

SWATANTRA NEWSLETTER NO.1.

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This is the first monthly Newsletter of the Swatantra Party. It deals with events up to the 15th of October. A Newsletter will be issued every month from the Central Office.

Introductory:

All the Provincial organisations are requested to send regular accounts of their activities so as to reach the Central Office during the first week of every month. The report should deal mainly with the meetings held, speeches made, response to the Membership drive, and other matters which will be of general interest. Extracts from the important speeches made should also be enclosed.

Activities of the Provincial organisations.

A representative committee has been formed for the Andhra State with Bezwada as the Headquarters. District organisations have been formed. A special office has been established at Hyderabad. Separate leaders have been elected for the Legislature Party. The Social Democratic Party has merged with the Swatantra Party. The work of enrolling members is proceeding fast. A special Donations Committee has been formed, entrusted with the task of collecting donations.

2. Assam

Prof. M. Ratnaswamy visited Shillong and committees have been formed at Shillong, Kamrup and Dibrugarh. Mr. Ratnaswamy has given separately his impressions of the tour.

The Janata Party, headed by the Raja of Ramgarh, has merged with the Swatantra Party. This is an important development. Bihar bids fair to be one of the major centres of the Swatantra Party. Committees have been formed at Gaya, Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, Monghyr, Chappra and Buxar. A vigorous membership campaign has been launched. The Raja of Ramgarh gave a Press interview in which he specially referred to the grim determination of the Nation to protect the freedom of the individual in all spheres of life from the encroachment of the State and to repudiate State compulsion and the encouragement of class hatred. He also spoke of the necessity for recognising the Cultivators' ownership of the land. That is a problem which affects several of the permanently settled areas and it will have to figure as one of the issues in which the Party is vitally interested. He proposes to undertake a whirl-wind tour of the State during November.

A strong regional committee has been formed for the City of Bombay with Shri M.R. Masani as the Chairman.

4. Bombay.

The Bombay office, being the best equipped office of the Party, has kindly taken on itself the work of printing and supplying the Hindi Membership forms and Statement of Principles. This has greatly helped the membership campaign in the Hindi speaking areas. Provincial bodies which require Hindi forms should contact the Bombay Office, provided they cannot undertake the printing themselves.

A Provincial committee has been formed separately for Maharashtra and organisers have been appointed in Sangli, Nasik and Amroli. The Central Committee hopes to appoint other organising bodies for East Kandesh and Vidarbha.

5. Delhi.

An influential Committee, with Sirdar Lal Sing as Convener, has been constituted and the membership drive is proceeding.

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A Regional Committee has been formed with Shri Bhailalbhai Patel as Convener. The rural population of Gujarat is evincing keen interest in the Party. For instance, in the village of Pipalia in Dharoji taluqa and in about 50 adjoining villages the people have, in a body, made a strong declaration to join the Party. Gujarat has always been in the forefront of the fight for freedom and it is to be hoped that the example of Gujarat will be followed elsewhere.

The C.R.C. Party in the Madras State was the first Party in India to declare its merger with the Swatantra Party. Since then it has been doing excellent work, forming organisations in all the Districts. Several meetings have been held in the important towns and the membership drive is progressing satisfactorily. Rajaji and Prof. Ranga visited Madurai, Trichinopoly and Coimbatore and addressed public meetings. This has had a great effect in the development of the Party in Madras.

In the City of Madras also an influential Committee has been formed. Nearly 200 persons have volunteered to work as field organisers in the City. It is to be hoped that in other areas also enthusiastic volunteers will be available for undertaking the membership drive.

Mysore was the first State to hold a State-wide Convention. In fact the Mysore convention was held before the All India preliminary meetings in Bombay, and Mysore sent a strong set of representatives to the Bombay meetings. The first District Convention in Mysore was held at Hassan on the 27th September. A special feature of the Convention was the great interest evinced by the merchant community several of whom have not only joined the Party but have expressed a desire to work for it. More than three thousand people, mainly agriculturists and merchants, attended the Hassan Convention.

