

A BLOW FOR CLEAN POLITICS

On April 12 the National Executive of the Swatantra Party took a decision which showed, once again, that this is a Party which, unlike many others, is prepared to put side expediency by paying a short-term price when the integrity of the Party and the interests of clean politics and disciplined functioning call for firm action.

The waves of opportunism and cynical disregard of standards which are overwhelming one Party after another in India could hardly be expected to leave the Swatantra Party untouched. The Party had during the past year or two, shown extraordinary patience and restraint about manifestations of such a spirit within our own ranks. A stand had to be made somewhere. There was a record of persistent and undisciplined behaviour over a period of time culminating in disloyal and anti-party activities on the part of Mr. C. C. Desai. On 12th April, the National Executive removed Mr. C. C. Desai "from membership of the Party and also from membership of the Party's Parliamentary Group by reason of his gross and persistent indiscipline and disloyalty involving, in recent months anti-Party activities."

Every opportunity had been given to Mr. C. C. Desai to explain his conduct and either to justify it or to apologise and give an assurance of better behaviour. Mr. Desai did neither.

On February 17, the National Executive at its meeting in Bombay unanimously decided to ask Mr. C. C. Desai to explain his conduct and to show cause why action should not be taken against him. On February 21, when the General Secretary's letter was to be handed to him, the President of the Party, invited Mr. Desai for a talk in the course of which he asked Mr. Desai if he was prepared to give an assurance even then to behave in a disciplined and loyal manner. Far from giving any such assurance Mr. Desai said that everything he had done was deliberate and justified. He wanted to see what the case against him was. He was told that the Party had been very careful to see that the charges against him were not published in the press. Mr. Desai was given time till March 10 to furnish his explanation.

On 2nd March Mr. Desai wrote to the General Secretary asking for more time till the end of the month. This was readily given to him. On 21st March, Mr.

Desai sent his explanation to the General Secretary and this was placed on the agenda of the meeting of the National Executive which was due to meet in Delhi on April 11 and 12.

On April 11 without waiting for the National Executive to consider his reply Mr. Desai thought it fit to release to the press a most offensive statement in which he cast unwarranted aspersions on the office bearers, the members of the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party and joined the communists in attempting to label the Party as apologists of monopoly capitalism.

Prior to the meeting on April 11 and 12, in order to provide the Gujarat State Unit with an opportunity to be consulted, the members of the Gujarat State Parliamentary Board who number three, namely, Mr. H. M. Patel, President of the State Unit, Mr. Jaideepsinhji of Baria, Leader of the Party in the State Assembly, and Mr. Navin Patel, General Secretary of the State Unit, were invited to be present at the meeting of the National Executive so that the Executive might have the benefit of their views before taking a decision.

(Cont'd on page 9)

PERSONALITY CRISIS



Courtesy: The Times of India



“Toppling - An Indecent Act”

The National Executive of the Party took an important decision on April 11, when dealing with correspondence that had been proceeding with Mr. George Fernandes, the General Secretary of the S.S.P.

The S.S.P. General Secretary had, in a letter some months ago, forwarded to us a 17-point programme adopted by their party and invited the Swatantra Party to a discussion of this programme along with other parties. The National Executive, at its meeting on February 16 in Bombay had considered this letter and, after rejecting multilateral talks as not being likely to be helpful, suggested bilateral talks and welcomed the SSP General Secretary to pursue the matter further with our President in Delhi. At the same time, the Executive pointed out that several points in the S.S.P. 17-point programme were not acceptable to the Swatantra Party.

In his reply Mr. George Fernandes, S.S.P. General Secretary, stated in effect that dislodging the Indira Gandhi Government should precede agreement on a common programme. The National Executive disagreed with this view and reiterated its earlier decision that efforts to dislodge the present government could only be meaningful and successful when a viable alternative was available. This meant the emergence of an opposition front with an agreed programme. At the same time the Executive was clear that the dialogue with the SSP should continue on a bilateral basis.

Explaining this decision to the Press at a briefing in New Delhi the same evening (April 11), Mr. Masani

drew a distinction between “toppling” a Government and replacing it by the normal democratic process. “Toppling” he said, “is an indecent act, a disgusting phenomenon of Indian politics arising out of a lack of political development”. According to the Swatantra President, toppling had three specific characteristics which distinguish it from the normal process of replacing a Government democratically. The first is that there is no issue of policy at stake. The second that there is no alternative Government ready to take over with an agreed programme. The third is that individual defections of members of the ruling Party are sought to be fostered by the use of financial or other dishonourable inducements.

Mr. Masani explained that it was in this context that the National Executive had declined to go along with the SSP General Secretary’s proposal.

