

Central Meetings in Bombay

The Central Parliamentary Board, National Executive and General Council of the Party met in Bombay from May 26 to 29, 1966. The presence in the city of the General Secretaries of various State Units was availed of to have a Secretaries' meeting on May 29, 1966.

Central Parliamentary Board

Prof. Ranga presided over the meetings of the Central Parliamentary Board on May 26 and 29.

The Board reviewed the recently concluded biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads. *Swatantra Newsletter* No. 57 has already carried a detailed report on these elections.

The efforts made by the Party to secure co-operation between Opposition Parties was another matter which was discussed at considerable length. In this connection, it was reported to the Board that the efforts made to convene a joint meeting of the Parliamentary Boards of non-communist Opposition Parties (see *Swatantra Newsletter* No. 57) in Delhi on May 8th, 1966, had to be postponed in the light of inadequate response from the invitees.

In the light of this experience, it was decided that the Party should continue bilateral talks with other democratic Opposition Parties. The Board decided that electoral arrangements with national Parties should be at the national level and with State Parties at State level. The Party's policy should be one of double rejection— i.e. the object should be to defeat the Congress and at the same time to have no truck with the Communists of either variety.

Certain guidance was given for the conduct of such negotiations, both with National and State parties, and this has been communicated to State Units.

The Board reviewed the progress made by the Party's prospective parliamentary candidates so far nominated and had before it a report on constituencies and candidates prepared by the Central Office.

Certain proposals made by the General Secretary with a view to securing decentralisation in regard to the preparation for the next year's General Elections and to ensure maximum devolution were considered and accepted. The main points of the modification in

the constituency level organisation are that full-time organisers are placed directly under the supervision and control of the candidate and the three-man committee in the Constituency, subject to the overall supervision of the State and the Central Offices. State Units have been asked to suggest wherever necessary a reconstitution of three-man committees. State Units have been requested to show greater initiative than they have done so far in supervising the work of the prospective candidates, three-man committees and organisers and providing them with the necessary leadership, direction and guidance. Certain procedures for expeditious consideration by the Central Parliamentary Board of recommendations of prospective Assembly candidates received from State Units were also evolved.

Eleven more prospective parliamentary candidates were nominated, thus bringing the total number of parliamentary candidates so far nominated to 58. The breakdown of these 11 is as follows:

Rajasthan (2), Uttar Pradesh (1), Madras (5), Orissa, (1), Mysore (1) and Gujarat (1).

A beginning was made with the nomination of prospective Assembly Candidates with the nomination of 11 Assembly Candidates from U.P.

National Executive

The National Executive met on May 26 and 29, with Prof. Ranga in the Chair.

Apart from drafting various Resolutions for consideration by the General Council, the Executive attended to the following organisational business.

Disciplinary Action

In *Swatantra Newsletter* No. 57 we had reported on the acts of indiscipline by certain members of the Party in the U. P. Legislature and others in connection with the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads from that State. Of the nine persons charged with indiscipline, the following four expressed regret for their conduct:

Mr. Mangal Prasad MLA
Mr. Charanji Lal, MLA
Mr. Ram Singh, MLA and
Mr. Balbir Singh, MLA.

They were reprimanded and debarred from holding elective office in the Party for one year.

The following were expelled from the Party after the Executive had gone into the charges levelled against them and the explanations furnished by them:

Mr. Virendra Shah, MLC
Mr. Chaitanya Raj Singh
Mr. Munni Singh, MLA,
Mr. Vijay Singh, MLA and
Mr. Harikrishna Srivastava.

Major Bhatnagar, a former joint Secretary of the Rajasthan Unit of the Party, was expelled for indiscipline, after the Executive had considered the charges levelled by the State Unit and his explanation.

On the recommendation of the Orissa State Unit, and after satisfying itself that certain members charged with indiscipline had been given every chance to explain their conduct, the National Executive accepted the State Unit's recommendation and expelled the following three members from membership of the Party:

Mr. Hari Krishna Mody
Mr. Bhaskar Mohanty
Mr. Gopal Chandra Das

Next National Convention

It was decided that the National Convention of the Party should be held in the first half of November and Delhi was decided upon as the tentative venue.

Draft Manifesto

A drafting group consisting of the President, General Secretary and Joint Secretary was constituted to draft an Election Manifesto to be placed before the next National Convention. State Units have been called upon to make various suggestions for inclusion in the Manifesto, as also to prepare and submit draft State Manifestos.

PUNJAB BIFURCATION

In the context of the bifurcation of the Punjab into Punjabi Suba and Haryana States, the National Executive decided to replace the present State Committee by two separate Ad Hoc Committees as follows:

Punjabi Suba

President:

Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman

General Secretary:

Sardar Basant Singh

Members:

Mr. C. L. Aggarwal
Brigadier Pritam Singh
Sardar Lal Singh Sandhu
Smt. Nirlep Kaur
Sardar Gobinder Singh

Sardar Darshan Singh Sultanwind
Sardar Gurdip Singh Bhullar
Dr. Mehar Singh
Mr. K. C. Gupta
Sardar Balbir Singh Brar
Sardar Hardam Singh Sidhu
Shri Niranjan Pal
Sardar Surinder Singh Virk
Sardar Karnail Singh Brar
Sardar Uttam Singh
Sardar Gurmej Singh, MLA
Sardar Natha Singh Dallah
Sardar Mihan Singh Gill
Bedi Raghbir Singh
Bedi Gurbaksh Singh
Mr. Surendranath Khosla
Sardar Gurdev Singh Mann

Haryana:

The following 4-man Committee, with powers to coopt not more than 3 members, was set up:

Choudhry Ram Singh
Mr. P. L. Bakshi and
Mr. K. C. Jain
Choudhry Inder Singh (Convenor)

General Council

The General Council met on May 27 and 28, with Prof. Ranga in the chair. It coopted, on the recommendation of the National Executive, the following to the Council:

Mr. Charanjit Rai,
Mr. Sundermani Patel, MP,
Mr. Man Singh Mahar, MLA,
Mr. Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta,
Mr. H. M. Patel,
Mr. Satish Malhotra,
Mr. N. K. Ganapiah,
Mr. C. C. Desai and
Mr. Y. G. Gowd.

