

## Central Parliamentary Board Meeting

The Central Parliamentary Board met in Madras on July 23. Several issues before Parliament, and the position taken by the Party's Parliamentary Group concerning them, were discussed.

### Fundamental Rights

The Board deplored the attempt on the part of the Government to seek to undo the decision of the Supreme Court on Fundamental Rights. It decided that all such attempts to subvert the Constitution should be opposed by the Party both in Parliament and outside. The decisions of the Parliamentary group not to join the Select Committee to consider a Private Member's Bill on the subject was endorsed.

### Privy Purses

The Board condemned the attempt by the Congress Party to abrogate unilaterally the solemn Treaties and Covenants with the former Rulers of the erstwhile Indian States and the Constitutional Guarantees concerning their Privy Purses and called upon the Party to resist all such illegal, unconstitutional and dishonourable acts.

### Composition & Functions of the Planning Commission

The Board deplored the decision of the Government of India to flout the well-considered recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission that the Planning Commission should henceforth be an Advisory Body of experts and that neither the Prime Minister nor any other member of the Central Cabinet should be Chairman or Member of the Commission.

### Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Board approved the position taken by the Party in Parliament condemning the failure of Government to adopt an objective and impartial attitude in regard to the Arab-Israeli dispute and to work for a just and stable peace in West Asia.

### Medium of Instruction

The Board approved the action of Mr. Dahyabhai Patel and Prof. R. K. Amin in submitting minutes of dissent to the Report of the Parliamentary Committee

on Education in regard to the freedom of parents to prefer the schools of their own choice for the education of their children, and for continuing the option to parents and students to adopt the regional language or English as the medium of instruction at the University level.

### Developments in West Bengal

The Officiating General Secretary having just completed a visit to West Bengal with Mr. D. N. Patodia reported to the Board on the sinister developments in recent months in the industrial and rural areas of West Bengal, and the possible developments in the near future. Arising from their report it was noted that the Communists had demonstrated:

- that the disturbances had been planned long ahead and were only awaiting the suitable opportunity now afforded by the coming into power of a Government controlled by them;
- that the motivating force was purely political, with only a facade of industrial and agrarian grievances;
- that they were resorting to organised violent activities with the main object of subverting the Constitution, by staging violent uprisings in rural areas such as Naxalbari, revolts in the shape of Gheraos in industrial areas from Calcutta to Dhanbad, and attacks on the leaders of non-communist trade unions and disruption of industrial production;
- that they were deliberately misusing their position as members of the State Government to intimidate, infiltrate into and destroy the morale of the Police and other services, and
- that they constituted the prospective fifth-column of the Chinese Communist regime bent upon destroying the independence, integrity and free way of life of the people of India.

### Madhya Pradesh

With reference to Madhya Pradesh where, at the time of the meeting of the Board the position was in a state of flux, the Board took the view that the correct course of action for the Government to have taken should have been to call upon the Leader of the Opposition to form a Government before resorting to the dissolution of the Assembly.

As readers are aware, the Governor did eventually adopt this course of action and we now have a non-Congress Ministry in that State.



# FOCUS ON ORISSA

Although we had prepared material for inclusion in these columns, we are not using it this time since we wish you to share with us the encouraging report on Orissa under the title "Orissa Coalition aims at Clean Administration" which appeared in the "Weekend Review" of July 29.

## "ORISSA COALITION AIMS AT CLEAN ADMINISTRATION"

### Bhubaneswar

To make an assessment of the first hundred days or so of office of the Swatantra-led coalition in Orissa, one must necessarily compare its record with that of the Government it has replaced. The very first thing that strikes one is the popular confidence which the Singh Deo Ministry enjoys, as against a total disbelief in and distrust of the Ministry which has gone.

There is no longer any talk of corruption in high places; admittedly, corruption has not fully disappeared among officials, especially in the lower ranks, but this, it is felt, will gradually go away with the strict measures that the Government is taking to remove corruption from the administration. Some of these have already proved effective. Inertia and lethargy in the administration are noticeably less. Official machinery now seems more responsive and wakeful.

So the Ministry has got off to a good start: its main electoral pledge was clean and efficient government for Orissa, and its record is largely going to be judged by its performance in this field. So thoroughly fed up are the people of Orissa with years of Governmental corruption and malpractices that they would support anybody who can provide good and clean administration to them, and this the astute Mr. Singh Deo knows too well.

Side by side, the Ministry has pruned all non-essential spending itself a source of corruption and nepotism and other malpractices with which the former Ministry has been charged; it has enforced maximum economy at all levels and cut out a good deal of unnecessary staff, especially in the somnolent yet grossly bloated departments of publicity and public relations. The Ministers and the higher level officials work hard to set the pace for those down below. One feels that at last there is a Government at work.

Another striking feature is the unity and cohesion with which the coalition has been working. The two partners—the Swatantra and the Jana Congress—work as a team and any differences that they may have on matters of policy or regarding implementation never come out into the open. The coalition rules with a small majority (a total membership of 75 in a House of 140) and though devious attempts have been made to wean away members, the Ministry carries on unshaken, redeeming its electoral promises one after another.

For instance, the promise of abolishing land revenue

has been fulfilled. This costs the exchequer about Rs. 3 crores in hard cash per year. With a total revenue of Rs. 117.06 crores, the State can ill afford the loss of such a relatively substantial source of revenue, but the electoral pledge had to be kept and the Ministry did not wish to be charged with playing a confidence trick. To make up the loss, the 1967-68 Budget has put fresh imposts on road transport, which in Orissa are the highest in the country, on urban land, and a toll on the expressway to Paradip port—which will affect iron ore export trade.

This is certainly not sound economics in a predominantly agrarian State, but the Ministry feels that the land tax on a peasantry subject to most ruthless and grinding type of poverty was morally indefensible. Hence, it had to go. But to the question as to why agricultural income tax should not have been stepped up on the better off or richer class of agriculturists, no clear answer is given. The question is almost evaded.

If the Ministry was unable to set up a commission of inquiry against two former Chief Ministers—Messrs Biju Patnaik and Biren Mitra—by April, it was because it had not anticipated the Government of India's strange reaction to its request for an authenticated copy of the C.B.I. report. The answer that the report could not be provided as it was a confidential document has caused much amusement. But it has also created technical difficulties. The Ministry is definitely annoyed with New Delhi.

The annoyance is now greater because the Centre, in disregard of the wishes of the State, has given a passport to Mr. Biju Patnaik to go on a foreign trip. The feeling of annoyance is generally expressed in private off-the-record conversations with Ministers, although publicly not much is said about it in the interest of maintaining good relations with the Centre. However, Chief Minister Mr. Singh Deo has declared that should Mr. Patnaik choose to be absent from the State when the inquiry against him is held, the Commission will be expected to give an *ex parte* verdict. So the Government is going ahead with the arrangement for setting up a commission of inquiry.

