurance but reserving to himself its (political) timing. The politics of the various steps suggested is more obvious than their economics."

Criticising the "cavalier" adoption of ideas which are later found unworkable or even counter-productive but which soon harden into unavoidable political commitments, the editorial remarked a "radical economic programme which inhibits the production, investment and saving process can only entail the distribution of poverty. The Congress (N) is addressing itself to quite the wrong problems and has yet to develop a relevant radicalism which it is willing and able to implement. As it is, the slogan mongers have taken charge."

The *Indian Express* of October 16, concluded a critical editorial with the comment "if the top leaders of the New Congress are incapable of rigorous and sustained thinking, they will not be able to tackle the country's pressing problems. The call of the polls cannot be answered effectively merely by coining slogans."

The *Hindu* correspondent reporting from Patna in its issue of 17th October saw in the Patna session "a turning point in the fortunes of the Ruling Congress and the Prime Minister. The defeat suffered by the Party in U.P. after a series of spectacular victories in the party's confrontation with its political rivals" "hovered over the session". "Otherwise", wrote the correspondent "the session turned out to be all sound and fury, signifying nothing." All it produced was high-sounding slogans and shibboleths.

Like the *Hindustan Times* correspondent the *Hindu* representative also noticed that Mrs. Gandhi was "clearly on the defensive, going to great lengths to prove that she had not turned communist or deviated from the professed policies of the Congress. She talked of the grim battle ahead with what she characterised as 'feudal and reactionary' forces. She was not sure whether she would win the battle.

"... This dramatic exhortation to battle had perhaps become necessary to bolster the party's sagging morale and enthuse its listless rank and file. ... A veteran AICC(R) member remarked, if the speeches were a substitute for action and slogans could achieve egalitarian society, socialism would have come to our door-

steps long ago." Again like the *Hindustan Times* correspondent the *Hindu* report noticed the growing isolation of the Ruling Congress from other political parties with the leadership denouncing 'right reaction' on the one hand and rejecting the Young Turks demand for an alliance with left parties.

"AICC(R) delegates returned as confused as ever from the Patna session about the party's future political line largely because of ambivalent talk of their leaders. . . . It was the impression of those who had been regularly attending AICC sessions that the Patna session was the most disorganised show so far. The Andhra Chief Minister Mr. Brahmananda Reddy, who was caught in a stampede remarked, 'The arrangements are awful. The misuse of government machinery again came in for comment. According to the *Hindu* correspondent "it was an entirely State-managed show. As many as 60 Under-secretaries, over two dozen magistrates, a dozen engineers and hundreds of peons were deployed to make arrangements for the session. What is more they went about their jobs so blatantly that one could not help noticing them."

Mr. Durga Das in his column in the *Economic Times* of October 20, drew attention to the comments in various dailies. He pointed out that even journals toeing the CPI line are disgruntled. "They charge the Congress leadership with the selfish desire of seeking help of political allies merely to help Congress(R) to recapture its lost glory of being the sole national party. The leader of the Muslim League has been equally blunt in stating that in this power game the Muslims would gain only if they form a communal bloc in every legislature and get a share of the spoils as they have done in Kerala."

To cap it all comes this report in the *Blitz* of October 17 with the heading "AICC non-session leads from Patna to nowhere". Wrote the *Blitz* correspondent: "The AICC session just concluded was a non-session: A non-session in terms of organisational arrangements and political fall-out.

"It was on an entirely different wavelength from that of all post-Bangalore conclaves.

"Organisationally, it was the most chaotic. The sudden spurt of internecine quarrels in the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee deprived the session of

its traditional expertise, even the old hospitality. According to this correspondent Mr. Jagjivan Ram's printed address was his "Swan song" and "set an awful tone for the whole session and bristled with obiter dicta."

The editor of *Blitz* commenting on the Presidential procession observed: "consisting of 50 caparisoned elephants, horses, bullock-carts and motor-cycle riders, *Blitz* could not help wondering whether this was a procession of a political party wedded to the socialist ideology, or the homecoming of some feudal maharaja from a victorious battlefield.

Significantly, among the journals to see some virtue in the Patna session were *New Age* the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of India and *Mainstream* edited by long time Communist Nikhil Chakravarty.

Mr. Bhupesh Gupta writing in the October 18 issue of *New Age* said "In more ways than one the Patna session of the AICC was a refreshing departure from many of its predecessors. It was not an uncommon practice for the AICC, especially after the split of the Congress, to reiterate past pledges and even issue new declarations. But at the Patna session one also noticed a powerful move to bring about such realignment of political forces as would remove the gap between the spoken word and the deed."