Earlier, when he was in Orissa on April 7, the Party President had expressed satisfaction at the failure of the effort that had been made to topple the Swatantra-led Government in Orissa. In answer to a question, he said that he was not in favour of “toppling” Mrs. Gandhi’s Government at the Centre, but that the Party gave high priority to her removal and replacing it by a better Government. What the President had in mind was the Orissa pattern of pre-electoral understanding on the basis of a common minimum programme which had already proved its merit by producing the only coalition government since the last General Elections in 1967 which continues to be in office.

National Executive Meets in Delhi

The National Executive met in New Delhi on April 11 and 12. Twenty six of the Thirty four members were present.

Apart from the action it took against Mr. C. C. Desai (reported elsewhere in this issue) the Executive considered several other matters including a review of the current political situation, the situation in Orissa and Gujarat and organisational problems.

Bhaikaka

Paying tributes to the memory of Bhaikaka the Executive observed a minutes silence and unanimously adopted a resolution moved from the Chair. The following is the text of the resolution:

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party records with profound sorrow the passing away of Bhailalbhai Patel, the architect of the Party in Gujarat. Public life in this country is poorer by his death.

Bhaikaka, as he was affectionately known to his colleagues and friends and the people of Gujarat, contributed not only to the establishment of a strong

two party system in Gujarat but his activities included other fields, particularly education and engineering. The University at Vallabh Vidyanagar is a monument to his work and as befitting a true Swatantra member he built up the University without any grant from Government in the initial stages. The National Executive conveys its deep sympathies to his family.

Current Political Situation

At the last meeting of the Executive in Bombay on February 16, a statement on the Current Political Situation outlining the Party’s national policy and objectives had been adopted. The discussions in Delhi were really a continuation of the Bombay discussions. Mr. Piloo Mody had prepared a note entitled “Towards a Better Life” which was in the nature of a minimum programme of the Party to form the basis for discussions with other democratic opposition parties.

There was a draft paper on Economic Policy that had been prepared by a Working Group (see News-letter No. 72)

These two papers and a further communication from Mr. George Fernandes, General Secretary of the Samyukta Socialist Party were considered during the discussions.

While not taking any decision in regard to the papers of Mr. Piloo Mody and the Working Group, the Executive felt that they needed thorough discussion among the Party's rank and file and decided that they should be circulated as 'Discussion Papers'. As for Mr. George Fernandes' letter the Executive settled the terms of the Party's reply. Elsewhere in this issue we have reported on the correspondence with Mr. George Fernandes and the Party's position in regard to the need for a programmatic basis for dislodging Mrs. Gandhi's government in Delhi.

Orissa Situation

The President reported on his visit to Bhubaneswar on April 7. As reported elsewhere in this issue, the President's report commending the reputation of the Coalition Government for giving the State an honest and clean administration was welcomed. At the same time the Executive did feel that there was need for better rapport between the Party in the Coalition Government and the National Headquarters.

Gujarat Developments

The President of the Gujarat Unit of the Party,

Mr. H. M. Patel assured the Executive that its directive of February 16, which permitted the Party's Gujarat legislators to play their legitimate role as the Official Opposition and use all parliamentary methods to unseat the State Government but without seeking the support of Mrs. Gandhi's party in Gujarat or entering into any arrangements with them, was being carried out. The Executive expressed its satisfaction with the assurance.

Party Organisation

Financial problems confronting the National Headquarters dominated the discussion, with the Treasurers reporting on the efforts they were making to collect funds.

Draft Position Papers

In pursuance of a decision of the National Executive, draft positions papers on Transport and Communication, Housing, Unemployment and Agriculture had been prepared by Messrs. N. K. Somani, D. N. Patodia, J. M. Lobo Prabhu and N. K. Ganapaiah respectively. Due to lack of time no discussion on these papers was possible. However the Executive decided that these papers should be circulated as "Discussion Papers" among the Party's rank and file as being the views of the persons who had authored these papers.

Central Parliamentary Board Meeting

The Central Parliamentary Board met on the morning of April 11, and considered various matters relating to the Party's work in Parliament and the State Legislatures.

1. Lok Sabha By-Elections

Of interest, was the informal reciprocal arrangement entered into with the Opposition Congress whereby in return for our withdrawing our candidate in the Buldana Parliamentary by-election in Maharashtra, the Opposition Congress had agreed to withdraw their candidate from the Mathura by-election in UP. The basis for this mutual arrangement was on the principle that the first option to contest (as between friendly parties) should be left to the Party whose member last occupied that seat. In the case of Mathura, the vacancy was caused by the death of the sitting Swatantra Member of Parliament, Mr. Giriraj Saran Singh of Bharatpur, while the vacancy in Buldana Parliamentary Constituency was caused by the death of Mr. S. R. Rane, a sitting member of the Opposition Congress.