Extending term of office of elected committees and office-bearers beyond end of 1966:

On the recommendation of the National Executive, the Council unanimously adopted the following resolution extending the term of office of the Party's elected Committees and office-bearers beyond the end of 1966:

"In view of the General Elections in 1967 and the desirability of concentrating on them, the General Council resolves, subject to the approval of the National Convention, that the term of office of all elected bodies and office-bearers of the Party be extended beyond the end of 1966 by not more than one year."

The Resolution was moved by Mr. R. N. Singh Deo of Patna and seconded by Thakur Mandhata Singh.

Resolutions

Fifteen resolutions on the following subjects were

adopted at the two-day meeting of the Council, the full texts of which form an Annexure to this issue.

- (1) Condolence
- (2) Continuance of Emergency
- ✓ (3) Continuance and extension of "Control-Licence -Permit-Quota" Raj.
- (4) Gold Control
- (5) Foreign Loans
- ✓ (6) Trend towards Party Dictatorship
- (7) Misdirected Discontent
- (8) Bastar
- (9) Drought Situation in Orissa
- (10) Nuclear Bomb
- (11) Nationalisation of Text Books
- ✓ (12) Chanda Committee Report
- (13) Food
- (14) The Mizo Hills
- ✓ (15) Resignation of Central and State Cabinets three months before the General Elections.

Meeting of Secretaries of State Units

The General Secretary took the Chair at a meeting of Secretaries of State Units held on the morning of

Sunday, May 29, 1966. Among those present at the meeting were the General Secretaries of Andhra, Gujarat, Kerala, Madras, Maharashtra, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, as well as representatives from Assam, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Indore.

The discussions held at this meeting centred round practical organisational problems. Thus, for instance, tentative dates of State Conventions, to avoid an overlapping of dates, were decided upon in the case of Mysore, Madras, Rajasthan, Orissa, Gujarat, Andhra, and the Punjab. Several suggestions for the improved functioning of the Central and State Offices and for the establishment of better communications between the Central Office and State Offices were discussed and agreed upon.

Other items discussed included the utility of full-time organisers; the need for camps for party workers at State level; the question of the formation of a volunteer force; the work of the labour wing; and the difficulties encountered in the renewal of volunteer's subscriptions.

Press Comments on Bombay Meetings

The recent Swatantra Party meetings in Bombay obtained better coverage than usual. We were front-page news in most of the national dailies. We came in for much editorial comment, especially in regard to the various resolutions adopted by the General Council, as also Rajaji's speech at Chowpatty on May 29. At least one national daily took note of the business-like manner in which the Party conducted its meetings and contrasted it with the "tamasha" that was the A.I.C.C.

Below are extracts from a cross-section of these comments.

"Swatantra Session" election

"It must be conceded that the recent Swatantra convention, unlike the A.I.C.C. session, was comparatively a businesslike affair. Its intention is to develop into the main opposition party in the Lok Sabha and it has negotiated electoral agreements with non-communist parties in some States and its plans include similar pacts in various parts of the country. This sort of thing cannot be entirely ascribed to political cynicism. Obviously the decisive factors that have entered into its electoral calculations are the split in the Communist Party and Congress disarray in Kerala, West Bengal and Orissa. Its hopes of improving its position in the Lok Sabha, where it is already the largest opposition party are, therefore, based on far from flimsy grounds. The same can be said of its objective of forming governments in three States, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa. These aims

are certainly not over-ambitious, if they are also not particularly easy to achieve.

"Its opposition, on economic grounds, to the manufacture of nuclear weapons and its acknowledgment that a certain minimum degree of State control is necessary have helped to reshape the party's image into something more relevant and realistic. Nevertheless, there is perhaps—even for an opposition party that is comparatively more articulate than the others—a tendency to over-criticise to the point of failing to present its own programme to the electorate more precisely than it has done so far. What it has to say on such issues as State controls, the Gold Control Order and the Emergency can generally be endorsed and is indeed shared by a large number of people who are not members of the Swatantra Party. Some of them in fact can be found within the Congress, the implication of which is that the forces for modification and adaptation within the Congress require the Swatantra Party to define its programme and objectives with precision and force. Its assurance that if in power it will free the economy from controls to the extent possible and desirable certainly makes for flexibility but not for clarity. It is surely desirable for the Swatantra Party to be known not so much for what it is against as for what it represents and is striving to achieve."

(Times of India 1st June 1966)

In this connection the following comment in the Evening News of India of May 24 on the AICC Session will amuse readers:

"...For three days they talked and talked...It was three days of sound and fury, of boat rides in the harbour and floor shows at Juhu, of receptions and felicitations, of mammoth public meetings and small tea parties. Some went for private screenings in miniature theatres, others for public shows by invitations which they never received...The biggest show however went on its biggest hall... But all good things must come to an end, and yesterday around 8 p.m. a brass band dressed in blue shorts played the final fanfare, the crowds cheered, and in ones and twos the familiar and not so familiar faces drove away from Bombay's biggest theatre in their Pontiacs and Oldsmobiles..."