Party work in the Punjab has been started with Sirdar Basant Singh as Convener. A closely knit team of experienced leaders is engaged in propagating the principles of the Party. Sirdar Uddam Singh Nagoke, who heads the Party in the Punjab, wrote a public letter to the Prime Minister explaining his reasons for resigning from the Congress, pointing out how the agricultural policy of the Congress is leading the country into ruin. The letter of resignation is instinct with patriotic feeling.

The response in Rajasthan is very encouraging. The Rajasthan Committee started by sending individual post-cards to all the important persons in the State who were likely to join the Party. They received several enquiries and messages and by this means they have given a great deal of publicity to the Principles of the Party. Several Independent Members of the Legislature have expressed their willingness to join the Party. The Rajasthan contingent in the Legislature is likely to be a strong one.

At a special meeting held in Jaipur, the Rajasthan Committee formulated a frame-work for the State organisation. The State was divided into six regions with separate Conveners for each region, i.e. Jaipur, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kottah and Bikaner. The Rajasthan Committee has, in a business like way, framed rules for actual working, one of them being that the regional bodies should open a Swatantra Party account in a Bank and the regional organisers be authorised to draw up to 50% of the funds collected for the use of their respective regions. A separate organisation has been formed for Ajmer City under the President-ship of Dr. Ambalal Sharma.

Uttar Pradesh is another State where good work has been done under the able Presidentship of Shri Pallival. The Gram Raj Party in Uttar Pradesh has merged with the Swatantra Party. A special Convention of the Party was held at Lucknow on the 29th and 30th August. It was presided over by Shri K.M. Munshi. Mr. Munshi in his Presidential address paid special attention to the increasingly communistic policies of the present Government and the need for restoring the Principles of freedom which were so dear to Gandhiji. More than 600 delegates from all parts of the State took part. Since then the Membership campaign has been proceeding briskly, and Party units have been set up in almost all the districts.

11. Uttar Pradesh

A Convention was held in the district of Gonda early in October and it was a grand success.

Party units have been set up at Indore, Gwalior,

12. Madhya Pradesh.

Ujjain, Bhopal, Ratalam, Saugar, and Hosh-

ingabad. Shri R. Agni Bhoj of Bhopal is touring all parts of the State organising the Party. He should be contacted by the Regional bodies.

An influential committee has been constituted in

13. West Bengal.

West Bengal with Shri Badal Gangopadhyaya

as Convener. The membership campaign is proceeding.

14. Orissa.

A Committee has been formed with Shri H. Kanoongo

as Convener.

Interest in the Swatantra Party abroad.

Mr. Masani was abroad recently. He has done much good work by way of public relations for the Party such as a Radio interview on the Austrian radio, a press interview with Guy Wint. He also attended an off-the-record editors' lunch arranged by Encounter magazine at which editors of the Economist, Spectator, Daily Telegraph, Manchester Guardian, Observer, and the Socialist Commentary were present.

The following news item is of interest.-

"Swatantra Party.

Message from Liberal International.

A resolution welcoming the formation of the Swatantra Party in India and expressing the hope that it would prove a staunch upholder of the ideas and ideals of liberalism was one of the features of the IXth Congress of the Liberal International at Gardone, Italy, from October 1 to 4.

The adoption of this resolution was preceded by the perusal of a message of greetings to the International from Professor Ranga, Chairman of the newly-formed Indian party and an exposition of its principles and objectives by Mr. M. R. Masani, who was last year elected one of the patrons of the Liberal International. The hope was expressed that this would be the beginning of a closer association between liberals in India and in other countries.

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The message expressed the hope that "the Swatantra Party will prove a staunch and successful upholder of the values and policies of liberals, which are so necessary for the development of good life, for friendly relations between the peoples of the East and the West and essential for the peace of the world."

(Times of India, 7-10-59)".

Want of finance continues to be a great handicap in furthering the cause of the Party. The Office-bearers in each region will naturally be busy with the day to day work of organisation. It is necessary that a special sub-committee should be appointed, consisting of influential persons who will be able to go round and collect donations. Andhra has already set an example in this direction. The other States should form separate donation Sub-Committees entrusted with the task of collecting donations.