A word of explanation is necessary about the State's attitude towards the Centre. The Singh Deo Ministry's policy so far has been to keep its relations with New Delhi as smooth as possible, not only because of the State's current dependence on the Centre in financial matters, but also because of the belief that in the present critical conditions of the country, relations should be both cordial and cooperative. Therefore, in



spite of some disappointment and occasional rebuffs, no engineered demonstrations or protests, of the type one witnesses in West Bengal, occur. The supply of rice to West Bengal is a good example. There was strong pressure on the Government to stop sending rice to West Bengal, ostensibly on the ground that the surplus in the State itself had been over-estimated. For a while, it seemed that the Government was of the same view. But when Mrs. Gandhi sent Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha to persuade the Orissa Ministry to help out sorely-pressed West Bengal, the former readily agreed and a substantial quantity of rice for West Bengal has been promised in exchange for some wheat.

However, if the Centre does not give some more money for the State's development schemes, as the State Government hopes it will, then feelings may get strained. Orissa has been obliged to cut down its 1967-68 annual plan to Rs. 46.92 crores, as against Rs. 52 crores provided for the 1966-67 one. Even so, in terms of resources, the gap is not fully covered. The Centre has so far agreed to provide only Rs. 26 crores, and the most the State hopes to raise out of its own resources, is Rs. 15 crores. So there is already a gap of almost Rs. 6 crores.

The State hopes that the Centre will at least give another Rs. 9 crores in order to help a relatively less developed State like Orissa to modernise and improve its agriculture, and start new industries to provide more basic facilities. For instance, power supply in Orissa is still insufficient even for the existing requirements and the State has to produce more power to start industries on its own or attract entrepreneurs from outside. Therefore, the extremely slow progress of work on the Talcher complex (which among other things is designed to produce 250 MW of power) due to insufficient Central aid, has caused much disappointment.

In keeping with his Swatantra philosophy, Mr. Singh Deo, is anxious to promote private enterprise in the State. Objectively speaking, however, the State Government is not in a position to start any more enterprises than it already has. During Mr. Patnaik's time, State undertakings were started by the dozen; there was hardly any sphere including fisheries, construction and normal purchases of the Government into which Mr. Patnaik did not wish to rush.

Some of them are now white elephants, and as such

tax the State's poor financial and administrative resources very heavily. The panchayat industries, which the Patnaik Ministry started to "bring industries to every village and provide every villager with a pucca building" are invariably losing money and are a big drag on the State's resources. Mr. Singh Deo is anxious to hand over these industries to private enterprise, for such plants and machinery as have been installed cannot be thrown away.

A group of businessmen who recently toured Orissa came away very much impressed by Mr. Singh Deo's approach to the economic problems of the day. They felt that he was concentrating on essential problems like cleansing the official machinery of corrupt and undesirable elements and toning up administrative efficiency, and on the development of agriculture which represented the fundamental needs of the Oriya people.

It would be, wrong, however, to think that Mr. Singh Deo does not wish his State to travel fast on the industrial road; only the method of promoting industry has been changed. The Chief Minister has been in frequent contact with chambers of commerce in Calcutta to invite industrialists to visit Orissa, and study for themselves the facilities that already exist and that need to be provided further. But he is not content with doing just that.

He has been pressing the Railway Ministry to construct a rail link to Paradip from the major commercial centre of Cuttack so that the port, built at a cost of Rs. 25 crores, is put to more profitable use. Paradip can certainly handle a good deal of the country's steel exports as the Union Steel Ministry has found, and it would be in the interest of India as a whole if this rail link is expeditiously completed.

Mr. Singh Deo is also anxious to have one or two fertilizer factories in the State; one is already proposed to be built as part of the Talcher industrial complex and another has been recommended by a team of British experts near Paradip port, based on imported raw materials.

Mr. Singh Deo has been asking for more Central aid for development on account of these schemes. If New Delhi softpedals on the matter or flatly turns down the request, it cannot be said that the Centre is reciprocating the State Government's gestures of good relations and cordiality.

### Rajaji's Pat for the Party

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari described his recent illness as "providential," as it enabled the Swatantra Party to get used to carrying on without him.

The 89 year-old elder Statesman, who was addressing a public meeting on Sunday, for the first time after his illness three months ago, commended the Swatantra Party for the way it had been conducting its affairs in his "absence".

"They have been going on and getting on. I hope this practice will continue," he said.

*Indian Express, July 3, 1967*



## West Bengal Situation

Mr. N. Dandeker and Mr. D. N. Patodia M.P., visited Bengal last month to make a personal assessment of the political situation there. Mr. Patodia also visited Naxalbari while Mr. Dandeker spent his time in Calcutta discussing the situation with various persons including high officials, politicians, industrialists and the like in order to gain a live impression of the situation.

Both at Calcutta and on his return to Delhi, Mr. Dandeker met Pressmen and gave them his impressions.

Expressing his satisfaction with the police action in the Naxalbari area which while being restrained was effective, Mr. Dandeker agreed with Mr. Chavan that the situation both in Calcutta and Naxalbari had improved. But he likened the improvement to a temporary lull before the final storm broke out ravaging all. According to Mr. Dandeker, by end-September and early-October, almost every company in West Bengal will be faced with the usual or normal bonus disputes and also the Puja Bonus issues and the violent leftists having achieved a measure of initial success in the earlier Gheraos will be eager to challenge their employers once again.

In the country-side it will be harvesting time in full swing. Men who were actively Red in Naxalbari have been roaming the country-side with tehsildars for semi-official recognition promising the Government 100% procurement. They too will go into action in September and October.

What is more, and little known, is that trouble of the Naxalbari variety has begun in the 24-Parganas and is threatening to spread along the entire East-Pakistan border posing a very grim situation.

Summing up the situation as he saw it, Mr. Dandeker described it as one in which Labour instigated by the Reds was rebellious, the Chief Minister a virtual captive in the hands of Mr. Jyoti Basu, the rural population in Naxalbari frightened to

go back to their homes, and other areas expecting violent upheavals *a la* Naxalbari, the administration frozen into inactivity, demoralised, ashamed and "wondering what the hell to do."

Mr. Dandeker was convinced that the entire thing was pre-planned, but triggered off prematurely. He cited numerous examples of industrial disputes which were not allowed to be amicably settled by the extremists, of Gheraos on the management while it was sitting at the Conference Table with the Trade Union leaders, of the witch-hunt for Trade Union leaders of moderate socialist parties, etc.

Even at the agrarian level, he cited examples of attacks on poor peasants who were looted and driven out of their homes because they had not joined the ranks of the chosen liberators. How could you call this a peasant movement, he asked?

At a public meeting in New Delhi on July 27, Mr. Masani speaking on the subject "Must India Go the Vietnam Way?" referred to Naxalbari. According to him, "the front paw" of the Chinese Communist advance whether in Naxalbari or elsewhere would have to be eliminated before it became a permanent base for subversion and civil war. He said that the present lull in Naxalbari and Bengal generally was deceptive. The Left Communists were lying low because their extremists had got out of hand and because they were embarrassed. He warned that there would be more Naxalbaris to come and the situation would recur with increasing gravity. The existence of common border which did not exist in Andhra or Kerala created a situation where Telengana would look like a picnic. He affirmed that nothing less than a ban on the Left Communist Party of India and the elimination of Communist Ministers from the West Bengal cabinet should be a starting point of a common attack in defence of Indian nationalism and democracy. Failure to do this would lead to a major bloodshed later.