"Challenging Congress Power"

"The Swatantra Party need not take too dismal a view of its immediate political future as one of the important parties of discontent and dissent. Indeed the objective circumstances in our country are far more favourable to it at the present time than they had been in any period since its inception..."

The Swatantra Party is entitled to attempt to paint its image on a much wider political canvas. This is because it has the advantage that, from the beginning, it has set out with a broad ideology and outlook. In fact, thanks partly to the intellectual catholicity of its founder, the Swatantra Party is the least inhibited among our political groupings. For the present, however, the Swatantra Party's political ambitions must necessarily be modest so as to be in line with its current capabilities. In elections to State legislatures, the Swatantra Party could still campaign with considerable effect on the issue of clean and efficient administration and this may bring appreciable political dividends in States, such as Orissa. At the all-India level, the Party has already, in a sense, asserted itself as the most important non-communist challenger of the economic credo of the Congress. Since public opinion is also running against excessive State regulation of or interference with economic activity, the Swatantra view-point must be acceptable to large numbers of our people, particularly in the business community. It is interesting to note that the All-India Manufacturers' Organisation, at its recent discussions in the Capital, had expressed views or made criticisms of government policies along almost the same lines as the Swatantra Party. The leadership of the party should capitalise on this advantage by expressing its economic programme in as simple, direct and concise terms as possible."

(*Eastern Economist*, 3rd June 1966)

"The Swatantra Party"

"The ruling Congress Party, with an uncanny instinct or capacity for survival, has mastered the art of stealing the Opposition's thunder or taking the wind out of its sails. That Party, incidentally, has al-

ready stolen the Socialists' thunder by appropriating several socialist planks and begun, of late, to take the wind out of Swatantra's sails either by implementing some measures of economic liberalisation or by going slow on certain policies challenged by the latter. Thanks to these principal factors, the Swatantra Party—at one time thought of as a pole on the Right, destined to attract towards itself all the conservative or liberal-conservative forces—is yet to perform, let alone succeed in, its appointed role. What is worse still, this young Party, which is cut out for this responsible democratic role, lacks, as of now, a coherent policy based on economic realities, positive ideas and concrete programmes. This is as surprising as it is unfortunate, considering that there is no dearth of intellectual talent in the Party and that a homogeneous constitutional Opposition is desirable in itself as a bulwark of democracy."

"To say this is not to deny that the Swatantra, as an Opposition Party, has succeeded, to some extent, in restraining socialist excesses (or what threatened to be so) on the part of the ruling Party or in reversing or modifying certain official policies. Its raging and tearing campaigns against nationalisation, State trading in foodgrains, land ceilings and co-operative joint farming have demonstrably succeeded in watering down the policies pertaining to them."

"Likewise, the Swatantra Party's campaign against controls and excessive regulation of the economy, its plea for greater priority to agriculture and road transport, its criticism of extravagant public expenditure and excessive taxation, its defence of private enterprise, and so on, have not been wholly unavailing. The campaign against controls, for instance, has doubtless created a climate for liberalisation. In fact, the relevant official policies have lately come in for reappraisal on a wide front."

(*Commerce*, 4th June 1966)

"... the way to totalitarianism"

"After the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Bombay, with its extensive press reports, intimate details, and inside information on the power groupings at the top of the ruling hierarchy, the bare, business-like reports of the Swatantra Party meeting in the same city a few days later lacked excitement. But they filled more space, and were given more prominence than has happened before. Some of the daily newspapers seem to agree that the glamour of ruling personalities cannot much longer conceal the failure of policy, and that the time has come to consider seriously a radical departure from the line which has prevailed, with such dubious results, for the past ten years."

"It is becoming clear in one department after another that the State's economic operations have a very pronounced tendency to fail of their purpose, and the Swatantra Party resolutions on agriculture and gold control, and on the general economic poli-

cy adopted by the A.I.C.C. meeting, repeat its basic demand that as far as possible natural market forces be trusted to secure economic progress.

"This general idea it also boldly extends to the policy on foreign aid. It agrees that India needs a very large import of foreign capital in the immediate future, but points out that whether we like it or not, foreign capital in the form of government loans is becoming more difficult to get, and is increasingly revealing its defects—its tendency to stop at awkward moments, as happened last year, and its involvement with politics or 'strings.' It also expresses alarm at the increase in the foreign debt, which is already a grave embarrassment, and if increased further as proposed for the Fourth Plan by the Planning Minister's negotiations in America, will become a veritable millstone round the collective neck....

"The resolutions mentioned the prolongation of the Defence of India Act under the pretence of restricting its area of application, the events in the Mizo Hills and Bastar, and the attacks on railway property and passengers. There is indeed enough to set a responsible Government wondering whether it has done all it ought to have done, and done some things which it ought not to have done.

"There is, however, evidence in some of these cases that the Government and the ruling party have a more direct responsibility. A Swatantra Party mem-

ber from the Mizo Hills reported his conviction that what was mainly responsible there was the Congress Party's intolerance of power groupings independent of itself and not under its control.

"This account is by a man in a position to know, and is quite in line with tendencies with which we are all familiar; it is perfectly credible. Nor would it be surprising if the inquiry reveals that something similar led to the tragedy in Bastar.

