

We resume publication after a lapse of five months. Much as we desired to bring out the *Newsletter* in September, our pre-occupation with the Fifth National Convention prevented us from doing so. This issue is almost entirely devoted to the Convention except for reports on the meetings of the General Council, National Executive and Central Parliamentary Board.

MURARJI VAIDYA

In Memorium

The cruel hand of death which, in the last twelve months claimed the lives of Col. L. Sawhney and Mr. Charanjit Rai struck once again to take away from us Mr. Murarji Vaidya, a founder-member and active enthusiast of our party from its very inception. Surviving through sheer will-power four earlier heart attacks and knowing full well the risks that he was running, Murarjibhai nevertheless answered the Party's call and took over the presidentship of the Bombay Regional Unit from Mr. N. Dandeker after the latter's election as General Secretary of the Party.

In a moving Tribute, Rajaji wrote in *Swarajya*:

"The death of Sri Murarji Vaidya is a heavy stroke of misfortune for the Swatantra Party and for the cause of freedom for individual enterprise in India, as against the tendency of political parties in office to get control over the economy. He was a person of remarkable balance and clarity of vision. Sri Murarji Vaidya's gentleness of spirit was as unique as his devotion to duty was exemplary. In every way the loss to public life in Bombay is great."

In a letter charged with emotion, the Party's President, Prof. Ranga wrote:

"What a misfortune for our Swatantra movement and Party and also to the Forum of Free Enterprise, that the dynamic and resourceful Murarji Vaidya should pass away at this juncture.

He had four heart-attacks and survived them through sheer will power. Knowing so well what risks he was running he shouldered once again the Presidentship of our Bombay city Party as well as the Presidentship of the All India Forum of Free Enterprise and has rendered signal service to the cause of freedom of our people during these two years.

Earlier, he did so much to develop the Swatantra unit in Bombay city and placed it so well on the political map of that great political metropolis.

He was one of the earliest, among the brilliant, dynamic and able intellectuals and industrialists of India to join our Swatantra Party at the call of Rajajee and he laid good foundations for our party in the city.

When he came to us, he had already made a good name for constructive leadership by his able and pioneering work, by the side of the great Sir Mr. Visweswaraiya in founding and building up the powerful All India Manufacturers' Association, which did so much to champion the cause of India's industry and economic development. He stood by the pioneer in Indian Economic Freedom Movement, the late A. D. Shroff, in developing that powerful Forum of Free Enterprise and became his successor, after Shroff's Swargarohan. Vaidya has become a well-known writer on various aspects of Indian economy and his thoughts were so forward-looking. He placed all these gifts and experiences so full at the disposal of the Swatantra movement. That such a versatile and dynamic colleague should pass away at such an early age is indeed a tragic loss to India."

The *Swatantra Newsletter* records its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Mr. Murarji Vaidya and conveys its heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

MEETINGS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEES

Since the publication of the last issue, three meetings of the Central Parliamentary Board, three of the National Executive and one of the General Council have been held.

CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

The first meeting was held in New Delhi on August 31st. It concerned itself with discussing the Party's strategy in the forthcoming mid-term poll in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It decided that the Party's effort should be a limited one, viz. to select Constituencies on the basis of our performance in February 1967.

As regards electoral adjustments or understandings, the Board decided that there should be no dealings with united fronts which included communists or extreme socialists.

To enable expeditious, but considered decisions to be taken on all aspects relating to elections the Board nominated sub-committees to deal with the relevant states.

The Central Parliamentary Board met again in Bhubaneswar on October 3. Parliamentary matters and the forthcoming Mid-term elections were among the subjects that came up for discussion.

The third meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board was held in New Delhi on November 24.

The Board discussed generally the forthcoming mid-term elections. The President and the General Secretary reported on their visits to Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in this connection and the progress made with the selection of candidates and other matters. The Board also discussed the procedure for settling the election Manifestoes that would be put out by the Party's Units in these States.

Dr. M. Mathias was approved as the Party candidate in the Nagercoil Parliamentary by-election. Mr. Himmatbhai Gumanbhai Patel was approved as the Party's candidate in the by-election to the Gujarat State Assembly from Ankleshwar.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The National Executive met in New Delhi on September 1st. It discussed the need to develop organisations of farmers, youth and women in States. It was of the opinion that far from regarding such activities as "out of bounds" for active workers of the Party it was in the Party's best interest for members to organise and occupy key positions in such organisations.