## Swatantra Industrialist Speaks Out for Labour

8/A  
In an interview to the *Indian Express* on 31st July, Mr. C. Rai, MP, Honorary Treasurer of the Party, severely condemned the retrenchment of labour during the current recession. He said that this was tantamount to hurling out friends into foul weather. Continuing, Mr. Rai said that the best course for the management would be to brave the storm and sail with those who toil for the production of national wealth. The employer and employee could brave the elements as partners in adversity, hoping for better times ahead.

He felt the recession had been occasioned not so much by the fall in demand at home and abroad,

especially after devaluation, as by the "Government's exercises in guesses about the pattern of future demand, which have mostly gone awry."

He said the private sector planned its production and expansion schemes on the basis of official estimates which proved unrealistic in many cases, whereas it should have been wary of gulping the estimates prepared by the Government.

But now that the demand was shrinking on a wide front, the desperate recourse to lay-offs should be resisted, Mr. Rai said.

Whilst appreciating the Government's intention to expedite the placing of orders on several industries,



Mr. Rai felt that if this was done just to keep the industry going, it would be tantamount to artificial demand, and the Government would ultimately have to stockpile the output and block public investible resources.

He said retrenchment to fight the recession was certainly a step in the wrong track, a policy guided by expediency rather than principles and it would only provide a transitory advantage to industrialists. But in

the long run that would only create more difficulties, he said.

Mr. Rai's comments are thought-provoking in the context of his close association with about 30 companies — big and small — as Chairman, Managing Director, Director or Partner. Most of these are public limited concerns, together employing a vast number of workers.) B

## Kashmir Swatantra Forum

A C To the Swatantra Forum in Calcutta and the Swatantra Club in Delhi has been added the Kashmir Swatantra Forum which was inaugurated in Srinagar on June 27 by Mr. M. R. Masani.) B

The following are the office Bearers and Members of its Committee:

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| President :      | Mr. Ragho Nath Vaishnavi |
| Vice President : | Mrs. Goodie Oberoi       |
| Secretary :      | Mr. Ghulam Nabi Khayal   |
| Treasurer :      | Mr. Sharif-ud-Din Ahmed  |
| Members :        | Mr. Ghulam Nabi Jan      |
|                  | Mr. Digambar Sawhney     |
|                  | Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed.       |

A C Speaking to pressmen on the occasion Mr. Masani said that the Swatantra Forum would disseminate Swatantra philosophy, ideals and principles in Kashmir and would prepare the ground for the establishment of the Swatantra Party in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The development would meet the need which had been felt in Kashmir for a non-denominational and non-sessionist party, preferably of an All India character.) B

According to Mr. Masani, the deplorable events of June 7 were evidence of a breakdown of law and order. From what he had heard and observed, the entire responsibility for these events rests squarely on the shoulders of the State Government. The Chief Minister and the President of the State Congress could not be absolved from responsibility for the inflammatory statements made by them so gratuitously about developments in West Asia.

Mr. Masani reiterated the party's stand that while there should be normal and friendly relations between India and Pakistan in the interests and security of the entire sub-continent, Pakistani aggression in 1965 had deprived Pakistan of whatever *locus standi* it might have had in regard to the Kashmir problem. It would be for a government representative of the people of Kashmir to work out with the Government of India

the precise status of Kashmir within the Indian Union and the measure of autonomy it should enjoy.

In this context, Mr. Masani supported the appeal recently made by a large number of Members of Parliament for the release of Sheikh Abdullah. He said the Swatantra Party had always been opposed to preventive detention of any kind and had consistently voted against the Preventive Detention Act and the Defence of India Rules.

The release of Sheikh Abdullah would, in his view, be helpful in bringing to an end the present unfortunate state of affairs in Kashmir. It was common ground among all opposition parties, including the Jan Sangh, that the people of Kashmir had been denied fair and free elections along with the people in the rest of India last February.

Mr. Masani was of the opinion that, after political prisoners and detenus had been released, there should be a Round Table Conference, the participants in which could be the Prime Minister of India, Sheikh Abdullah, G. M. Sadiq, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and their respective colleagues.

Such a conference could be followed by dissolution of the present legislative Assembly and fresh elections in which all elements could participate. These elections would be followed by the setting up of a new Government in Kashmir. In order that such a government should be broadbased and fully representative of the people of Kashmir, it would be desirable that all major elements in the public life of Kashmir should be persuaded to join in forming such a government.

The Delhi Weekly *Thought* in its issue of July 29 welcomed the emergence of the Swatantra Forum. It said: "Mr. M. R. Masani, explaining the aims and objects of the Forum, told newsmen here that his party favoured a settlement of the Kashmir question on the basis of autonomy for the State within the Indian Union. If the reports about Mr. Mizra Afzel Beg's current political thinking are correct the Swatantra Party's role in Kashmir politics, howsoever limited it may be, could be fruitful, more so because of the Party's known friendly attitude towards Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues."



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## Foreign Money in Indian Elections

1 The *New York Times* published a report that according to the Indian Central Bureau of Intelligence both the United States and Communist countries have spent vast sums of money to influence India's last general elections.

According to the report, the CBI inquiry found that the United States paid money to the Jan Sangh, Swatantra Party, Praja Socialist Party and some Congressmen. The total amount was "more than a few lakhs and considerably less than a crore of rupees."

The amount of money spent by the Communist embassies backing the left-wing reportedly was even much higher than the sum allegedly spent by the United States.

Naturally the Swatantra Party alongwith the Jan Sangh and the P.S.P. took strong exception to the report and raised the issue in Parliament.

\* Speaking for the Swatantra Party, Mr. Masani said on June 15:

7 "I would like to start by saying that the allegations, in so far as my Party is concerned, are totally false and we repudiate the slander which has been attributed to some high official quarter by the *New York Times* correspondent in Delhi. Every rupee of the Election Fund that we collected was collected from our friends, sympathisers and supporters in this country. So far as we are concerned, we are prepared and in fact insist that this matter should be investigated so that the facts may be brought to light."

Who is responsible, under the cover of this cowardly anonymity, for having carried on this smear campaign so harmful to all political parties in the country, because every political party of one persuasion or another is referred to. Whoever has done this, whoever talked to the *New York Times* man, has done no service to the country or even to his own Government. Is the Hon. Minister prepared to investigate this crime first of all to find out who did it?

"...Is it some one in the entourage of my hon. friend (Mr. Chavan) or is it somebody in the entourage of the Prime Minister? Is it a Junior Minister of the Government or is it a Government Official? This is not the first time that this kind of smearing has been attempted from these quarters..."

"Normally we would not have expected intelligence reports to be published. But I do suggest that in this particular case, more harm will be done by not publishing it than by publishing it. Let the Minister come to the conclusions which he wants to have a few days to arrive at, and let him publish the report along with the Government's conclusions, and let them put the matter out for public discussion..."

"...as soon as Government's preliminary investigation is over, an appropriate Tribunal should be set up.

There should be a public investigation into the possible use of foreign money in our elections. Let there be a public enquiry. Let there be a Supreme Court Judge or any one of his status, of an independent objective status appointed. Let this report, let the Government's conclusions, and let what all of us have to say, be presented in public to this authority. And after some months, after a proper hearing, let this Tribunal give its findings. If there are any guilty people in this country, let them be appointed out. If there are innocent people, let their reputations be cleared of the dirty smear.