"It is not, therefore, merely the heated imagination of an opposition party which discerns evidence of developing totalitarianism in India. There are trends that way, in the activities of the Central Government, of the State Governments,—who are mainly responsible for the continuation of the D.I.R.—and of the local Congress bodies. The trend is given powerful support by the party's economic policy, which increases enormously the Government's and therefore the party's power, and correspondingly the attraction of ruling. It is also increased by the habit of political monopoly which twenty years of almost undisputed rule in most parts of the country has engendered.

"Of all the alternatives before him, the Swatantra Party can claim to have been the first to anticipate the troubles which are now being experienced, and the most cogent and consistent in analysing their causes and pointing out the remedies. It should have the first claim to a trial as the alternative government."
(*Mysindia*, 5th June 1966)

Rajaji in Bombay

Rajaji told a mass rally at Chowpatty in Bombay on May 29 that the Congress rule had reduced the people to the state of bullocks.

Launching the party's election campaign, the elder statesman said amidst cheers: "You have in 1967 an opportunity to wake from your bullockhood and become men and women again."

In an attack against the ruling party packed with satire, he said that the directed economy of the Congress Government bristling with controls had deprived the individual of all his freedom, reducing him to a beast of burden with a string in its nose for controlling and directing it. He exhorted the people to shake themselves up from the state of servility in which they had been remaining so long as not even to be aware of such a state. While he could understand some controls, he could not think of controls of anything and everything. Even during the British regime he said, there was greater freedom for the people.

The Difference: Rajaji explained that the final and intermediate goals of the Congress and the Swatantra parties were the same. But the difference was in the method of attaining the goal. The Swatantra Party, he asserted, totally objected to the in-

tervention of the State in all affairs. The Congress Government wanted to direct from Delhi everything, reducing the country to a licence-permit raj. Congress rule, he said, had brought 'abominable' indebtedness to the nation and resulted in the imposition of monstrous taxes. Foreign loans, he pointed out, increased the servility of the individual.

While assuming power from the British the Congress had promised to give a good rule to the country and that promise had been broken, Rajaji asserted. If Mahatma Gandhi had been aware of the extent of controls and taxes that would be imposed by the future Congress Government, he would not have promoted the Congress campaign in the pre-independence days, he said. And today if Mahatma Gandhi were to witness the state of affairs, he would have certainly told the Government to resign. The people of India, he said, were so poor that they could not even comprehend the extent of the nation's indebtedness which was so vast. "How can you support a Party which does not even regret about such a state of affairs and wants to continue the same policy?" he asked.

Free Poll: Prof. N. G. Ranga, president of the Swatantra Party, demanded that Congress Minis-

tries at the Centre and the States should resign at least three months before the General Elections to ensure free and unfettered elections.

He said that the Five-Year Plans were being held as red herrings before the people in the pre-election days and that those who did not vote Congress to power were being punished by the non-implementation of the Plan wherever the Congress was defeated. The Congress, he said, was ruling the country on a minority vote and this was because the Opposition parties had not come together.

Referring to the agitations and *bundhs* in the country, he said that the "Congress body politic is suffering from diabetes. When one carbuncle is healed another one erupts."

Ten years ago, Prof. Ranga said, the country required only 1.5 million tons of food grains import and today, after 18 years of Congress rule, the requirement had gone up to 11.5 million tons.

Mrs. Shantabai Gulabchand welcomed the gathering, and Mr. Piloo Mody proposed a vote of thanks.

(Addressing a large gathering of businessmen and industrialists at a dinner arranged by the Bombay Unit of the party on May 26, Rajaji asked them to withdraw their support to the Congress, if the Congress reign of fear was to be ended.

"What is the secret of the Congress rule?" he asked. Answering the question himself he said all important people in the country supported the Congress. "If businessmen and industrialists withdraw their support to the Congress, stop giving money to its election fund, the Congress must withdraw like the British," he said.)

Devaluation — First Reactions

Rajaji, on learning of the devaluation of the rupee, described it as a "consequence of the mismanagement during the last 15 years. This we cannot help."

"It is no good camouflaging the fall in the real value of our rupee. Our insolvency is a fact, he added.

"This mismanagement must be terminated in 1967. Those who allowed the long misrule have no right to be shocked now. We have to suffer the distress caused by the devaluation."

Mr. M. R. Masani, General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, commented: "Devaluation is a drastic remedy for a desperate economic disease, namely, the depreciation in the value of the country's currency as a result of inflationary policies.

"It will bring loss and hardship to large sections of the people. In my speeches in the Lok Sabha on the Budget, both in 1965 and this year, I had warned the Government that the Budget proposals would, if persisted in, make devaluation unavoidable.

"Even now, whatever merits the measure may have will be lost if the present policies of the Con-

Only Way: The Government that robbed the people of the freedom of trade and business was worse than the British Government that robbed us of self-government, he said. The only way the poor of this country could be helped was to create more opportunities of employment and not to give doles.

When the Swatantra Party was formed, he had thought, so also Mr. Nehru, that a large number of people would join it because the party was formed on reasonable principles. But that had not happened. If only men had acted according to their conscience and done the right thing, the Swatantra Party would have defeated the Congress in the last elections, he added.

The Party critics asked how could the Swatantra Party function without control. "You don't want controls." It was wrong to say that his party wanted everything to be uncontrolled. Some control was necessary but certainly not the control the Congress had imposed.)