Mainstream in its issue of October 24, felt that the most important achievement of the Patna session was that "for the first time after Nagpur in 1959, the party focussed its attention largely on land reforms. Earlier, whenever economic situation was discussed in the AICC, the Ten-Point programme was invariably brought in and, thus, attention got dispersed over a wide front. At the end, nothing concrete used to emerge.

"But at Patna, the Congress discarded its vagueness and the area of attention was narrowed to land reforms, urban ceilings and unemployment. Again, on the question of land reforms, the aspects selected were not of marginal nature but those which are most crucial at the present stage of development."

As Mr. Masani observed in his inaugural address to the Mysore State Convention "This (press comment) is unanimous testimony to the fact that the intelligence of the Indian people is coming to life and that the kind of fraud that has gone on successfully for the last year is nearing its end."

from the General Secretary's desk

Dear Friend,

This issue of the *Newsletter* is mainly devoted to the proceedings of the Central Parliamentary Board and National Executive which met in New Delhi early this month. I would like to focus your attention on two or three important matters that engaged the attention of the Executive and the Board.

The first was our decision to permit our Board to join the SVD Government in UP. Taking this decision was not such an easy task, particularly because of the presence in the SVD programme of an item relating to land ceilings where it has been promised, the SVD Government would initiate steps to legislate for lowering land ceilings. The National Executive was thus caught, as it were, on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, we had offered down-right support to the SVD in UP in the light of the peculiar circumstances in which President's Rule was imposed in UP with the active connivance of the Prime Minister's Party. And, on the other, was this ideological issue of ceilings. A way out of the impasse was finally found when it was decided that we would accept the Chief Minister's invitation and permit a member of our Party to join the Ministry but, while doing so, we would make it clear publicly that in the event of the SVD Government bringing forward legislation to lower land ceilings, our member would quit the Government and we would feel free to oppose the legislation on the floor of the Assembly. At the same time, it was also decided to request the Chief Minister to invite two of our representatives viz., Mr. Munshi Lal, the leader of our Group in the State Assembly, and Mr. B. P. Singh, MLA, to represent the Party in meetings of the Coordinating or Advisory Committee of the SVD so that the Party's viewpoint in respect of various policies could be adequately represented.

The other matter of importance considered by the Executive was the question of the unity of nationalist and democratic parties. The Congress (O) which originally took the initiative by its Resolution of June 28 and which we, along with the Jan Sangh, warmly welcomed, is now dragging its feet. Naturally, members of the Executive were unhappy and we adopted a Resolution (published elsewhere in this issue) which reflects this sense of disappointment.

This is not to mean that we have given up the effort. The President has been authorised to pursue the matter. Meanwhile, the Executive decided that nomination of candidates for the next General Elections should begin immediately.

Delhi rumours have it that the General Elections might come off next February. While it is true that one must not give too much credence to rumours, it does

underline the fact that time must not be lost in preparing ourselves. Good candidates must be found—the emphasis being on the word “good”. Seven sitting MPs and one other have already been nominated as prospective parliamentary candidates. But the search for good constituencies and candidates must now be pursued with vigour. Soon after my return from Delhi I issued a Circular calling upon State/Regional Parliamentary Boards to address themselves to this task and to let us have recommendations.

You, my friend, might have ideas in regard to good constituencies and candidates in your own area. Why not share them with your own office bearers? In the selection of candidates, the views of the man on the spot matter very much. Your views therefore, would be invaluable to your State leadership.

The Party's organisation needs to be geared in a hurry and in this connection, I want to draw your attention to a very welcome development viz., the formation of a Youth Wing of the Party at the national level at a very successful Preparatory Convention held in Bhubaneswar. Our Youth are today restless and vocal; channelised in the right direction, their energies will be an invaluable asset to the Party. I would like you to try and get units of Swatantra Youth (for this is the name that has been decided upon) formed in your areas—and quickly. Anyone between the ages of 16 and 35 and accepts the principles and policies of the Swatantra Party is welcome to be a member of Swatantra Youth. They should be organised and guided and given work to do. I am presently preparing the framework for the organisation of Swatantra Youth based on recommendations made by their Preparatory Convention. This will be issued shortly.