"...Already many people think that we are sycophants going round with a begging bowl asking eternally for aid. Now, are we going to allow the world to think that every political party in India can be purchased by one government or another? Are we such a minor, backward republic in some backwoods that this can be alleged against us without our repudiating this libel?"

Unfortunately the Home Minister, Mr. Chavan turned down Mr. Masani's suggestion for the appointment of an enquiry commission. Mr. Chavan said that the CBI had made a report to the Government but that he had not found time to read it.

Mr. N. Dandekar as the officiating General Secretary officially denied the allegation. In a pressnote he said:

"In view of several recent insinuations, open as well as veiled, I wish to state categorically that the Swatantra Party has not at any time received any financial assistance whatsoever, whether for purposes of the General Elections or otherwise, directly or indirectly, from any foreign source whatsoever, whether American or any other, nor from any foreign official or non-official sources, openly or secretly. It is a matter of regret that the offer to face a public investigation into these insinuations made by the spokesman of the Party on the floor of the Lok Sabha last week has not been accepted by the Home Minister."

The Executive Committee of the Swatantra Party in Parliament expressed indignation at the libellous and false report in the *New York Times*. A statement issued by the Committee called upon the Government to either contradict the report or come forward with a specific charge.

Wrote Rajaji in *Swarajya*: "The totally baseless story may have started as an alibi in some irresponsible talk of Congress bosses who were disgracefully defeated in the general election, which was picked up as something official by representatives of the American press."



## Relations with China

Ceaselessly, Swatantra spokesmen, inside Parliament and outside, keep warning the people of India about the dangers to the security of the country, *vis-a-vis* Communist China unless Government changes its policy immediately.

Along with the Jan Sangh and the two Socialist Parties, the Swatantra Party got together to observe 2nd July as the day to express national indignation against Chinese Communist indignities and against the Indian Government's defiant policies and to demand severance of diplomatic relations with Communist China.

In Calicut, Kerala, Dr. V. V. Anthony of the Swatantra Party, shared the platform with members of the Jan Sangh, Kerala Congress and the SSP demanding that the Government of India should take the Chinese outrage of Indian diplomats more seriously.

In Bombay, Mr. M. R. Masani was the Party's spokesman at a joint meeting which included speakers from the PSP, the Congress Party, the Jan Sangh and the SSP. Incidentally, a fortnight earlier, on learning about the humiliating treatment meted out to our Indian diplomats, the Bombay Unit organised a procession and burnt the effigy of Mr. Mao Tse-tung.

Mr. Parulekar of our party spoke at a joint meeting at Indore.

The Jalgaon District Unit held an all-Party procession terminating in a public meeting presided over by Mr. V. N. Patil, the General Secretary of the Maharashtra Unit.

In Bangalore, on the initiative of the State Unit, a Joint meeting was held presided over by Mr. M. Vazir Ahmed of the Swatantra Party. A Resolution condemning the Chinese Government for its humiliating treatment of Indian diplomats in China and calling upon the Government of India to sever diplomatic relations with China was unanimously adopted.

In Madras, Rajaji appearing on a public platform for the first time in 3 months, described the Chinese as an outlaw for the whole world and called upon India to sever diplomatic relations since India would not lose much by such an action.

Referring to Mr. Chagla's contention of keeping the window to China open, in keeping the Indian Embassy there when our diplomats were treated like dirt, Rajaji said that the window operated in only one way — from the Chinese side to pour dirty water on us. Among others who spoke at the meeting were Mr. S. S. Mariswamy, General Secretary of the Tamil Nad Unit and Mr. N. V. Nataraj of the D.M.K.

## Swatantra Party and the West Asian Conflict

Some Muslim friends have misunderstood the Swatantra Party's position on the West Asian Conflict. Angry letters have been received from them and public pronouncements made by them condemning the Party's attitude. Four Swatantra legislators in U.P. made this the pretext to resign from the Party. It is unfortunate that individual expression of views by Swatantra leaders on West Asia have been taken to be the Party's attitude.

The President of the U.P. Unit Mr. B. P. Singh explained the position with clarity. In a statement to the Press he said that the Swatantra Party had taken no stand on the Arab-Israel dispute. No resolution favouring the one and condemning the other has been passed by the National Executive of the Party. Even in Parliament the spokesman of the Party had only stated that

the Government of India should not have taken a wholly one-sided view and should not have drawn hasty conclusions.

No doubt, Mr. B. P. Singh added, Rajaji had already strongly expressed himself in favour of Israel and so might have many other members of the Party. But those are personal views and cannot be taken as the official opinion of the Party. But it is open to other members of the Party to hold the opposite view and give expression to it.

Mr. B. P. Singh has pointed out that the Arab-Israel question is not covered by the 21 points in the Statement of Principles of the Party nor by its Manifesto and, therefore, is a free subject for discussion by Party members. Our Muslim friends are as free to

### Stronghold of Swatantra

There was not a single Congress voter in the village of Mathippanur of the Thirumangalam constituency, which elected a Congress candidate to the State Assembly last Saturday, reports UNI.

According to the official counting, the following were the details of voting in the village; Mr. M. P. Rajan (Swa) — 563; Mr. N. S. V. Chithan (C) — 0; Mr. Pedda Naicker (Ind) — 1; Mr. Arumugam (Ind) — 2; and Mr. M. S. Kamalammal (Ind) — 18.

Statesman, May 3, 1967



propagate their pro-Arab policy if they want to, as Rajaji and others are free to propagate their pro-Israel policy.

The officiating General Secretary, Mr. N. Dandekar set the record straight in the course of a letter to the Hon'ble Shri Akhtar Ali Khan, the (Swatantra) Minister of Excise in the present SVD Government in U.P. which we reproduce below:

"I have your letter of 14th July in which you request the Party to change its 'partisan' policy towards Israel, and failing which you wish to submit your resignation from the Party Membership. To begin with, let me make it quite clear that the Party's policy concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict was in fact *not* partisan, but an express request that the Government of India should maintain an attitude of strict neutrality in the matter. This was the attitude Prof. Ranga and I both adopted. Moreover, last Saturday the 15th July, it was also expounded very clearly by Mr. Masani in his speech in the Lok Sabha in the debate on the Demands for Grants for the External Affairs Ministry. We have taken this stand for the simple reason that we feel that that would be the only way in which India could properly assist to resolve the dispute between Arab countries and Israel.

Nevertheless I must also add that it is one of the basic principles of our Party that on all issues not covered by the Party's Statement of Principles, members are free to express personal views. This means quite clearly that in the matter of the Arab-Israeli dispute, you are free not merely to hold different views but also to give expression to them.

In view of the foregoing, I trust you will appreciate that the Party's attitude on the Arab-Israeli dispute is not partisan. Moreover, you have every right to express your own views in the matter. I trust therefore you will agree that no question of any resignation arises."

Speaking in the International Affairs debate in the Lok Sabha on July 15, Mr. M. R. Masani said:

"The approach of my Party has been, and is, that we should be friends of both the Arabs and Israel and that we should maintain a posture of impartiality and objectivity in the dispute that goes on unfortunately between the Arab countries and Israel. It was in pursuance of that policy that we, along with non-communist parties in this House, signed a letter to the Prime Minister on 25th June as soon as hostilities broke out in West Asia.