In the Mathura By-Election, our Party has sponsored the independent candidature of Raja Singh of Bharatpur, who is the brother of the deceased member.

2. Biennial Elections to the Rajya Sabha

The Board expressed satisfaction that the following three sitting members of the Party in the Rajya Sabha had been returned in the recent biennial elections:

Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel	..	Gujarat
Mr. B. K. Deo	..	Orissa
Mr. S. S. Marisway	..	Tamil Nadu

The Board also recorded its satisfaction with the fact that the Party had fared reasonably well in the biennial elections generally and that it had contributed to the success of the following (for whom Swatantra MLAs had cast their first, second or third preference votes.)

State	Name of elected candidate	Political affiliation
Andhra	Mr. K. L. N. Prasad	Independent
Assam	Mr. Bipinpal Das	Independent
Bihar	Mr. Jainarayan	Independent
	Ch. A. Mohammad	Congress (O)
	Srikant Mishra	Jana Sangh
Gujarat	Mr. Devdatt Kikabhai Patel	Independent
Orissa	Mr. Surajmal Saha	Jana Congress
	Mr. H. K. Mohanty	Congress (O)
Punjab	Gyani Bhupinder Singh	
Rajasthan	Mr. J. P. Mathur	Jana Sangh
UP	Sardar Inder Singh	Independent
	Mr. Mahavir Tyagi	Congress (O)

Another cause for satisfaction was the manner in which our MLAs in the Rajasthan Assembly had carried out their commitment to vote for the Jana Sangh candidate in return for Jana Sangh support to our candidate in 1968.

In regard to Madras, the Board noted with satisfaction that the DMK and the Opposition Congress by their support had facilitated the success of our candidate, Mr. S. S. Mariswamy.

Two members of the Party in the Gujarat and Mysore Assemblies had defied the Party's discipline by contesting the elections. In the case of Gujarat, where the Party had its own official nominee, the Board decided to ask the State Executive to initiate action against Mr. Dwarkadas Barai, the rebel candidate and make its recommendation to the next meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board.

In regard to Mysore where the Party did not have

a nominee, the Board strongly disapproved Mr. Rattankumar Kattemar's conduct in standing as a candidate despite being asked to withdraw by the Mysore State Unit.

3. Assembly By-Elections

The following were nominated as the Party's candidates in the forthcoming by-elections to the State Assemblies of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Sarsa (Gujarat) Mr. Govindbhai Jaisinhbhai Patel
Nasirabad (Rajasthan) Mr. Bhanwarlal Airan

On the recommendation of the Leader of the Party in the Rajasthan Assembly the Board agreed to sponsor the independent candidature of Mr. Rafiullah Baig from the Tonk Assembly Constituency. Mr. Baig is also being supported by the Opposition Congress and the Jana Sangh.

Masani in Orissa

Mr. M. R. Masani was in Bhubaneswar on April 7th on his first visit to Orissa as Party President. Apart from meeting Party colleagues in Government and in the organisation, Mr. Masani met leaders of the Jana Congress who are our coalition partners in the State Government. He complimented the State Government for providing the State with a honest and clean administration and expressed satisfaction that the Government had weathered the toppling storm initiated by the Ruling Congress and the PSP. Commenting on a statement by Mr. Surendranath Dwivedy the PSP MP., from Orissa that his party would topple the Govt. in Orissa "at any time and by any means", Mr. Masani said "there was something indecent about this toppling game." Mr. Masani paid tributes to the Jana Congress leaders for their courage and skilful handling of the recent crisis in the coalition.

Mr. Masani said that the Swatantra Party regarded the New Congress as its opponent whether it was in Gujarat or in Orissa. He described Mr. Jagjivan Ram

as a 'superman' since a superman alone could shoulder the great responsibilities of heading an organisation as well as running the administration.

Asked about defectors, Mr. Masani suggested that defectors should be "put in quarantine for sometime" before being admitted to other parties. Defects of character, he observed, could not be solved by legislation. Enlightened public opinion alone could put an end to this menace.

Turning to matters relating to Party organisation, Mr. Masani who discussed organisational matters with Party workers, officials and legislators came to the conclusion that the organisational work of the Party was trailing behind the record of our work in Government. After discussing this problem with the Chief Minister and President of the State Unit, Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, Mr. Masani advised that a senior Minister should step down from his office and take over as the President of the State Unit to put across to the people what was being done at the Government level and to inject dynamism into the Party's work in the State.