Another vital area of activity where attention must be given is among Women. The Mysore Unit of the Party must be given full marks for having recognised the importance of a Women's Wing of the Party. Their Women's Wing was recently inaugurated by Mr. Masani.

On the 29th of January, (on the eve of the National Convention) in Bombay, Mrs. Sharayu Daftary, who was the Party's candidate in the election to the Maharashtra Legislative Council this year has kindly agreed to our request to shoulder the responsibility of this meeting. May I extend to all lady readers of this *Newsletter* a warm invitation to be present at that meeting where we hope to launch a Women's Wing of the Party at the national level. I would suggest that Swatantra women should write to her directly at the National Headquarters, 143 Mahatma Gandhi Road. Mrs. Daftary will be delighted to have your co-operation.

This brings me to the last item, viz., the next National Convention. Who knows but this might be the last

Convention before the next elections if Madam Prime Minister decides to have elections next year. It is therefore very important for us to ensure that the Convention is a success. Elsewhere, in this issue, details in regard to the Convention have been given. We must ensure that a large number of delegates from all over India are present. Everyone of you, who is a member of the Party, should offer himself or herself as a delegate. The State Units have been allotted delegates' quota generously. I am sure that anyone showing sufficient interest and enthusiasm can find a place on his State Unit's delegation. The next National Convention must project to the people of India the image of a Party which is

virile, active and on the march. The Convention should prove sceptics who have predicted Swatantra's doom to be hopelessly wrong and most of all, the Convention must prove that the Swatantra Party is *the* Party of the future.

JAI SWATANTRA

R. E. Cooper

General Secretary

Sardar Basant Singh

The Central Parliamentary Board meeting in New Delhi on August 22, condoled the death of Sardar Basant Singh, General Secretary of the Punjab Unit of the Swatantra Party and member of the National Executive. The following resolution was passed with members standing:

"Sardar Basant Singh's tragic death at the hands of assassins was an avoidable tragedy had only the Union Government taken stern action against Naxalites and other anti-social elements. Sardar Basant Singh, who has died a martyr's death, was a founder member of the Party and General Secretary of the Party's Punjab Unit. He was a member of the General Council and National Executive of the Party.

In his death the Party has lost a valued colleague, Punjab a balanced politician and the country a patriotic citizen. The Board hopes that the Punjab Government will leave no stone unturned in bringing his assassins to book. The Board conveys its

deepest sympathies to his family and shares their grief and loss."

Similar sentiments were expressed at meetings of Party's Units at the State/Regional, district and primary levels—throughout the country and by the National Executive meeting on November 8.

Writing in *Swarajya* Rajaji wrote:

"After the passing away of Master Tara Singh, there was no one in Punjab whom I trusted and loved as I trusted and loved Basant Singh. Putting aside my deep personal grief, Acharya Ranga's appreciation of what Sardar Basant Singh was to the Swatantra Party is not an exaggerated obituary. It is a fully deserved expression of the grief of all of us in the Swatantra Party. The foul assassination of Sardar Basant Singh is another demonstration of the folly of not tackling communist violence as it should be done with determined will, speed, energy, and clarity of thought."

K. B. Jinaraja Hegde

Former President of the Mysore State Unit of the Swatantra Party, Mr. K. B. Jinaraja Hegde expired in Mangalore on 27th August 1970. Mr Hegde was one of the founder members of the Swatantra Party. He was a champion of the cause of agriculturists for decades. When the move came for imposing one-sided ceiling on agriculturists alone while leaving all the others with their properties and their incomes completely free from ceiling, Mr. Hegde raised his powerful voice. He organised the All India Agriculturists Federation of which he was elected the General Secretary. He placed his

immense resources at the disposal of the peasants.

Rich tributes were paid to him by Prof. N. G. Ranga in Parliament. Mr. Hegde was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly from 1938 to 1945. The President Mr. Masani said that his death had deprived the party of one of its founders and a pillar of strength to the party in Mysore. The Executive Committee of the Mysore Unit passed a condolence resolution at its meeting in Bangalore on 28th August. The resolution placed "on record its sense of the great loss sustained by the Party and the State of Mysore."

ANNEXURE

SUMMARY OF MR. MASANI'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE MYSORE STATE CONVENTION

Inaugurating the Mysore State Convention of the Swatantra Party in Bangalore on October 18, Mr. M. R. Masani, the Party's President, rejected the Ruling Party's panacea produced in Patna for dealing with the massive unemployment in the country and for lowering land ceilings.