Unless such a drive is launched immediately the work of the Party is likely to suffer in the future.

This is proceeding satisfactorily. There has been some delay because the forms could not be got ready early. The working arrangement was that Madras should supply the English forms and Principles and that Bombay should supply the Hindi forms and Principles. These have been supplied to almost all the Provinces by now. In future the working arrangement should be modified. Each Province should print its own forms both in English and in the respective regional language. This should be a charge on local collections. The workers engaged in collection work should not be remunerated on a percentage basis of the collections; it is much better to pay them separately. The strength of the Party depends on the strength of its membership. Every criticism can be answered provided it can be shown that the Party commands a wide membership amongst the common people. The persons particularly affected by the present policies of the Government are: (a) Persons in receipt of monthly salaries who are affected by inflation; (b) agriculturists, especially the small peasant; and (c) the small traders in the towns. The membership drive should be concentrated amongst these persons.

Mysore wants to know whether the workers are being paid or whether all work has been honorary so far. So far the work is being done only on an honorary basis.

Queries.

There is, however, no objection to employing paid workers.

Hyderabad wants instructions about the use of the membership collections. For the present there is no objection to these collections being spent for local expenses. Allocation should, however, be made only by the State organisation, and not by the Districts on their own.

Recently, Shri H.P.Modi expounded the Principles of the Party at a meeting and answered the criticisms levelled against it. It gives in a short compass much good material.

Speeches and Interviews:

The Prime Minister strongly criticised the Swatantra Party and said that it will take the country towards its doom.

Rajaji's answer to this criticism is well worth wide publicity.

Prof. Rutnaswamy gives his impressions of his tour in Eastern India.

Speech delivered by Sir Homi Mody
at Bombay.

"They say the laws of economics are immutable and operate with certainty. That may be so, but in India they seem to change with circumstances. It all depends on whether you get attached to the Court at Delhi, or are a free lance economist who can speak the truth as he sees it and is not afraid of offending the high and mighty. It would be a sad day for the country if independent economists were to be forced out of their convictions through political pressure.

It was only a little while ago that the Swatantra Party was formed and its first Convention was held, but it has already received a flattering amount of attention from the Prime Minister and many of the Congress leaders. The members of the Party have been described as old fossils, frustrated individuals, champions of vested interests and reactionaries whose thinking is of the Nineteenth Century. It is time we dealt with some of the charges levelled against us.

With regard to the allegation that we are old and tired men, I would say that, if that is a reference to Rajaji, whom we are proud to own as the founder of our Party and whose dynamic leadership is such a great asset to us, he is much more alive and alert than most men half his age. And even with such old stagers as my friend Munshi and myself, the average age of the leaders of the Swatantra Party would compare favourably with that of the men who are holding the reins of power to-day.

We are not frustrated individuals, either. We have not been in the habit of seeking jobs, contracts or licences. Most of us can claim to be, in our own little way, useful members of society earning an honourable livelihood.

Nor are we champions of the so-called vested interests. The majority of businessmen and capitalists are not with us; they are busy cultivating the ruling Party, and it is largely with their funds and their support that the Congress leaders hold the position which they do to-day. They may be reviled and ordered about from time to time, but their value gets fully recognized when Elections are approaching. Apart from this category, the persons who can really be said to have vested interests are Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Members of Legislatures and Congress bosses. They have entrenched themselves in power and authority and are enjoying all manner of privileges. They constitute the Great Moghuls of our time. They are the people who have surrounded themselves with pomp and circumstance and who are constantly careering about the country laying foundation stones and performing opening ceremonies; and they can always have joy-rides abroad on all sorts of missions. Last year, as many as 215 delegations went abroad spending Rs. 47 lakhs of Foreign Exchange.

At a respectful distance from these overlords is the army of bureaucrats whom the Welfare State has reared and nurtured. They form an integral part of the ruling hierarchy.