FOCUS ON ORISSA

Topplers Toppled

The topplers in Orissa have themselves been toppled! The Government is safe, the prodigals have returned home to their respective parties in the coalition and the Ruling Congress after the Rajya Sabha election has found itself in serious trouble; their own candidate losing to a nominee of the Opposition Congress and a Congress MLA crossing over to join the Swatantra Group. On 26th March, the coalition government won a division in the Orissa Assembly by a 17-vote margin. The Orissa Coalition Government

has successfully proved that toppling, like crime, does not pay. Meanwhile the Swatantra-led coalition continues to provide the State with a stable, clean and honest administration.

Proposals for New Industries

The Government of India have so far issued Letter of Intent for setting up of four new industrial units in Orissa as against 20 proposals recommended by the State Government during the last three years.

Disclosing this in the State Assembly, the Minister

enrolment of new workers, maintaining personal contact with selected corporation divisions and intensifying party activity in cooperation with allied organisations. In a letter received from the Madras District Unit, about 100 workers in Madras city participated in a camp in Corporation Division No. 102. Their work included enrolling new members, distributing party literature and collecting donations.

Swatantra Study Circle

The Swatantra Study Circle conducted its fifth Annual Inter-Collegiate debate on 1st February, 1970, at Mylapore. About 25 students representing 12 city colleges took part in the debate on the subject "Is the Presidential Form of Government the only Method of Securing Stability in this Country." Dr. Hande, who is also the Chairman of the Circle distributed the prizes and Mr. C. R. Narasimhan, Municipal Councillor congratulated the students who participated in the debate.

Mr. V. Srinivasan, General Secretary of the Circle, thanked the principals of local colleges for sending student participants.

The State Parliamentary Board met on March 4. It cautioned the Tamil Nadu Government against rushing through any legislation to lower the land ceiling from the present 30 acres to 15 acres. It pointed out in a resolution that the Centre had appointed a National Committee to survey and report on the problems of agriculturists. It would be better for the State Government to await the Committee's findings before making any drastic changes in the present conditions.

UTTAR PRADESH

The Party Unit at Varanasi has taken up the cause of the students of the Banaras Hindu University against whom the University authorities are contemplating disciplinary action. Shri D. Chaturvedi in a press statement has pleaded that the students who are due to appear in the final examination this year should be allowed to sit for the examination though this would not debar them from punishment if the Enquiry Committee found them guilty.

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Only Mr. H. M. Patel, who is also a member of the National Executive, attended the meeting. The other two members failed to respond either by their presence or by forwarding their views in writing.

On April 12, after full debate, in the course of which a letter and a telegram from Rajaji supporting severe action against Mr. Desai were read, the National Executive adopted a resolution (Annexure A) by a decisive majority of 17 and 5, with three absences. The President did not cast his vote.

The Party's resolution reveals that, as the culmination of a long series of acts of indiscipline, Mr. Desai made during the months of February and March several statements, including one on March 10 which was unworthy of any member of the Swatantra Party, and which were completely contrary to the Party's policies and principles. In that statement, Mr. Desai claimed that in Gujarat 'the remedy lay in the replacing of the present Government by another which would have the support of Mrs. Gandhi' and that "the new Government should be loyal to the Central Government."

Mr. Desai thus publicised what was already known—that he was actively engaged in subverting the integrity and the unity of the Swatantra Party from within by indulging, as the National Executive's resolution charges, "in a sustained campaign of an anti-Party nature in furtherance of the interest of the Ruling Congress Party led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Jagjivan Ram whose Government in Delhi the Swatantra Party is pledged to oust".

On April 21, Professor N. G. Ranga, the Leader of the

Party in the Lok Sabha, informed the Speaker that Mr. Desai had been removed from the membership of the Swatantra Party and was no longer a member of the Swatantra Group in the Lok Sabha. The Speaker was requested to allocate another seat to him as the Party wished to give the seat so far occupied by him to another member of our Party.

The Party's decision has received widespread approval and welcome from decent people in all parts of the country. Editorial comment, barring of course those of the Communist and fellow-travelling press, has been overwhelmingly behind the Party's action.

The *Hindustan Times* of April 14 observed

"the attitude of the National Executive does make sense in terms of minimal disciplinary obligations to be expected from its members, however eminent and influential locally. In addition, the principles of political behaviour that the Party has sought to uphold in taking this extreme step against an important member are by and large salutary and deserve to be upheld in the confusion and ambiguity currently afflicting political conduct. . . . The really important question at issue is political and in this Mr. Desai's position is not only indisciplined in terms of the Party's declared policies, but indefensible in terms of the need to promote cleaner politics in these troubled times."

The *Statesman*, in its Editorial on the same day, concluded:

14.4.70

"It should be said to the credit of Mr. Masani and other Swatantra leaders that, despite the short-term

risks involved, they chose to enforce party discipline rather than succumb to political expediency."

The *Madras Mail* wrote editorially

"We have here an example of the national executive of an all-India party refusing to yield to political expediences. To that extent, it is a gain to Indian political honesty that is being rapidly eroded by opportunism."