In that letter, we said:

"Whatever may so far have been said and done, we are of the view that from now on the best thing that can be done is for the Indian Government to adopt an objective attitude in this dispute and to abstain from taking sides or apportioning blame at this stage. We feel that, if this attitude is adopted by the Government, it will have the support of the country as a whole. Such an attitude would be conducive to India's playing an honourable part in restoring peace in West Asia."

"We asked for nothing more than neutrality, nothing more than impartiality in the company of Muslim countries like Malaysia, Iran and Turkey, all three of whom maintained impartiality and objectivity throughout the West Asian war, just as Japan did, and as other countries did."

The Central Parliamentary Board when it met in Madras on July 23 approved the position taken by the Party in Parliament in condemning the failure of Government to adopt an objective and impartial attitude in regard to the Arab Israeli dispute and work for a just and stable peace in Asia.

## Privy Purses

The Central Parliamentary Board has declared the Party's total opposition to the AICC resolution calling for the abolition of Privy purses. Several leaders of the Party have also publicly expressed the Party's opposition.

In *Swaraja*, Rajaji wrote:

"Even if the assurances given to the ex-rulers as consideration for their retiring from all power in the regions they ruled from the time of the Moghuls and during the full British period had not been written down in the Constitution, could we with any claim to moral conduct go against these assurances?"

"The assurances were given by Sardar Patel on behalf of the people and the Government of India

and effectively defended by him in the Constituent Assembly. The treaty cannot be torn up as a "scrap of paper"—Kaiser Wilhelm-style. If the Parliament of India does this, it will perhaps be the last straw on India's camel-back—in its effort to be still a bit Gandhian."

Rajaji adds: "The present Home Minister, Mr. Chavan, is using all his talent for acid and irrelevant wit and denigrate India's greatest and first Home Minister Sardar Patel's word of honour given to the rulers of Indian States, who agreed to retire from power as heads of their States to make India one and great. It is hoped, however, that in spite of all the forces behind this disgraceful proposal, India will maintain its honour and credit by rejecting the suggestion. Nations must respect treaties



and agreements if they wish to be considered civilized."

Mr. C. C. Desai M.P., issued a statement on 2nd July in which he stated that any amendment of the Constitution to abolish the privy purses and other privileges of the princely order in pursuance of the resolution of the All India Congress Committee would amount to a "breach of trust" on the part of the Government.

Interviewed by the *Gujarat Herald* on July 16, Mr. H. M. Patel, M.L.A., a former Principal Finance Secretary of the Union Government, warned the Government that if it violated the contracts with princes no one outside or inside would thereafter place any faith in any promises of the Indian Government, however solemnly given. And criticising the Union Finance Minister's escapist views, he further said that while Mr. Morarji Desai was reported to have stated that the stopping of privy purses constituted a breach of assurance to the ex-rulers, he had added that "conditions" since the assurance were given to the princes had changed, and that he was bound by the AICC resolution.

But, Mr. Patel asked, was Mr. Desai unaware that what he called assurances had been incorporated in the Constitution of India and that he along with his colleagues in the Government had sworn to uphold the Constitution and to be loyal to it.

Mr. Patel said in retrospect it seemed that Sardar Patel, remarkable alike for his true patriotism and his leadership of men, know instinctively how far he could trust his fellow Congressmen to honour con-

tracts. In order that they might not be tempted by "changed circumstances" to dishonour the contracts entered into with the princes, that it should not be easy for them to do so, he had the provisions of the contracts incorporated in the Constitution.

Thus, he must have thought, he had put temptation to go back on their word safely out of their way.

But alas, even he did not seem to have been able to judge the full measure of their frailty.

As Finance Minister, Mr. Desai must realise more than anyone else how important it was that the people both here and abroad should have full confidence in the word of the Government, especially in financial matters.

Let him succumb to the temptation to break the Government's plighted word to the princes and he would have dealt a mortal blow to the honour and prestige of the Government of India, Mr. Patel concluded.

Mr. Dandekar adds: "Even more despicable would be the fraudulent device, recently reported to have been blessed by Shri Govinda Menon, the Law Minister of the Government of India, for abolishing Privy Purses by a mere executive order of the Government, on the ground that the Courts (including the Supreme Court) could not interfere with such an order because of the supposed bar under Article 363 of the Constitution against any such intervention. Apparently there are more ways than one for embarking upon a course of fraud, deceit, breach of trust, breach of faith and dishonour." 8/B

## Drought Relief

The lone Swatantra MLA in the Bengal Assembly, Mr. Rajendra Singh Singhi told a press conference in Calcutta last month that the Party had planned to carry out relief work in the drought-affected areas in Malda District. Specifically he said that about 500 villagers would receive 2 Kgs each of cereals.

While admitting that this was but a "meagre" contribution to the relief effort, Mr. Singhi stressed that this sort of venture might create the right sort of momentum as far as the other political parties were concerned.

Although scarcity conditions prevailed in 21 villages of Jasdan Taluka in Rajkot District, the Yuvraj of Jasdan, President in the Rajkot District Unit of the Party and his colleagues in Jasdan Taluka collected donations for the Bihar Famine Relief Fund. Rs. 1324.65 in cash, 2266 items of clothing and 840 kilos of foodgrains were collected and sent to the appropriate authorities.

Subsequently responding to Bhaikaka's call for aid to drought-stricken Panchmahals he collected Rs. 583 from Jasdan Town to be utilised in Panchmahals.

## The Unsung Heroes of the Revolution

From the hindsight of post-election perspective, one can now see that whatever the other failings of those who broke away from the Congress, they at least had the courage to face the prospect of the political wilderness. Leaders like Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Masani, Harekrushna Mahtab and Ajoy Mukherjee who, against tremendous odds forged out of the desperation of hopelessness a spectrum of political alternatives for the country, are the unsung heroes of the revolution which has transformed the Indian political scene.

MR. R. VAITHEESWARAN in *Himmat*, June 9, 1967



The Bombay Regional Unit organised several processions to collect cash, clothing and foodgrains and

collected over Rs. 10,000/- for Bihar Famine Relief and handed it over to the Sarvodaya Mandal.

## Local Bodies Elections

The Swatantra Party annexed eight out of nine seats in the election to the Chachlana village in Jamkalyanpur Taluka. 14 of the 25 seats were captured by the Swatantra Party in the election to the Anand Municipality. The remaining seats have gone to independents.

Six out of 9 seats in the Domda village of Paddhari Taluka have been won by Swatantra members, the re-

maining 3 having been secured by Congress candidates.

In the Municipal elections in Rosa Town area of Shahjahanpur district in Uttar Pradesh Swatantra candidates secured four out of six seats.

Six out of eleven seats were annexed by Swatantra candidates in the elections to the Jaswantnagar Town Municipality of Etawah District of U.P. A Swatantra Party member was elected Chairman of the Municipality.

## Gherao

Though the virulence of the Gherao movement has somewhat abated, it is nevertheless present in various parts of the country. The Swatantra Party's opposition to the Gherao has been made amply clear by the National Executive. (see July issue of *Newsletter*). Since then several leaders of the Party have expressed their views.

Prof. N. G. Ranga said that Gheraos go against the fundamental rights of the people. They also prevented people from exercising their rights and privileges to discharge their responsibilities towards society.