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As for the charge that we are still living in the Nineteenth Century, it is too ridiculous for words. It is not we who are pledged to social justice and equality of opportunity -- while affirming our faith in the freedom, initiative and enterprise of the individual -- who are clinging to the past, but it is the leaders of the Congress, who are fond of talking about the Nuclear age and who are still pinning their faith to an out-moded concept of socialism that has no relevance to the conditions of to-day. It is time they got away from what is nothing different from the Marxist doctrine and took note of the vast changes that have taken place in the so-called capitalist world in the course of the last 50 years. The country must awake to the dangers which their thinking poses before it. The passion for power they have acquired and for regimentation of the mode of life and living of the people is fast destroying the liberties of the individual and the democratic way of life."

Rajaji's reply to Nehru's
Criticism.

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War Analogy Not Justified.

(By C. Rajagopalachari)

" I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress."

(Gandhiji, 1935).

The Swatantra Party has pointed out what policies of the present Government will reduce food production and kill individual initiative and interest which are at the bottom of all progress.

Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru says he is convinced that if India followed the new Party, the country will be doomed. Violence of language arises out of a defence complex and is in the inverse ratio of internal confidence. Would Mr. Nehru be good enough to state which one of the 21 principles of the Swatantra Party will take the country to doom? Or, is he again thinking of the personalities in the Party against whom he has rooted prejudices? Prejudice is not reason even when it is a Prime Minister's prejudice. Does the Swatantra Party lead the country to doom because it proposes to keep before itself the cardinal teachings of Gandhiji maintaining faith in the people and in the efficacy of truth and non-violence?

Or, is it because the new Party is opposed to the practice of political pressure being put on officials to deflect them from the course of just discharge of their duties that the Prime Minister is unhappy?

Fair deal for Labour

The new Party is pledged to a fair deal for labour in field, factory, shop and office and to the principle of conciliation whenever any conflict arises. Is it this that will lead to doom? The Swatantra Party has declared that the cost of public administration should be considerably reduced. Does Mr. Nehru object to this and fear doom on that account? The Swatantra Party stands for efficiency and honesty but is against the expansion of the bureaucratic machine as a substitute for efficiency. Does Mr. Nehru consider this to be a dangerous doctrine? If the work that belongs inherently to private agency is given as a monopoly to officials, inefficiency and corruption are bound to ensue. Expansion of supervisory machinery will not achieve anything but extra expenditure. Has not Mr. Nehru sufficient evidence for this? The new Party opposes crippling taxation

abnormal deficit financing, and the taking of foreign loans beyond repayment capacity. Does the Prime Minister feel that this attitude is disastrous because his own policies involve all this that is objected to? Which then of the Swatantra Party's principles will take the country to doom? Surely, it is not priority to the basic needs of the people, food, water and housing, for which the Party stands. Does he believe that a violent disturbance of the structure of ownership and management and the transfer of the work of cultivation from owners' interested in out-turn to artificially formed bodies, official or unofficial, interested in faked reports will increase production? Does he not confound egalitarian doctrine with the technique of increased production?

Competitive Enterprise.

The Swatantra Party's industrial creed is that the incentive for production and expansion lies in competitive enterprise and it holds that the State should provide for safeguards against unreasonable profits, prices and dividends when there is not adequate competition to act as a corrective in these respects. Does Mr. Nehru receive advice from his experts that State management without irrational subsidies from the general revenues has reduced real cost of production in any field which alone can lead to reduction of prices?

Finally, does Mr. Nehru hold that disaster awaits the country because the Swatantra Party stands for every effort being made to foster and maintain the spiritual values in life and to resist the dominance of a purely materialistic philosophy of life?

I have exhausted all possible grounds for Mr. Nehru's conclusion about the Swatantra Party's dangerous emergence except, of course, his inveterate prejudice against non-revolutionary and non-exhibitionist policies.

Co-operation is one of the universally admitted principles of good life; but it is not logic to use this general word to justify something wholly different, viz., the merger of ownership of all land to enable the State to take one step after another towards collectivisation and progressively advance the move towards centralisation of all power. Socialism is centralised comprehensive planning and State ownership of all resources.