Himmat of the 17th April said:

"Mr. C. C. Desai precipitated his own expulsion by a statement he issued 36 hours before the National Executive met to decide on his case, accusing the party of being apologists for monopoly capitalism. "We understand that earlier, when Rajaji requested Mr. C. C. Desai to resign from the party, Mr. Desai is believed to have replied that he would resign when it suited him! For a person who four years ago was in the political wilderness and was put up for Parliament by the Swatantra Party, to turn against its founder is not only bad manners but bad politics."

The *Commerce* of 18th April observes:

"It seems the Swatantra Party is also faced with the problem of dealing with members who claim the right to vote according to conscience. The Party should be congratulated on facing this problem boldly."

The *Indian Monitor* of 18th April wrote:

"That the Swatantra Party has attempted to hold the bull by its horns, notwithstanding the possible bruises that this might cause, is in itself an object lesson for politicians as a whole....

"May be, quite unwittingly, Mr. Masani has set an example for other party chairmen too".

The *Political and Economic Review* of 20th April wrote:

"Shri Desai, it now transpires, is positioned in such a place that either he does the bidding of the messiah of new socialism, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, or goes down the current....

"One should say 'bravo' to the National Executive of the Swatantra Party which refused to be rattled by Shri Desai".

Current of April 25 writes:

"The recent expulsion of Mr. C. C. Desai from the Swatantra Party by its National Executive has run like an electric shock through most other political parties, barring the Communists. For responsible politicians Mr. Desai's ouster has come like a breath of fresh air in the current murky atmosphere of underhand political manoeuvring, vaudevillian use of "conscience" factor and cheap tactics, irrespective of whether it temporarily redounds to the advantage of MRS. GANDHI'S ruling Congress.

"The Swatantra action has specially perturbed a section of Mrs. Gandhi's followers which still finds itself unenthusiastic in toeing the line of political chicanery. It has brought back sharp memories of the November split of the Congress party and caused a heartsearching review of their decision than to support the Prime Minister."

Finally, *March of the Nation* of 25th April writes:

"Just as every rogue can masquerade under the banner of socialism and justify his actions through a liberal use of the new jargon, Mr. Desai, in his reply to the charge-sheet issued to him by the Swatantra Party, sought to justify his actions by championing the cause of Free Enterprise and accusing the Party of being subservient to Monopoly Capital....

"The issue between Desai and the Swatantra Party was one of principle, discipline, and direction....

"For the Swatantra Party, it has been a most difficult decision to take, particularly in the context of India's political life today. The Swatantra Party made the right choice."

Laxman's classic cartoon (on the front page) clinches the matter as no words can do. The issue is no less than a clash between decency and political skulduggery.

Thus closes an unpleasant chapter in the Party's history with a lesson to all of us of the need to put high standards of public behaviour and the interests of the country above petty self-interest and cheap short-term Party advantage.

from the General Secretary's desk

Anti-Naxalite Activities Day

Dear Friend:

As you are aware, even after the fall of the United Front Ministry in West Bengal, the unlawful activities of the Naxalites have continued unabated in Calcutta and other places. In fact they have gathered momentum as part of the celebrations of the Third Anniversary of the Naxalbari brand of Communist movement for staging proletarian revolution in the country.

Only the other day on April 25, a bomb explosion presumably the handiwork of a Naxalite, rocked those who were participating in the "Save Democracy Convention" at Patna. Luckily for us our leader Prof. Ranga escaped unhurt. But the explosion is part of a calculated attempt to terrorise democratic forces.

The Central Government have consistently failed to deal with this serious problem which now threatens to create a situation in which the Government may be compelled one day to quit the State of West Bengal. In spite of repeated warnings from political leaders and intellectuals in the country, the Central Government has failed to take effective action to curb Naxalite activities.

The Swatantra Party has tried to focus attention of the Government on this serious situation but the Ruling Party has not woken up to their responsibility.

This leaves us with no other alternative but to start a country-wide agitation to educate the masses and also compel the Central Government to take appropriate action without any further delay.

Accordingly the National Headquarters has decided to observe Sunday, May 24 as *Anti-Naxalite Activities Day*. On this day, throughout the length and breadth of the country, leaders and Units of the Swatantra Party should hold meetings, processions and use other means of publicity in focusing public attention on the serious Naxalbari menace in West Bengal and some of the other States of the Union of India.