Talks with B.K.D.

The Executive discussed in detail the Party's relations with the B.K.D. especially in the light of the talks that had taken place between the President,

Prof. Ranga and the General Secretary, Mr. Dandekar on the one side and Mr. Charan Singh of the B.K.D. on the other. It was felt that these talks were premature and issues relating to them could best be taken up only after the Mid-term polls.

Protest Day against Mr. Nath Pai's bill

The Executive decided that November 2, should be observed as Fundamental Right's Day to express the Party's strong opposition to Mr. Nath Pai's bill to amend the Indian Constitution calculated to nullify the Supreme Court's judgment on the amendment or alteration of Fundamental Rights.

Czechoslovakia Day

Apart from adopting a resolution, condemning the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, the Executive decided to observe October 24 (United Nation's Day) as Czechoslovakia Day to express the country's solidarity with the people of Czechoslovakia in their fight against Soviet tyranny.

Resolutions on the following issues were unanimously adopted:

Floods; Drought; Reorganisation of Assam; Newspaper Employees Strike; The Andhra Pradesh Special Powers (Press) Bill, 1968; Czechoslovakia; Tibet; and, Soviet Arms for Pakistan.

(For Texts of Resolutions see Annexure A)

The National Executive met again in Bhubaneswar on October 3. It devoted itself mainly to the programme of the Fifth National Convention and to a consideration of resolutions given notice of by delegates as well as some recommended by the Executive itself for adopting by the Convention.

The third meeting of the National Executive was held in New Delhi on November 24.

Mid-Term Report Committee

In pursuance of a resolution adopted by the Fifth National Convention of the Bhubaneswar last month to publish a mid-term Report of the Party's achievements since the last general elections and what it proposed to do between now and the General Elections of 1972, the National Executive appointed the following Committee to prepare such a report for approval at the next meeting of the General Council: Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. M. R. Masani, Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, Mr. H. M. Patel, Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu, Mr. Harihar Patel and Mr. N. Dandekar.

Subscription

Matters arising from certain amendments made to the Party's Constitution at the Fifth National Convention at Bhubaneswar were considered. It was de-

I: Adopted on September 1, 1968.

(i) Floods

The National Executive conveys its deep concern to the people of Gujarat at the great calamity that has over-whelmed vast areas of the State, and caused enormous – and at present incalculable – loss of life and property, and virtually destroyed the economy of the areas affected. The National Executive wishes, on the one hand, to express its deep sympathy for the large number of people who have suffered so grievously as to have virtually to start their lives afresh and, on the other, to convey its appreciation of the magnificent courage and spirit which the flood-affected people have shown in facing up to the effects of the devastating floods. The National Executive notes with satisfaction that vigorous efforts are being made to rehabilitate the people who have suffered and to reconstruct the economy of the areas affected; and it places on record its profound appreciation of the spontaneous way in which the people of Gujarat, from the city of Bombay, and from other parts of the country have rushed to provide whatever help they could make available.

The National Executive also expresses its deepest sympathy with the people of other flood-affected areas, notably Orissa, West Bengal, Assam and Rajasthan.

(ii) Drought

The National Executive expresses its deep sympathy to the people of Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Madras and other famine-stricken areas who have been suffering from severe and prolonged drought resulting in failure of crops, cattle-feed and drinking water and also considerable unemployment and other economic and social disabilities. The Executive trusts that State Governments and Central Government would hasten to organise Famine Relief, coupled with irrigation and drainage works and rural housing projects, and to remit Land Revenue and declare moratorium on cooperative and other rural indebtedness.

(iii) Reorganisation of Assam

The National Executive takes serious note of the repeated failure of the Government of India to fulfil its solemn assurances to the hill people of Assam over the matter of the reorganisation of that State. While regarding such procrastination as characteristic symptoms of Congress rule in the country, the National Executive offers its fullest sympathies to the hill people and calls upon all of them to stand steadfast and united, so that, in their peaceful and constitutional struggle for the creation of a separate hill

State, they may be always guided by wise and patriotic leadership.

(iv) Newspaper Employees Strike

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party deplores the stalemate in the strike by newspaper employees. The stalemate is especially regrettable in that it has denied to the people of this country an adequate news coverage concerning the grave developments both within and outside the country in the last few weeks.