Ignorance: There was abundant ignorance in the country about what the Swatantra stood for, he said, adding that the party should work systematically to educate the people. He called upon industrialists and businessmen not to donate to the Congress election fund. There was the fear among them that if they did not give money for elections, they would be victimised.

Rajaji assured them that there were still a large number of people in the country who thought the right way and who would oppose any victimisation by the ruling party.

Mr. N. Dandekar welcomed Mr. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Piloo Mody proposed a vote of thanks.

gress Government are persisted in. For instance, if the proposed Fourth Plan, in its present shape and size is imposed on the country, there will be further inflation and the value of the rupee will fall greatly below the level at which it is now sought to be pegged. All the evils from which the country has been suffering would once again recur.

"Devaluation can stimulate exports and promote the inflow of foreign capital, which the country needs, only if it is the beginning of a radical change in policies and the acceptance of economic realism in place of the present doctrinaire policies."

In a statement, Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, M.P. said: "It is shocking that the Government has not a word to say about the unplanned money supply as a result of which during the past one year prices have risen by as much as 16 per cent. At this rate, we shall have to repeat devaluation every third year. It is this situation that has caused untold misery to our people and, at the same time, has frightened foreign investors. Nobody in India or abroad would be deceived by such panicky measures."

from The General Secretary's desk

Dear friend,

I do not think I can do better this month than to share with our readers the concluding portion of my Report on Organisation to the General Council of our Party which met in Bombay on 27th and 28th May, 1966, when there was a prolonged and useful discussion on the Report.

"In the Statement on Organisation approved by the General Council last year, the following targets had been envisaged:

- (i) Wiping out the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha by carrying a large number of seats for the Swatantra Party,
- (ii) Elimination of the Congress majority and the establishment of Swatantra or Swatantra-led Governments in two or three States,
- (iii) Becoming the principal opposition in some other States.

The order in which these targets were set out in the Statement on Organisation approved by the General Council last year is unquestionably a sound one. The fight against Statism has essentially to be waged at the Centre where not only the Congress Government and the Planning Commission but the deleterious policies by which they have brought the country to its present plight have to be combated. The State Governments, as Rajaji has often put it, have become glorified Municipalities and District Boards dependent on the Centre for grants and overdrafts. It is unquestionable, therefore, that the centre of gravity and power in this country lie in New Delhi. It is only if the Swatantra Party multiplies its strength in the Lok Sabha several times over that the Congress Party can be denied a majority and its monopoly of power over the Union Government can be ended. This involves the adoption of a large number of prospective Parliamentary candidates throughout the country.

While, therefore, it would be a spectacular success for the Party to carry a couple of States as it hopes to do, and the Party has in fact during the past year given priority to the States where we are in the strongest position, any undue diversion of effort and resources to one or two States would not only, in the pursuit of the second objective, be unfair to the Party in other parts of the country but would limit the number of Parliamentary candidates that will need to be put up and thus strike a blow at the very first objective of the Party, as also at the third objective.

It would be fair to conclude from the facts available that, while the broad lines of organisation laid down by the General Council at its last meeting have helped to some extent to galvanise Party activity and to pull it out of the condition in which it was in the beginning of 1965, the progress towards the achievement of these targets has not been as satisfactory as

had been envisaged last year. Force of habit and the lethargy which is common to all political parties in India in between General Elections have unfortunately come in the way of the incentives offered for the early nomination of candidates and the effective nursing of constituencies yielding the expected response and results. Indeed, as has been mentioned earlier, those very incentives have, in some cases, though these are not representative, been made to serve purposes other than those the Party had in mind.

More Rapid Advance

The main problem before the Party at this moment appears to be how to move on from the 47 prospective Parliamentary candidates who are now in position to several times that number, along with a correspondingly larger number of Assembly candidates, between now and the National Convention which is being planned for later this year without diluting the quality of the prospective candidates and thus frustrating the very sound objectives which the General Council, the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board have set before themselves.

It is more than likely that there are a large number of good men in fundamental agreement with the Party's policies who are today either passive members of the Party or not even on the roll of Workers but who may be prepared to consider becoming the Party's standard-bearers at the next General Elections. This may be particularly true of the kind of young and dynamic men and women whom a Party of modern, twentieth-century thought like the Swatantra Party should be able to rally to its ranks but which it has so far failed adequately to do.

It is to be hoped that the Election Manifesto of the Party which will emerge from the Convention later this year may provide a rallying cry to a much wider cross-section of public opinion in this country than the Party has yet been able to attract to its ranks but for the purpose we have in mind—of placing an adequate number of the right kind of candidates in the field well in advance of the elections—this would in any event be too late.

Broaden the Base

It is therefore suggested that the Party should appeal to good men and true who find themselves in

basic agreement with the Party's philosophy and policies to come forward and volunteer to stand as the Party's candidates for Parliament and State Assemblies. This would broaden the Party's base and widen its reach. There need be no inhibition on our part in making such a call through false considerations of Party prestige. The Swatantra Party, as Rajaji has so often stressed, wants to see the Congress Government replaced by a good and efficient Government in which the Swatantra Party would be prepared to play its part but which it would have no desire to monopolise. There should be room in such a Government, if we can achieve it, not only for members of other democratic Opposition Parties but also for good citizens outside the field of Party politics whether from the ranks of professions, business, peasants, labour or Sarvodaya.