The following editorial in the *Financial Express* of April 24 assesses the seriousness of the situation:

NOW OR NEVER

"Wednesday's incidents in Calcutta as a part of the celebrations of the third anniversary of the Naxalbari brand of Communist movement for staging proletarian revolution in the country have served one more notice on the Government to quit or face the challenge. Fortified by Mao's thought that an armed struggle with the aid of peasants and encouraged by the prospects of getting arms from foreign powers is inevitable, the Naxalites have opted for violence and crime by rejecting Mr. Khrushchev's theory of peaceful coexistence of different social systems. If

they chose, three years ago, the Naxalbari area for their first adventure, that was only because it was of strategic importance in view of its proximity to Nepal and East Pakistan and was a link with Assam, Bhutan and Sikkim and the rest of India. Since then the movement has spread to rural areas in different States with varying degrees of intensity. But it is mainly concentrated in West Bengal. Encouraged, however, by the successful attack on the Communists with this ideology, who made a bold bid to hoist the banner of rebellion in Telengana in 1947, the Government has been nursing false hopes about its capacity to stamp out this evil. The logic has been advanced that the problem of law and order is essentially economic and has to be tackled administratively and politically. But here hardly anything has been done to implement the solution, with the result that administrative and political problems have belied solutions, the problem of law and order has become worse than ever, and the Government has presented a picture of helplessness. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Naxalite activity has snow-balled throughout the country. If the problem is worst in West Bengal, it is due to the combination of all the adverse factors which have made a shibboleth of the economy of the State, aggravated social tensions and forced the educated middle class to revolt against political machinations which have made a mockery of democratic institutions. The problem has, therefore, to be tackled in this larger perspective. But the dilemma for the Government is whether law and order should be ensured first or administrative or political solutions should be initiated. For three long years the Government has failed to resolve the dilemma, with the result that it has proved incapable of deciding how it should face the brute while expressing its good intention not to quit.

If the incidents in Calcutta on Lenin's birth centenary were not the worst, it was only because the police had taken precautionary measures against the possibility of "large-scale violence", had been assured of help from the Central Reserve Police and the border security forces, and were directed to take "firm measures at the first sign of any trouble." But even then the explosion of a bomb in the Secretariat and the processions parading Mao's portraits and slogans have certified that, so far as the State is concerned, the initiative still rests with the Naxalites. This group has claimed that it has "annihilated" as many as 60 people, including police and their agents since September last, and has also published the names and addresses of its victims. They have also

plans to intensify this process. The more recent raids by small groups of students in Calcutta have advertised the strength of their "guerilla bands." True, since the inauguration of the President's rule a month ago, 229 Naxalites and 3,653 anti-social elements have been arrested and the police have seized 454 bombs, 591 types of explosive materials and 56 firearms in various districts of West Bengal. But the continued spate of violence, crime and arson testifies that only a fringe of the problem has been touched. What else can be expected when the Governor could not choose his advisers and Chief Secretary in a month? The country is now told that the Prime Minister has been seized of the problem and is considering special legislation with the help of which she can attack the problem. She needs to be reminded that it is not so much the lack of power that is an impediment as the unwillingness of the Government to use the powers at its disposal to stamp out the evil. This may give Mrs. Gandhi's Government a fresh lease of life; but in the ultimate analysis, it will mean the end of all that her Govern-

ment stands for. The time for action is now and the failure to catch the bull by the horns will only mean that there will be no fresh opportunity to repair the damage."

Whether you are a Party worker or a sympathiser it is my earnest appeal to you to cooperate with the Party's Unit in your area and help them in organising various activities on May 24 in an effective manner so as to bring home to the people living in your area, not only the seriousness of the situation, but the criminal failure of the Government in taking adequate steps to combat this menace and the extent to which "Naxalitem" which is merely Communism in a virulent form, threatens the liberties of our people and the freedom of our country.

J A I S W A T A N T R A

Yours sincerely

R. E. Cooper

Annexure

Decision of the National Executive, (New Delhi, April 12, 1970) regarding Mr. C. C. Desai

The National Executive has considered Mr. C. C. Desai's explanation of 21st March in reply to the General Secretary's letters of February 18 and 23, 1970, charging Mr. Desai with persistent indiscipline. The National Executive also invited the members of the Gujarat State Parliamentary Board to be present and give the Executive the benefit of their views.

The National Executive regrets to learn that, despite the effort made by the President to ascertain if Mr. Desai would agree from now on to function in a disciplined manner, Mr. Desai not only failed to respond but also aggressively sought to justify all his various activities. In the circumstances, the Executive, having carefully considered Mr. Desai's explanation, finds him guilty of many and persistent acts of gross indiscipline. The Executive also notes that, far from expressing any regret, Mr. Desai has, on the contrary, chosen to justify his conduct and cast unwarranted aspersions on the Officer-bearers, the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party and taken the matter to the press even before the National Executive could consider his explanation. The National Executive rejects Mr. Desai's explanation and resents Mr. Desai's effrontery in joining the communists in attempting to stick the label of apologists of monopoly capitalism on the Swatantra Party.