Dictatorship of "Party Bosses"

The truth contained in the words of Gandhiji quoted above has been amply demonstrated. Power taken over by the State leads not only to the undermining of individuality but inevitably to favouritism and party politics in the course of the exercise of that power through the machinery of administration. It is this that makes Party bosses and members to hold on to the erroneous policy and to the practice of intervening in administration. The recent exhibitionist decentralisation activities are as unreal as the decentralisation of authority in the Soviet State. Gandhiji put it in a nutshell to Mr. Louis Fischer in 1946: "Socialism is either dictatorship or arm-chair philosophy." It is no longer arm-chair philosophy. It is dictatorship. Dictatorship not of the proletariat, but of the party bosses. We are told that there is a war on against poverty and so all powers should be given to the Central authority such as must be and are given during war-time. It is remarkable how the spirit of dictatorship unveils and confesses itself. A figure of speech is strained in order to make a claim for dictatorial authority to control everything from the Centre in the name of planning and on the analogy of military strategy. The two wars, the one against military aggression from outside, and the other against internal diseases and defects are as different from one another as violence is different from non-violence. The tactics of the one is poles apart from what the other requires, and it is entirely misleading to use the military phrase to justify the over-ruling of the Constitution. "

(Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy)

After attending the Convention of the Swatantra Party in Bombay and Ahmedabad meeting early in August, I went to Delhi. There I attended a preliminary meeting of those interested in the Party called by Mr. N.G. Ranga, the Chairman of the Party, on the 22nd August, at the common room of the M.P. Hostel, North Avenue. An organising Committee was formed to enroll members in Delhi City and District and otherwise organise the formation of the Branch in the Capital. It was urged by a businessman that the organisation should be run on business lines and not be informal or loose even from the very start.

My visit to Lucknow, where I had gone to see a relative, coincided with the Convention of the Party on the 29th and 30th August. It was held in the Bharadhari Hall, the old Durbar Hall of the Kings of Oudh, and was attended by about two thousand citizens of the U.P. State. There were representatives of the old Taluquaders of Oudh among whom the Raja of Mankapore distinguished himself as one of the Secretaries, and of the peasantry of the State with delegates from 52 out of 56 Districts of U.P. It was inaugurated by Mr. K.M. Munshi who spoke in Hindi as did all the other speakers at this Convention including the President, Mr. Palleva, former Minister of U.P., and the leader of the new Party in his State. I was the only one who spoke in English. An enthusiastic participant in the Convention was Janab Wahirdar Rahman who spoke in Urdu. Mr. Palleva has promised an enrolment of a hundred thousand members of the Party in U.P. by the end of the year which may justify the holding of the All India Convention of the Party in Lucknow sometime early next year.

From Lucknow I proceeded to Assam where, at Shillong, I met Mr. P.S. Krishnamoorthy who is actively engaged in organising a Convention of the Party in Calcutta early in December to serve not only Bengal but also Bihar, Assam and Orissa. I introduced him to Mr. Narayanan, a teacher from Kerala married to a Khasi Lady, also a teacher, who, in his turn, introduced to Mr. Krishnamoorthy others interested in the Swatantra Party in Shillong. A representative organising Committee was formed for Assam and the Party promised to make early headway among the tribal peoples of Assam without losing sight of the people of the plains.

In Calcutta I called on Mr. Sampath Iyengar, the Chairman of the Provisional organising committee of the Party in Calcutta, at his Chambers which he has kindly lent temporarily to the Party for its Calcutta Office. He has an enthusiastic Secretary in Mr. Badal Gangopadhyay, former Member of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee. He is an effective speaker in English and Hindi in addition to his native Bengali and spends his week-ends in going to the moffusil in Bengal preaching the gospel of the Party.

At Bombay, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, New Delhi, Lucknow, Shillong and Dibrugarh where I had occasion to address Catholic Associations, I took the opportunity to introduce the Swatantra Party and its Principles to Christian communities in the North.

"We need hardly mention that we have been congressmen for over 4 decades and have spent a good portion of our lives in jails in India's Independence struggle. Obviously, therefore, we would not have expected to part company, in any light-hearted manner, with an organisation with which we have been attached for such a long period, and it is a matter of great regret that we feel compelled to resign from the congress.