Writing in *Swarajya*, Rajaji described Gheraos as unlawful and those committing it as members of an unlawful assembly. He added that "a blockade or encirclement or seige or gherao, whatever it might be called whether of an office room or a whole factory, whether of a public sector unit or of a private sector, or of a school or college or class room or principal or

headmaster's room or any other place where men lawfully work is wrongful restraint, and a group of people committing the offence is an unlawful assembly." He pointed out that a demonstration leaving room for free entry and exit and attended with no insult or annoyance was picketing.

Rajaji warned that if the misconceptions about Gheraos were not removed and physical blockades were tolerated, industrial effort which even now was pursued under difficult conditions would completely collapse and all would suffer, workers as well as managers and proprietors.

At a public meeting in Bombay, Mr. N. Dandekar said that gherao was an organised attempt to establish communist control over all vital nerve centres of labour and to create a "receptive ground" for a possible invasion by China with or without the collaboration of Pakistan.

## Swatantra and Labour

Alone among political parties in the country, the Swatantra Party has imposed upon itself certain self-denying ordinances. It has refused to enter the student's movement on the ground that, for students, studies must come first and politics later. Similarly, in the trade union movement, the Party realising that if the trade union movement is in the doldrums today, it is so because the movement is politically-oriented and not labour-oriented, decided it would not join the race to form political trade unions but would encourage the formation of independent unions run by workers themselves and free from outside control. This self-imposed abstinence has been misinterpreted in certain interested quarters as

an indication of the fact that being a 'capitalist' Party, the Swatantra Party is against Labour, and hence has not entered the trade union movement.

Prof. P. J. Shroff, Vice-President of the Bombay Unit of the Party has refuted the charge that the Party is anti-Labour in a letter published in the *Economic Times* of 17th June. Since many in our own ranks do not appear to have a clear concept of the Party's labour policy, we are reproducing below the text of his letter:

An accusation often levelled against the Swatantra Party is that it is a party of rich men and of employers and that it is anti-labour.

That this accusation is entirely false will be clear



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from the following declared aims and objectives of the Party vis-a-vis labour:

1. The Swatantra Party recognises and accepts the workers' right to organise themselves in order to improve the conditions of life and work.

2. The Party accepts that strong and responsible trade unions managed by the workers themselves are an integral part of a democratic industrial order. It is opposed to the intrusion of outsiders into trade unions who exploit the unions for their political machinations and make hard-working workers their cats' paws for their own purposes.

3. The Party stands for the workers' right to collective bargaining, involving where necessary, the right to withdraw their labour.

4. The party stands for closer association of the worker with the management of industries. It is anxious to see that a spirit of partnership is developed among all those engaged in production.

5. The Party stands for a good wage for a good day's work.

6. The Party advocates the restoration of the constitutional rights of the State employees and the public

sector employees to be placed under the same labour laws as are applicable to the private sector. The Party is opposed to the exploitation of workers by the employers either in the public or the private sector.

7. It will be seen from the declared aims of the Party vis-a-vis labour, that the Party is determined to uphold and safeguard all legitimate interests of labour so that labour may play its role in increasing national production and get its fair share in the increased production.

8. The Swatantra Party has always raised its voice against the licence-permit Congress raj, which leads to the unholy alliance between some rich men and the ruling Congress Party for the purpose of exploiting the people by a system of controls and economic regimentation.

The interests of the common man and labour are identical. Both the common man and labour demand a fair deal and both are entitled to it, and the Swatantra Party being the party of the common man staunchly stands for the rights of labour. The Party's Charter of Labour which is deliberately distorted by the Congress and the Communist Party, will, no doubt, assure labour that the Swatantra Party is their best friend. 23

## DEBATE

*In a democratic Party healthy debates on current issues act as a tonic and help in building up the Party's ideological base. There are many issues that fall outside the scope of the fundamental principles of the Party as outlined in its Statement of Principles adopted in August 1959 which are open for discussion.*

*In the last issue of the "Newsletter" the Officiating General Secretary Mr. N. Dandekar dwelt at length on the post-election phenomenon of "floor crossing."*

*Readers will recall that the National Executive of the Party at its meeting in May took a dim view of the "patch work Coalitions" which had emerged as a result of such floor crossing.*

*We publish below the views of Rajaji, Prof. Ranga and Mr. Masani. Readers are welcome to contribute their views on the subject. The contributions should not exceed 200 words and is confined to bonafide Workers/Life Workers of the Party. Kindly therefore give your Workers/Life Workers Card number when sending in your contribution.*

### Floor Crossing — Two Views

#### Rajaji

Writing in *Swarajya* of 5th August Rajaji observed:

"The immediate adverse reaction of good men to individuals leaving one political party and joining another is understandable. The motive is often selfish and the disgust of people at such selfish defections is natural. But bulk defections of party members is more often based on misdemeanours of parties and party leaders than on selfish interest. If party bosses, for instance, systematically fill semi-official organisations with their favourites and partisans, the resentment of a large body of dissatisfied party members and of the

public is quite natural. Freedom of movement from one party to another is in a sense the essence of democracy. To take away this freedom would lead to a greater evil than what we seek to remove. Political affiliation should not develop into a caste system but should retain its elasticity. Otherwise there would be no room for change which, as Burke foresaw long ago, was necessary for conservation."

#### N. G. Ranga

Prof. N. G. Ranga was of the view that crossing the floor is a democratic weapon in India and this should be used as a means to correct the monopoly enjoyed by the Congress.



Members elected to legislatures must have the freedom to choose the Party in which they would like to function because they were elected by the people. It was, no doubt, a matter of honour that members stayed with the parties from whose platform they fought the election. Floor crossing should not be for personal or private advantage. But the Congress had started the game.

The time had come in the present state of Indian democracy when a very large section of Congressmen should break away from the Congress and make it possible for a real polarisation of democratic parties.

#### **M. R. Masani**

Addressing a public meeting in New Delhi on 27th July, 1967, Mr. Masani referring to floor crossing observed:

"There is this matter of defections of which our press is full. It is undoubtedly a national disgrace. I

am not against people changing their views, or even their political party or label. That is a very healthy thing when it comes from within, when there is a feeling that one no longer belongs to a particular school of thought or that a particular party one has served is ceasing to play a positive role and one should move on. Some very good people have changed parties. Mr. Winston Churchill changed his party, I did so too. But when people change their parties, they do it for a very compelling reason of policy or principle. What we see today is not a change of party because your ideas have changed or the party has deteriorated but a defection from one party to another with a view to creating a situation where you or someone close to you gets a job or becomes a Minister. All the defections that have taken place since last February, whether to the Congress Party or from the Congress Party, have been motivated by this rather dishonourable idea."

## **NEWS FROM STATE UNITS**

### **ANDHRA**

A Telengana Party Workers' Conference was held in Hyderabad on 18th June with about a hundred Workers. Prof. Ranga, inaugurating the Conference referred to the new land revenue proposals of the Andhra Government and said that the Government has no legal sanction to impose any land revenue on the peasant. He warned the Government that individual satyagraha would be resorted to if they tried to burden the kisans with additional Land Revenue proposals.

Problems relating to the affairs of the Warangal district unit were discussed in great detail.