The National Executive hereby removes Mr. C. C. Desai from membership of the Party and also from membership of the Party's Parliamentary Group by

reason of his gross and persistent indiscipline and disloyalty involving, in recent months, anti-Party activities and in particular the following acts of indiscipline:

- (1) Mr. Desai has shown by his actions that he is not in agreement with the basic policies of the Party which are to oppose Statism, all monopolies, excessive controls and permit-licence-raj and to advocate a changeover to competitive peoples enterprise with minimum social controls in agriculture, trade and industry. This has led to his repeatedly speaking or writing in contravention of specific decisions of the Party taken from time to time on such issues as the Government's licensing policies and excessive interference with the operation and management of corporate enterprise.
- (2) On 12th November, 1967, the Executive Committee of the Swatantra Party's Group in Parliament met to consider a move by Communist members of the Lok Sabha to try to censure the Government by way of an adjournment motion or motion of no-confidence against the dismissal of the communist-dominated United Front in Bengal by Governor Dharma Vira, and it decided that the Party should oppose an adjournment motion of that nature if it was tabled. Later, when the matter was due to come up in the Lok Sabha by way of a motion of no-confidence from Communist quarters, an urgent meeting of the Execu-

tive Committee was held on the morning of 22nd November, 1967, and after considerable discussion, in which Mr. C. C. Desai participated, it was decided that our members should not rise in favour of the admission of the motion of no-confidence. It was also decided that, at the time of final voting on the motion, our members should abstain from voting. Despite these clear decisions taken in his presence, Mr. Desai stood in support of the Communist motion when moved in the Lok Sabha later that morning, thus openly defying the Party's decision. It should be noted that Mr. Desai was then one of the Secretaries of the Parliamentary Group.

- (3) In March 1968, for the biennial election to the Rajya Sabha, the Swatantra Party had nominated Mr. Babubhai Vaidya as the Party's nominee for election in accordance with the commitment made earlier by the Gujarat State Party and its leaders. Mr. U. N. Mahida, a member of the Party, defied the Party's decision and stood as a rebel candidate soliciting the votes of our Party's members. Despite instructions issued by the leaders of the Gujarat Swatantra Party and the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party asking members to vote for Mr. Babubhai Vaidya, and despite Mr. Mahida having been suspended by the President of the Party (Prof. Ranga) for his indiscipline, Mr. C. C. Desai visited Ahmedabad on more than one occasion during the campaign and asked the Members not to vote for Mr. Vaidya. His action contributed to the defeat of the Party's candidate, resulting in a major set back for the Party and its prestige in Gujarat. At a meeting of the National Executive of the Party in Madras on May 31, 1968, in reply to a question put by Rajaji to him, Mr. Desai admitted that he did work against the Party's candidate.

- (4) On July 20, 1969, the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party decided to advise members of the Party to give their first preference votes in the election of the President of the Union to Dr. C. D. Deshmukh and their second preference votes to Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy. Instructions to that effect were conveyed to Members of Parliament and State Assemblies throughout the country. On 12th August 1969, after a visit to Ahmedabad, Mr. Desai issued a statement to the Press in Bombay in the course of which he said: "As for the second preference, there is a feeling amongst the Swatantra MLAs in Gujarat that they should not be asked or advised to vote for a Congress candidate until the Chief Minister and the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee President personally approach the leader of the Swatantra Party in Vidhan Sabha and appeal to him for Swatantra support to the Congress candidate. Neither Mr. Hitendra Desai nor Mr. Vajubhai Shah has made any such approach to the Gujarat Swatantra Party. Therefore in all probability

Gujarat Swatantra MLAs will exercise only first preference vote and refrain from giving the second preference either to the Congress candidate or to the Communist supported candidate Mr. Giri." This statement went directly counter to the Party's decision in the matter and was obviously designed to cause confusion among the Party's members in the Gujarat State Assembly and also to confuse and mislead members of the Party in the State Legislatures in the other States of India by conveying to them a misleading impression of what was to happen in Gujarat.

This made it necessary for the officiating General Secretary to issue a statement contradicting Mr. Desai's statement in the press which he did on August 13, 1969.

- (5) In recent months, Mr. Desai has issued several statements to the press purporting to lay down the policy and attitude that the Gujarat Swatantra Party should adopt towards the Government of Gujarat and Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Ruling Congress Party and her supporters in Gujarat. Several of these statements ran directly counter to the Party's policies and arrogated to Mr. Desai the right to speak for the Gujarat Swatantra Party. Thus—

- (a) The *Hindustan Times* of 8th November, 1969, carried a statement by Mr. Desai which stated *inter alia*: "Efforts to form a United Front between the Right Wing Swatantra and the Left Wing Congress are likely to be made during the forthcoming session of the Gujarat Assembly towards the end of this month. . . . "Mr. Desai extended an open invitation to 35 Congress MLAs to come out of their Party to form another ministry.