Unemployment, said Mr. Masani, was increasing by leaps and bounds at the end of every Five Year Plan precisely because of the nature of the Union Government's statist policies, involving wrong priorities and wasteful investment. The only way to create more jobs was to increase production on farms and in factories. This could only be done by providing the necessary incentives through the dismantling of the oppressive structure of controls, permits and licences, the discarding of inflationary policies and the reduction of taxation. Any claim to create jobs otherwise was humbug calculated to fool the people.

Similarly, the Swatantra Party President opposed the proposal to reduce land ceilings which were already low compared to countries like Iran, to which the Prime Minister had referred in Patna, and Egypt where they were very much higher. The farmer had as much right to a good life as the official, professional and business class in the cities. The ruling party was obviously following the method practised by their Communist mentors in Eastern Europe after World War II when farms were cut down to such a small size that they became uneconomic and this was made an argument for collectivising the land. He had no doubt the intentions of the Marxist Congress Party were exactly the same. The Swatantra Party had come into existence to defend the peasant's land from the Nagpur Resolution of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1959. It must now rally the peasants for the defence of their lands from those who were trying to carry out the same policy of collective farming copied from Soviet Russia and Communist China.

Turning to recent actions of the Union Government, Mr. Masani observed: "If any further proof was required of the authoritarian temper of those in power in Delhi and the threat that this poses to our young democracy, it has been provided by the way in which the President of the Union has been persuaded to misuse his powers by reversing the decision of Parliament on an Amendment to the Constitution concerning the princes' privy purses and by terminating democratic rule in UP".

Referring to the chequered fortunes of the effort to create an alternative from amongst democratic and

nationalist parties and elements, Mr. Masani appealed to the common people to take the initiative and knock the heads of Party leaders together so that such a consolidation might be brought about in good time both in Parliament and outside. In making this suggestion, the Swatantra Party President said he was acting on the old adage about "appealing from Philip drunk to Philip sober".

The Swatantra Party had a vital role to play in saving democracy but it could only do this effectively if its members carried its real message to the people. In this connection, he complimented Mr. Ganapaiah, President of the Mysore Unit, on the extremely vigorous constructive work that he had been able to do, which was an example for others to follow.

The Swatantra Party, said Mr. Masani, does not stand for the *status quo* which had resulted from twenty years' rule by the Socialist Establishment, but for the dismantling of the apparatus of controls, permits and licences and liberating the vital energies of the people working on the farms and in factories. The Party stands for social justice for the underprivileged people of the rural areas. The Party also stands for equality of treatment to Minorities and for the protection of their rights. Finally the Party stands for modernisation of the country on lines so successfully achieved in Japan.

"It is we who occupy the middle of the road of ordered progress. The path proposed by Mrs. Gandhi and her colleagues would lead the country right off the road and into the gutter", observed Mr. Masani.

Dealing with the suggestion made in certain quarters that, in an effort to compete with the Prime Minister's demagoguery, the Swatantra Party should also describe itself as socialist, Mr. Masani asked: "Is there any reason why we should jump on to a sinking ship?" He pointed out how twenty years of Socialism or Statism, as he preferred to call it, had led to economic stagnation, rising prices, increasing misery for the people, growing unemployment and international bankruptcy. Socialism, as originally conceived, was a noble concept and he for one still stood by its objective of moving to a free and more equal society. The methods of Marxism adopted by those in power in India for the last two decades were, however, altogether outmoded and had in fact defeated the ends of progress and social justice. They were making socialism a dirty word.

Intelligent socialists in more advanced countries had discarded the dead wood of Marxism and he pointed out that the Manifesto of the German Social Democratic Party of Mr. Willy Brandt was entirely in line with that

of the Swatantra Party. Similarly, the Party had always kept Gandhiji's ideals and socio economic policies in view.

That is why the Swatantra Party had readily accepted the AICC Resolution of June 28 which set out a programme which could be accepted by Gandhians as well as those who believed in democratic socialism.

If Mrs. Gandhi and her party were prepared to accept Gandhiji's principles, which were opposed to Statism, or even the concepts of 20th Century Socialism

as formulated by the Socialist Union in Britain, she would get the Swatantra Party's measured support. Unfortunately, there was no possibility of this happening so long as Mrs. Gandhi was in tow with Moscow on the one hand and the Communist Party in India on the other.

"The choice before India", said Mr. Masani, "is between Gandhi and Marx, and every party and individual has to choose between the two, since there is nothing in common between them."

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