It was in this spirit that the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party invited Acharya Kripalani, a distinguished non-Party Opposition figure, to accept nomination for the Rajya Sabha in the recent biennial elections from the U.P. and it is a matter for regret that certain interests in the U.P. Unit of the Party had neither the imagination to see the virtues of this proposal nor the discipline to give effect to it. The fact remains, however, that there was widespread appreciation in the country of this particular step taken by the Party and that it raised the Party's stock among many who were not wedded to its ideology. If, therefore, Rajaji's approach is to be carried out by the Swatantra Party, it would be in the fitness of things that the ranks of the Party's candidates next year, whether for Parliament or Assembly, should include a large number of good men and women who need not so far have been identified with the Party's organisation.

Electoral Understandings

Despite the Party's consistent efforts to arrive at an electoral adjustment or agreement with other non-Communist Opposition Parties, it has to be conceded that little progress has so far been made. In an effort at breaking through this impasse, the Central Parliamentary Board, at its meeting in Madras on February 26 and 27, 1966, decided to take the imaginative step of inviting non-Communist Opposition Parties to a joint meeting in Delhi during the Budget Session of Parliament, which has just concluded, of members of their Parliamentary Boards for a free exchange of views without any commitments whatsoever in order to explore the maximum amount of cooperation that could be achieved. It is a matter of profound regret that the response, though enthusiastic in certain quarters, was not widespread enough to enable a representative meeting to be held with the result that the meeting proposed to be called on 8th May had reluctantly to be postponed since the only Parties that

agreed to send their representatives to participate in the meeting were the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Republican Party, the Hindu Mahasabha and one of the two wings of the Akali Dal.

Notwithstanding this lack of response, efforts to arrive at bilateral electoral understandings which would prevent a distortion of the popular will, such as has taken place in past elections owing to their absence, are being pursued by our Party and talks are at present proceeding with various non-communist Opposition Parties, in the case of State Parties at the State level and in the case of national Parties both at National and State levels. The Party should, in this context, guard against the temptation to lose patience and resort to shortcuts by attempting to make adjustments at only State or local levels with national Parties. There are obvious dangers in such an approach. It should be clear that it is not feasible for two parties to cooperate with each other in some States while they are at loggerheads in other States. Similarly, for reasons that Rajaji so clearly explained in *Swarajya* recently, it would be very harmful to the Party's image and prospects if it were to allow itself to be drawn into an opportunist electoral understanding with one or the other Communist Party or a Communist dominated organisation like the Janta Parishad in Ahmedabad.

While pursuing these efforts undeterred and with vigour till the end, the Swatantra Party should be careful to ensure, as was well said in the Resolution of the last National Convention in Bangalore in February 1964, that "such efforts should be no reason for any slackening in building up the Party's own organisation which should enjoy the highest priority among our tasks."

The Constituencies

Another matter to which the Central Parliamentary Board, the National Executive and the General Council may well give some thought is in regard to toning up the functioning of the Party's organisation at constituency level. In the light of the experience gained during the past fifteen months, the problem resolves itself into two facets: first, better coordination between the prospective candidates, 3-Man Committees and the full-time Organisers on one side and District and Constituency Committees on the other; and secondly, their more active functioning resulting, in particular, in the Party's appeal percolating to the level of the villages.

In so far as the first problem is concerned, the placing of the full-time Organiser directly under the supervision and control of the candidate and the 3-Man Committee is a measure that may well be taken.

Since the candidate and the members of the 3-Man Committee will have to play a key role during the next nine months, it is recommended that a scrutiny by the State units be made of the member-

ship of the 3-Man Committees, several of whom are at present not meeting at all or functioning inefficiently so that, wherever necessary, they may be re-constituted by agreement between the prospective candidate and the office-bearers of the State unit who had originally cooperated in recommending them.

In order that smoother coordination of work at constituency level may be facilitated and increasing dynamism imparted to it, it is proposed that joint meetings of prospective candidates, members of 3-Man Committees and Field Organisers should be called by each State unit, at which the General Secretary or Joint Secretary of the Party would also try to be present or to be represented. It is hoped that in this and other ways, the Party apparatus at the State level will take greater initiative in providing leadership, direction and guidance to the Party's prospective candidates and the 3-man committees.

In the last analysis, the success of the Swatantra Party will depend on the efforts of its own members and not on what the ruling Party or others may do to frustrate the pursuit of our objectives. Our future is in our own hands. Senator Dirksen, the American Republican leader, with his extensive and profound experience has seen this point and given expression to it recently when he said:

'Parties do not defeat each other. Generally speaking, parties defeat themselves. A party becomes a victim of its mistakes and of its blunders.'

Jai Swatantra!

Indira Gandhi
June 1966

Annexure

Text of Resolutions adopted by the General Council in Bombay on May 27 and 28, 1966.

Condolence

This meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party records with a deep sense of sorrow the passing away of the following Party colleagues. It conveys its sympathies to the family of the bereaved. The Party and the country are poorer by their loss.

Mr. V. P. Menon, Member of the General Council.

Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, Vice-President, Swatantra Party and Kisan Leader.

Mr. A. D. Shroff, Member of the General Council.

Maharaja S. P. Singh Deo of Dhenkanal, M.P., Member of the General Council.

Mr. Ramaswamy Konar, President, Tirunelveli District Unit of the Party.

Mr. Dwarkadas, Treasurer, Hyderabad District Unit of the Party.

Mr. S. Hameed, Vice-President, Swatantra Party, Tamil Nad.

Thakur Saheb Bhanu Pratap Singh of Dudu, President, Jaipur District Unit of the Party.

Moved from the Chair

Continuance of Emergency

1. The General Council condemns without reserve the continuance in force of the Proclamation of Emergency and expresses its complete lack of faith in the assurance that, in practice, "Government by DIR" will be restricted to border areas only.