"Any fears that they might have had about the adverse reactions of alliance with the Rightist Swatantra Party were allayed by Mr. Desai who assured the rebels that his Party would not join the Government."

The President of the Gujarat Swatantra Party took a serious view of this unauthorised statement by Mr. Desai and had to issue a rejoinder published in the *Hindustan Times* of 9th November making it clear that Mr. Desai had no authority to speak on behalf of the Gujarat Swatantra Party.

- (b) On 12th November, 1969, the National Executive of the Party met in Bombay and took serious note of Mr. Desai's misbehaviour. The Executive "regretted that Mr. Desai should have stated that MLAs of the Swatantra Party in Gujarat were bound to take the line indicated by him although neither the State Unit of the Party nor the State Legislature Party had considered and decided upon the line of action to be followed in the present political crisis in the State."

- (c) On February 16, 1970, the National Executive of the Party met in Bombay and issued a directive in regard to the Party's position in Gujarat, which *inter alia* stated that "The Swatantra Party is pledged to the removal of the Government led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, because of its disastrous policies at home and its alignment with the Communists. The removal of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Government, with or without elections, presupposes the coming into existence of an alternative government of which the Swatantra Party forms a part, such a government has to be formed along with like minded democratic parties. Obviously, nothing should be done which cuts across these objectives of the Swatantra Party in furtherance of the basic national interest." The directive had also gone on to say that the Party should not ask for the assistance of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's supporters in the Gujarat Assembly.

Undeterred by the National Executive's censure and caution and its directive to the Gujarat Legislature Party, Mr. Desai proceeded with his public pronouncements in defiance of the Party's position.

- (d) On February 20, 1970, the *Western Times* of Ahmedabad and on February 21, *Sandesh* of Ahmedabad, carried a statement Mr. Desai had made to the Press in New Delhi in which he announced that the Swatantra Party would be able to form a Government in Gujarat with the support of the Indicate. Mr. Desai also expressed the view that it should be left to the Gujarat Swatantra Vidhan Sabha Party to decide whether it should seek the support of either the Syndicate or the Indicate and that others, whatever may be their status in the Swatantra Party, should leave the Gujarat Party to its own judgement, thus challenging the competence of the authority of the National Executive of the Party.

- (e) On March 10, 1970, Mr. Desai issued a Press statement which was the most indis disciplined and objectionable of the lot. The *Gujarat Herald* of Ahmedabad of March 10, and *Janmabhoomi* of Bombay of 11th March published statements issued by him which *inter alia* read as follows:

"In a statement issued here (in New Delhi), Mr. Desai said that 'the voice of Gujarat was lamentably feeble today in the coun-

cils of Delhi. The reason, that Gujarat has a Government the leader of which is discredited in the eyes of the ruling Party in Delhi. There was no reason why the people of Gujarat should suffer or be penalised for the sins of an individual. The remedy lay in the replacing of the Government by another Government which would have the support of Mrs. Gandhi."

(*Gujarat Herald*, Ahmedabad, March 10)

"Mr. C. C. Desai goes on to say in his statement that Gujarat has no voice in Delhi. The reason for this is very clear. The leaders of Gujarat have fallen from the favour of the Ruling Congress at the Centre. Thus, why should the people of Gujarat suffer because of the deeds of such leaders? The solution is to change the Government. The new Government should be loyal to the Central Government."

(*Janmabhoomi*, Bombay, March 11, 1970)

It will be seen that there is nothing in common between this attitude and that of the Party at both the National and State level that, while the Party should continue its effort to defeat the State Government, there was no question of a Swatantra Government being depend on the support of the Prime Minister and her followers.

- (f) Finally, on 16th March 1970, the *Times of India* reported Mr. C. C. Desai as having welcomed in Bombay what he described as the "statesman-like statement" made by Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the President of the Ruling Congress, in Ahmedabad on March 14, 1970.

The Central Parliamentary Board at its meeting in New Delhi on March 19 categorically denounced the machinations of Mr. Jagjivan Ram and the Ruling Congress in Gujarat which it felt "should invite the contempt of all lovers of clean public life and principled politics" and noted that there was no difference of opinion in the Gujarat Party regarding the National Executive's directive.

Thus Mr. C. C. Desai, by his repeated public statements, between November 1969 and March 1970, indulged in a sustained campaign of an anti-Party nature in furtherance of the interest of the Ruling Congress Party led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Jagjivan Ram whose Government in Delhi the Swatantra Party is pledged to oust.

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