Resolutions on Land Revenue, Stamp Duty, Watan-dars, Nizam Sagar project, Pochampala and sugar cane prices were unanimously adopted. The Conference was presided over by Mr. G. Latchanna.

In the State Legislature, the Swatantra Party emerged as the single largest Opposition Party in the last

General Elections displacing the two Communist Parties. The position was further improved when, with the permission of the Central Parliamentary Board, the Swatantra Legislature Group joined hands with the dissident Congress group to form a United Democratic Front of 44 members with Mr. G. Latchanna of our Party as its leader. The Speaker has accorded recognition to this Group and Mr. Latchanna has been recognised as the Official Leader of the Opposition.

### **BOMBAY**

Social work continues to take pride of place in the activities of the Bombay branch. Whether it is a question of rendering assistance to victims of a Rail disaster or attending to the medical care of those involved in unruly demonstrations, the Bombay Unit has been the first on the scene.

### **Swatantra's Anti-Statism**

What the Swatantra Party opposes is not change but Statism, which leads not only to gross mismanagement of national resources but to the conversion of a free people into a servile nation. Heavy taxation and misuse and mismanagement of the funds so secured, impoverishment of the people and frustration of spirit, these are the results of Statism. Swatantra welcomes change which removes evils, not change which brings in evils of great magnitude such as we have seen have plunged India in undisclosed bankruptcy. Congress rule is now the status quo from which we have to escape."

**Rajaji**



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We have come across an interesting circular put out to members of the Matunga Unit of the Party which ought to serve as a guide to primary units on how to work in a way that will attract attention. The Matunga Unit's Circular gives an idea of the range of activity of the Unit stretching from getting the police authorities to lay a pedestrian crossing to collecting food, money and clothing for famine victims.

## KERALA

The Kerala Unit has been doing steady work ever since their Committee was re-organised.

In what can be described as the first direct action by the Kerala Unit of the Party, on May 8, about 40 volunteers of the Party led 500 small planters in a procession through the streets of Kottayam culminating at the office of the Central Income Tax Office at Kottayam. Before they could reach their destination, a party of policemen, with a police van were ready to receive them. The Sub-Inspector was curious to know why the Swatantra Party had chosen an out-of-the-way place like the Income Tax office for picketing. It was explained to him that both the Rubber Board and the State Government supported the agriculturists and that it was the Central Government which was standing in the way. That is why they had chosen a Central Government office. The Sub-Inspector not knowing what to do since the picketing was very peaceful, left to consult his superiors. He returned soon and obviously the instructions were to jail them. Produced before the Magistrate, they pleaded guilty to the charge of picketing and were sentenced to a fine of Rs. 25.00 or in default, simple imprisonment for seven days. All elected the prison sentence.

On 30th July, the Kerala State Committee decided to do something to bring pressure on the Government to accept the Swatantra Party's Food programme. It was decided that a five-man Jatha should start from the constituency of the Food Minister on the 9th and reach Trivandrum—300 miles away—on September 2. Another Jatha was to start from Kasargode and join the main Jatha at Kottayam on 27th August.

According to the latest report from Kerala, the Jathas are now on their way. They were launched on June 22 when a Food Convention was held in Kottayam presided over by Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla, a member of the National Executive.

The Convention resolved to organise groups of volunteers in every village to mobilise public opinion in favour of the suggestion of the Convention. The suggestions contained in the resolution were the abolition of paddy levy, and the restoration of the open market besides stopping of rice rations to the higher income groups.

## ORISSA

The Central Office in cooperation with the Orissa Unit of the Party conducted a very successful Study Camp between the 22nd and 30th July in Bhubaneswar. The subjects covered by the Study Camp ranged from the philosophy of political parties, foreign policy and defence policy to organisational matters and the Party history, ideology, and problems of political democracy.

Among those who lectured to the trainees were Mr. N. Ghosh, Mr. H. Rehman, Prof. K. C. Lalwani, Mr. Raj Vallabh Mishra, Mr. Harihar Das, Mr. Harihar Patel and Mr. Karunakar Das. The Camp was directed by Mr. C. R. Irani of Calcutta.

The day for the trainees began at 5:30 a.m. and ended at 9:30 p.m. with a three-hour break in the afternoon for lunch and rest.

## PUNJAB

A meeting of the State *Ad Hoc* Committee on May 14, demanded the removal of the single State Food Zone system which it said had harmed the producers. It also criticised State Trading in food grains as calculated to convert the grower's profit into the Government's gain. The meeting was also critical of the great delay in the announcement of wheat prices by the State Government and expressed the opinion that the rates fixed by the Government did not provide enough incentive to the growers.

The newly appointed *Ad-Hoc* Committee at its next meeting devoted its attention to organisational matters. A decision has taken to expedite enrolment with a view to setting up primary units in as many constituencies as possible.

According to reports received by this office in the middle of June, the campaign for enrolment was proceeding satisfactorily.

## RAJASTHAN

The State Committee of the Party met in Jaipur on 1st August. After attending to the business of the impending Party elections, the Committee discussed political issues. Referring to the controversy raised about the leadership of the Opposition in the State Assembly the State Committee condemned attempts to raise such a controversy and stated that "in accordance with the established Parliamentary practices the leader of the largest Party in the Opposition is always recognised as a leader of the Opposition and as such this issue should not be made controversial."

Commenting on the defection of Swatantra Legislators in the State Assembly the State Committee adopted the following resolution:



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"The State Executive strongly condemns the recent defections of certain Swatantra M.L.A.s to the Congress Legislature Party. This act is tantamount to a fraud on the electorate and undermines democracy. The Executive directs the workers of the Party to mobilise public opinion against this condemnable act of these legislators.

The Executive resolves that, as far as possible, only those workers of the Party, who have been its members since a long period, should, in future, be set up as the Party's candidates at elections."

On the abolition of Privy Purses the State Committee expressed the opinion that "the Government of India should honour its commitment in order that the people might have faith in the Government. The Government cannot unilaterally abrogate the agreements entered into with the former rulers.

#### UTTAR PRADESH

The West Asian conflict has had its impact on the fortunes of our UP unit.

Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan, who was Minister in the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal cabinet as the Swatantra Party's nominee, along with three others, threatened to resign from the Party in protest against what he called the "pro-Israel" policy of the Party.

The explanation that the Party as such had not taken sides on the issue however did not appear to have satisfied Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan. Anyway, this has resulted in the depletion of our legislative strength.

Although, we are a constituent of the SVD Government, the State Unit of the Party has on more than one occasion made it clear to the SVD Government that its continued support will depend on the adherence of Government's policies to the common agreed programme. For example, the UP unit had to protest over the promulgation by the UP Government of the Rabi Food Grain Order, which had not taken into consideration the varied agricultural conditions prevailing throughout the State.

The State Unit had therefore to ask the Party's workers to dissociate themselves from the Government's procurement drive. Fortunately the UP Government as a result of our protest made many modifications in its original order which made it possible for us to

extend support. In this connection, the President of the UP unit has in a statement clarified the reason why the Swatantra Party which is opposed to compulsory procurement in any form has in UP supported the measure. He also took the opportunity to warn the SVD Government against any attempt to introduce State Trading in Foodgrains. He said: "The Food Minister, Mr. Jharkhande Rai (of the CPI), has been saying for sometime that the runaway prices of foodgrains cannot be brought under control unless the Government resort to State trading in food grains. It seems, as a first step towards State Trading, the Government intend to enter the market as a monopoly purchaser directly from the cultivators.