2. It is obvious that the Central Government has yielded to the pressure of the State Governments who wish to govern with Emergency powers and not

under the Constitution which empowers all adequate measures in cases of real danger or emergency.

3. The Council is of the view that there are more than adequate powers already in existence to ensure the security of the border areas, such as the Preventive Detention Act, the Disturbed Areas Act in Assam, Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, Special Regulations in Kashmir and Criminal Procedure Code.

Moved by Sir Homi Mody
Seconded by Mr. S. S. Mariswamy

Continuance and Extension of "Control-Licence-Permit-Quota" Raj.

The General Council views with grave concern the threat implicit in the recent resolution of the AICC, to continue and, indeed, to intensify the pernicious system of a rigidly controlled and regulated economy, involving Permits, Licences, Quotas and the like, by extending the range, scope and depth of that policy over the whole field of national economic life, including procurement and distribution.

This system of controls is an obstacle in the way of national economic progress. It also results in widespread fear and corruption, and is calculated to help the Party in power to perpetuate its rule.

Moved by Mr. N. Dandekar
Seconded by Mr. H. M. Patel

Gold Control

The General Council recalls the Swatantra Party's implacable opposition, from the very outset, to the Gold Control Order issued under the DIR and to the subsequent Gold Control Act.

Experience of Gold Control over more than three years has fully vindicated this stand. The Gold Control

measures were wholly ill-conceived; they did not and could not possibly, achieve their declared objectives and in the process of their enforcement, they have not only intensified all the evils they sought to cure, but have also caused untold hardships and misery on large sections of the community.

The Council therefore demands the immediate and total repeal of the Gold Control law which is now condemned by the whole country.

Moved by Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, MP

Seconded by Mr. P. A. Krishna Rao

Foreign Loans

The General Council of the Swatantra Party reiterates the Party's stand on the subject of foreign loans as adumbrated in its Election Manifesto of 1962 viz., that "the Swatantra Party is totally opposed to the policy of huge foreign debts being incurred" and that such extensive foreign aid "hangs on the slender thread of international peace which may snap any day." The warning given by the Party at the time of the last General Elections has been amply justified by the way in which foreign aid was discontinued during the hostilities between this country and Pakistan and the difficulties that are being encountered in securing its resumption.

2. While recognising the need for short-term foreign aid to extricate India from the economic plight in which she finds herself as the result of the ruinous economic policies of the Congress Government, the Council expresses great concern at the present efforts of the Congress Government at raising in preference to and at the cost of foreign investment, foreign loans of colossal proportions on a Government-to-Government basis in an attempt to bolster its discredited economic policies and plans and to perpetuate its tenure of office.

3. There are three distinct respects in which Government-to-Government loans are at a disadvantage viz., their wasteful and inefficient use generally, the fact that they come at this nation's risk which has in any event to repay both capital and interest, and the fact that such borrowing has political implications. None of these disadvantages apply in the case of private capital.

4. The General Council, while accepting the desirability of obtaining foreign loans for the production of equipment for defence, building the infra-structure and industrial activity in private enterprise, is of the view that what this country needs is the creation of conditions in which the effective investment of domestic and foreign capital is made possible by basic changes in the nation's economic policy, the abandonment of Statism, and the removal of needlessly restrictive controls, excessive taxation and inflationary policies.

Moved by Mr. M. R. Masani

Seconded by Mr. C. K. Irani

Trend Towards Party Dictatorship

The General Council of the Party notes that recent actions and procedures of the Union Government are calculated to transfer all Constitutional power from Parliament to the Congress Party organisation. This is an attack on the Constitution of the country and should be halted by action on the part of the electorate otherwise the Government of our country will soon approximate to the system of Government prevailing in Communist countries and will not be consistent with the Constitution adopted in 1950 and Parliamentary Government contemplated therein.

Moved from the Chair

Misdirected Discontent

This Council strongly condemns the recent deplorable and criminal acts of violence and sabotage, occurring so often, which indicate that there is some fundamental defect in the policies and programmes of the Government and administration. This drives people suffering from grievances to resort to such anti-national acts of sabotage. This calls for serious reflection and quick reappraisal of Government's policies and attitudes on the part of the Government and its leaders.

Moved from the Chair

Bastar

The whole nation has been outraged by the terrible tragedy perpetrated by Government in Bastar, resulting in the shooting down of Maharaja Pravin Chandra Bhanj Deo, whom the Adibasis have looked upon as the personification of God and so many of his loyal Adibasi followers on the 24th and 25th April. All the Opposition Parties in Madhya Pradesh Assembly and both Houses of Parliament have expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with the inhuman manner in which Government have dealt with the Adibasis and their Maharajah over so many years and with the unholy haste and suspicious manner in which the victims of the outrage were cremated and the one-man Commission of Enquiry was appointed by the very Government whose omissions and commissions are widely believed to have been responsible for this tragedy.

Therefore this General Council demands that the whole administration of the Bastar District should be immediately taken over for some time by the President. The present set of officers of the Police and Revenue Departments transferred or suspended and the Enquiry Commission be strengthened by adding one or more Judges of the Supreme Court and terms of reference suitably amended so as to cover the direct or indirect responsibility of the Governments at Bhopal and Delhi for this tragedy and the situation leading to it.

This Council expresses its deep sympathy for the Adibasis of Bastar at this moment of their sorrow

over the loss of their beloved leader, Pravin Chandra Bhanj Deo of Kakatiya who died as a martyr to their cause.