2. Amongst other reasons, the most outstanding one which the has prompted us to resign from congress is the passage of Nagpur Resolutions fixing ceiling on land holdings at ridiculously low level at 30 acres and the introduction of Joint Co-operative farming as a national policy.

3. We are afraid, the ruinous effect of these policies has not been fully appreciated by those now in charge of the destiny of this country. Imposition of ceiling on land holdings at 30 acres with the expected maximum income of Rs.300/- per month per family or Rs.60/- per person amounts to statutorily reducing the highest Agriculturist family to the position of Pariya. Further, in the absence of any ceiling on income or property in the case of people in non-agricultural sectors, imposition of ceiling on agriculturists alone, and that also at such a low level, is highly discriminatory, which is bound to lead to class conflict of the worst kind between agriculturist and non-agriculturists rural and urban besides creating chaos and anarchy in rural areas and this discriminatory or anti-agriculturist policy cannot on any ground be justified either morally or legally.

4. So far as its effect on food production is concerned, all agricultural authorities are agreed that it will result in heavy fall in production which, in turn, will lead to economic ruination or financial bankruptcy of this country and make it economically dependent on others. Political independence without economic independence, is a complete farce and Moon-shine, and, in fact, it cannot last also for long.

5. So far as joint-co-operative farming is concerned, it has not so far succeeded in India or elsewhere in any part of the world except in Israil where conditions are entirely different. And it is too risky and unwise to build our future on mere ideological foundations devoid of practical realities. Instead of first making success of "Service Co-operatives" before thinking of any other kind of co-operative farming propaganda about Joint Co-operative Farming incessantly being carried out now, may actually thwart the success of even, "Service Cooperatives". Apart from its failure from the view point of economy and production, the Joint cooperative Farming would deprive the peasant farmer of his independent status and convert him into a sort of daily paid labourer, if not actually slave.

6. The greatest misfortune of this country is that its agricultural policy, on which depends the prosperity - nay the very economic existence of this country, is in the hands of people who do not possess elementary knowledge of agriculture and who are largely drawn from non-agricultural class and who have little sympathy, if any, with the agriculturists, or even rural people in general, who form 85% of Indian population. If other countries like USA have made wonderful progress in agriculture, it is because the agricultural policy is in the hands of persons who understand the subject of agriculture, rural psychology and rural problems.

7. Nagpur Resolution has proved a snot of last straw to break camel's back. Previously also, anti-agriculturist policy has been too evident in various kinds of legislations enacted. For instance, the Hindu Succession Act, which gives share to the daughters in the property of her father, was passed in the teeth of opposition from agriculturists, who wanted that wives should get share from the property

of their husbands. This may or may not prove impracticable of its enforcement of detriment to the social fabric in the urban area, but it shall prove most ruinous to the agriculturists, insofar as sacred ties between brothers and sisters and social relations in the rural areas are concerned. It will lead to litigation of worst kind and bad blood between brothers and sisters. Agriculturists already have small bits of lands in the villages. Could not the framers of the Law realise the disastrous effect of a son-in-law going to the village of his father-in-law and demanding a share in the lands or produce of his father-in-law? Even though the law has not yet been enforced, relations between brothers and sisters have already become strained in some cases to the extent as to lead to murders. It only shows to what extent our rulers are completely ignorant of conditions in rural areas.

8. Agriculturists, in fact, the rural people in general, forming 85% of Indian population, have always had serious grievances that their representations in Government Services or even in the legislatures was in inverse ratio to their population and that medical educational transport facilities etc., existing in villages were fantastically inadequate as compared with those available to the urban people. Nagpur resolution only confirms the belief that the whole agrarian policy is formulated in a manner that would reduce all the rural people to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water. It will not only drive away the men of intelligence, capital, enterprise, and ambition from the rural areas to the cities, but it will also be death-knell to the future economy of India. We consider morally bound to announce our disapproval of this policy by resigning from congress, before the country is actually driven to economic disaster. We request that our resignations from Congress party maybe kindly accepted."