"State trading is not a part of the SVD common programme and any attempt to introduce it in the guise of monopoly purchase would be resisted by the Swatantra Party.

"The Swatantra Party had agreed to the procurement of rabi food grains on account of abnormal conditions prevailing then. Even if the conditions of scarcity continue, procurement will have to be strictly in accordance with the principles laid down in the common programme of the SVD. The Swatantra Party will strongly oppose any procurement move of the Government if it is done in an arbitrary manner.

"In normal times, we are opposed to compulsory procurement. But in the present abnormal conditions, we have accepted it as a temporary measure. In the common programme of the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal to which the Swatantra Party in UP is committed, three guiding principles of procurement have been laid down viz.

- 1) Procurement will be resorted to only when the price level of foodgrains rises above a specified limit.
- 2) That it will be done only at parity prices, and
- 3) That the producer will always be left with enough stock to meet his family's and agricultural needs.

It was the violation of the third point in the original procurement order of the UP Government that led our unit to protest and refuse to cooperate till the violation had been rectified.

#### Post-Election Publications

|                              |   |               |       |
|------------------------------|---|---------------|-------|
| The People Have Won          | — | M. R. Masani  | 20 p. |
| The Missed Opportunity       | — | M. R. Masani  |       |
| (The Central Budget 1967-68) | — | Charanjit Rai |       |
|                              | — | N. Dandeker   | 20 p. |
| Our Defence Preparedness     | — | N. Dandeker   | 20 p. |
| The People Are Sovereign     | — | Piloo Mody    | 20 p. |



Prohib. Tow  
Birth Control  
Punjabi Suba  
Language  
floor crossing  
West Asian  
conflict

From the General Secretary's desk

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For Party  
Intra-Party  
conflict Chapter  
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## The 21st Principle of the Swatantra Party

Dear Friend:

The conflict between individual conscience and the requirements of Party discipline has often led either to the disruption of political parties or to its members paying lip sympathy to policies with which they disagree but do not have the courage of conviction to express their dissent openly for fear of being either isolated in the Party or evicted from it. The latter being particularly true in the case of a party in power.

The agitation for linguistic States is an example. While certain opposition parties almost broke up on this issue, the ruling Congress Party was internally weakened since its members, even while disagreeing with one another, were averse to expressing their views openly for fear of losing the loaves and fishes of office.

The Swatantra Party had an opportunity to gain from the experience of others and therefore its Founding Fathers very wisely realised that in a country so large as India, with such a variety of communities, customs and languages, it was not only wishful thinking but undemocratic to enforce a monolithic uniformity of views among its members on every subject under the sun.

When the Preparatory Convention of the Party met in Bombay on August 1 and 2, 1959, it laid down a set of 20 principles which constituted the Party's fundamental philosophy. Anyone who agreed with these principles was welcome to join the Party. These 20 principles, mainly economic in character, were the raison d'être of the Party. These were inviolable. Every member of the Swatantra Party had to subscribe and was ideologically committed to the pattern of values and thought outlined in these principles. If a member disagreed with any one of these principles, he had no business to be in the Party.

Having thus prescribed the limits of ideological loyalty, the Convention went on to inscribe the 21st Principle which stated:

"The Swatantra Party holds that democracy is best served if every political party allows freedom of opinion to its members on all matters outside the Fundamental Principles of the Party. It, therefore, gives its members full liberty on all questions not falling within the scope of the Principles stated above."

This is a new concept in the working of India's party politics. And like all new concepts it has been misinterpreted as an attempt to dodge or escape taking a definite stand on "inconvenient" problems.

The criticism runs somewhat like this: "How can a national party which aspires to acquire power at the Centre avoid taking a firm stand on important national problems, such as the official language for instance?"

It is all very well to take such a position when a Party is in opposition. But if it were in power can it avoid taking a stand? In which case would it allow its Members in Parliament to exercise the same freedom?"

The last question is really the most important and the answer to it is an emphatic "Yes". When in office, the Party will necessarily have to take a stand on many important issues on which no clear guidance is to be found in the first 20 Principles. But whether in Office or in Opposition, the Swatantra Party assures its members the freedom of expression contained in the 21st Principle. If the Swatantra Party were in power and the language issue came up before Parliament, every member will have the right and will be allowed to express his opinion freely on the floor of the House according to the dictates of his conscience. No attempt will be made to gag him. And the policy on language that will emerge will not be the Party's policy but Parliament's policy and thus a National Policy. This is genuine democracy. Swatantra Government as the instrument of the National Will through Parliament will implement the policy faithfully.

Will not such a policy hamper the growth of a disciplined party? Will it not destroy its solidarity? Not at all. On the contrary, well defined loyalty confined to ideological necessities has actually helped to strengthen the Party. There have been occasions in the past when even the national leadership has differed on issues like Prohibition, Birth Control, Language, Punjabi Suba etc. All these issues fall outside the Fundamental Principles of the Party. The national leadership agree to disagree among themselves and carry on with the business of the Party which is to protect individual liberty, oppose Statism and prescribe the kind of economic policies which will lead the country to prosperity.

This Newsletter itself carries two issues in the fields of domestic and foreign policies where the leadership expresses divergent views viz., the post election phenomenon of floor crossing and the conflict in West Asia. Neither of these issues is covered by the Principles of the Party. The differences have in no way impaired the Party's unity even though four UP Legislators, despite being given full freedom to take any stand they liked on the West Asian conflict, decided to resign leading one to suspect that the real reasons for the resignation must be sought elsewhere.



(X)  
I am convinced that the 21st Principle is a salutary innovation in Indian politics. The Common Programme evolved by United Front Governments are in fact an extension of the Swatantra Party's 21st Principle to cover the requirements of a multi-party "coalition" government.

The 21st Principle is the ideal compromise which preserves individual liberty without sacrificing Party discipline. It is also an honest, open compromise. Far from being an escapist solution it promotes the deve-

lopment of a truly democratic alternative with definite objectives which do not get side-tracked by emotional issues which though appearing important at any given moment do not really have a fundamental relevance towards the development of a prosperous society.

Jai Swatantra

*L. S. Dantla*

### **Swatantra Publications**

The Central Office of the Swatantra Party publishes two journals — SWATANTRA IN PARLIAMENT and SWATANTRA NEWSLETTER as also various pamphlets on important national topics from time to time. Hitherto, the journals were sent free as also the pamphlets although the latter are nominally priced.

While we would have liked to continue doing so, the high cost of printing compels us to charge our readers even nominally and recover a part of the cost of printing.

Therefore, we now introduce a subscription scheme beginning with October 1967, whereby all those who pay a sum of Rs. 10/- per annum will receive copies of the two journals as also the publications that are put out by the Central Office for a period of one year.

In this issue, you will find a self-addressed card. If you are interested in receiving regularly our literature, please fill in the Card and return it to us.

Your cooperation in this matter will ensure that there is no reduction in the production of literature published by the Central Office.

Please also read all about our special introductory offer on the card attached to this issue of the Newsletter.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Swatantra Party — Central Office

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