Moved from the Chair

Nuclear Bomb

The General Council of the Swatantra Party is clear and firm in its view that India should not embark on any scheme of making nuclear weapons.

The view taken by India under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership on this question still holds good.

Any step taken towards arming ourselves with nuclear weapons is bound to lead to a ruinous race in such manufacture taking the nation to economic ruin and moral stultification. When we depend on foreign aid, even for supplying ourselves with the necessities of civil life, it would be utterly unreasonable to get involved in a nuclear race.

As long as nuclear weapons are not internationally banned altogether we cannot do better than to seek an assurance from the U.S.A. on whose behalf President Johnson offered in October 1964, that the U.S.A. would guarantee full protection against any nuclear threat.

Moved by Mr C. Rajagopalachari

Seconded by Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel

Nationalisation of Textbooks

The Swatantra Party condemns the action taken by some State Governments in nationalizing school text-books. This will not only result in production of poor quality and high cost books, leaving no choice for the pupils but also the regimentation of their minds. This is a sinister move which should be resisted by parents, if they want to save their children from mental slavery of one kind or the other.

Moved from the Chair

Chanda Committee Report

This meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party welcomes the report of the Chanda Committee to place All India Radio and T.V. Services in the hands of an autonomous body and requests the Government of India to give effect to the recommendations of the Chanda Committee as early as possible, particularly before the general Elections.

Moved from the Chair

The Mizo Hills

The General Council of the Swatantra Party having made its own assesment of the problems of the Mizo Hills through its representative there, is convinced that, while recourse to violence should always be condemned as a means to a political solution, much of the recent trouble in the Mizo Hills could have yet been avoided had the Party in power made prompt and sincere efforts to find a lasting solution to the problems of the hills of Assam, instead of aggravating the situation further through

callous indifference and delay. Further, the Council views with grave concern the attitude of patronage shown by the Ruling Party in Assam towards the now outlawed Mizo National Front even after the latter had publicly announced, in 1963, its goal of an independent State outside the Union of India. Such patronage of an anti-national party was obviously motivated by the desire to crush, even at the expense of political morality, loyal and democratic opposition parties. The Council calls upon the people of India to resolutely resist the increasing number of attempts by the Ruling Party to apply double standards to public life. It also calls upon the Government to summon immediately a Conference of the political parties of the hill areas of Assam to try and evolve a permanent solution to the varied problems of the Mizos.

Moved by Prof. Martin Narayan

Drought Situation in Orissa

The General Council notes with grave concern the widespread conditions of acute drought in Orissa which have assumed grave proportions. There have been many starvation deaths, and thousands have become emaciated and are in need of hospitalisation and special diet to restore them to normal health.

The neglect of the last 19 years, the failure of ill-conceived plans on which crores of rupees have been spent and the colossal waste due to favouritism and corruption have resulted in complete failure of many irrigation projects, while many others including large numbers of drinking water wells have remained incomplete. Hence, the total failure of crops in many areas and the acute shortage of drinking water is not due entirely to the failure of rains, but is to a large extent attributable to the inefficiency, neglect and lapses of the Government.

The Council condemns the Orissa Government for its lack of foresight and complete indifference to undertake timely relief measures. The present distress and suffering would have been minimised, if Government had paid heed to the timely warnings and advice from several quarters in recent months and had started relief measures earlier. Even the belated measures now undertaken are vitiated by inefficiency in execution, narrow partisan outlook; and the State Government is unable to prevent corruption and exploitation even during the distress of the people.

The General Council is further of the view that the Central Government cannot be absolved of its share of responsibility, especially in view of the fact that the worst hit areas are largely inhabited by Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes, who are the worst sufferers of the famine and for whose welfare the Central Government has special constitutional responsibility.

The General Council calls upon the State and Central Governments energetically to undertake and intensify relief measures to save the famine stricken people from starvation, ameliorate their sufferings and enable the agriculturists to undertake cultivation in the Kharif season, so that a repetition of the great Famine Tragedy of 1866-67 when one million people perished may be avoided.

This Council also demands that a Commission of Inquiry be appointed to investigate the cause of the present acute famine conditions and numerous starvation deaths in Orissa, to fix responsibility for the failure of relief measures and to suggest measures to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy in future.

Moved by Mr. R. N. Singh Deo

Food and Agriculture

The General Council deploras the fact that a sizeable section of the population is starving, notwithstanding the assistance of other countries.

The Council refers to a Resolution of the National Executive on November 1, 1965, and considers it necessary that:

- i. All restrictions on the movement of foodgrains whether between zones, districts and belt areas or otherwise be removed.
- ii. That if this does not help to even supplies

and prices, throughout the country—as it should do from all previous experience—Government should buy grains at prevailing prices for subsidised sales to the weaker elements of the population.

- iii. That, as production has been restricted due to the disturbed conditions introduced by so-called Land Reforms, there should be no dispossession of owners, while at the same time all actual cultivators should be protected against eviction and unfair rents. As such they should be entitled to cooperative and other loans for which they are in pressing need.
- iv. That ~~land revenue~~ should be abolished as it is a crime to tax the peasant who produces food for the country.

Moved by Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu

Resignation of Central and State Cabinets three Months before the General Elections

The General Council reiterates the opinion already expressed that the Cabinets at the Centre and in the States should resign three months ahead of the General Elections and the President should take over the Administration to ensure equal opportunities for all political parties. The Council is further of the opinion that a Demand Day should be observed throughout the country to press this demand.

Moved from the Chair

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