The National Executive is of the view that this avoidable strike is due to the utterly irresponsible manner in which the Government accepted in toto the recommendations of the wage board which itself was not unanimous and which wholly ignored three basic principles in the formulation of wage structures, viz.

- (1) Ignoring the circumstances relating to the newspaper industry in the different regions of the country;
- (2) Failure to take into account the prevalent rates of wages for comparable employment in those regions; and
- (3) Totally ignoring the question of the employers' capacity to pay.

The situation has worsened with lockouts and layoffs announced by certain major newspapers.

The National Executive cannot help feeling that the strike is politically motivated and is part of the Communist plan to disrupt public life and create chaos in the country. However, the National Executive notes with satisfaction the very recent reports to the effect that, at long last, the suggestion made by the Swatantra Party in Parliament that negotiations between the newspaper employers and employees should be conducted on a "unitwise" basis is now being tried out. The Executive feels that this is the only right way to bring to a speedy settlement, so as to end the unfortunate strike.

It hopes that these negotiations will be conducted in a spirit of mutual give and take, not only in the interests of the employees and the employers but also in the interests of the general public, particularly the readers of newspapers who will ultimately have to bear the burden.

(v) The Andhra Pradesh Special Powers (Press) Bill, 1968

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party notes with deep concern the proposed Andhra Pradesh Special Powers (Press) Bill now before the Select Committee of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly. The Bill seeks to invest the State Government with sweeping powers to control and muzzle the press and all other publications in the name of public

order, decency, morality and matters connected therewith. In effect the provisions of the Bill seek to empower the State Government and the Executive, —

- (a) to place an embargo on the reporting of news and information by prohibiting the printers, publishers or editors from printing or publishing any document or matter relating to any particular subject;
- (b) to compel the printers, publishers or editors to print any matter issued to them by the State Government for publication in issues of their newspaper or periodicals;
- (c) to subject printers, publishers and editors to pre-censorship by requiring them to submit in advance any matter relating to specified subjects for scrutiny by any Officer or authority appointed by the State Government in this behalf.

Even more fantastic, the Bill also seeks to prohibit the entry into Andhra Pradesh of all newspapers, journals etc., which in the opinion of the State Government or any Officer empowered in that behalf is prejudicial to the maintenance of communal harmony or likely to affect public order or offend or likely to offend public decency or morality.

The Bill also confers upon Government powers to confiscate copies of newspapers, journals etc., if they contravene Government's order in this behalf, and to seize and dispose of printing presses if the printer or publisher or editor is found guilty of disobeying the provisions of this Bill.

The National Executive is of the opinion that if this Bill is enacted it will strike a mortal blow against the freedom of the press and freedom of speech, opinion and expression guaranteed by the Constitution. The glib justification that the Bill seeks to curb scurrilous writings which endanger communal harmony and public morals cannot deceive anyone who knows too well how, with such pious preambles, the executive often suppresses the very forces which strive to uphold public decency and communal harmony. The National Executive also feels that the existing laws, if properly enforced, are fully adequate to meet the professed ends of the Bill.

Such omnibus and sweeping legislation should not be a substitute for effective action against individual trespassers of morality and decency in journalism.

The National Executive therefore calls upon the Swatantra Party in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly to organise active opposition in Andhra Pradesh and in the State Legislature against this pernicious measure. It also appeals to the people of Andhra Pradesh and throughout the country to bring public opinion to bear on the Government of Andhra Pradesh so as to compel it to withdraw this Bill.

(vi) Czechoslovakia

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party

condemns the unprovoked military invasion and continued occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and its Satellites.

The abduction of Czechoslovak leaders to Moscow, the agreement which, it is reported, they were forced to conclude under conditions of extreme duress and the brutal shooting down of innocent people by the occupying troops is a revival of totalitarian imperialism of the worst kind.

The sort of agreement that the Czechoslovak leaders were forced to sign is now evident from the reimposition of censorship, the curbs imposed on freedom of expression and the reshuffle of the Czechoslovak Cabinet where nationalists are being replaced by Soviet quislings.

The Executive deplores the failure of the Government of India to condemn Soviet aggression. Our abstention from voting in the Security Council of the U.N. on a resolution condemning Soviet aggression is once again, indicative of the Congress Government's abject subservience to Moscow and the bankruptcy of its foreign policy.

The Executive salutes the people of Czechoslovakia in their struggle against Soviet totalitarian imperialism. It warns the people of India that unless our Government gives up its present policy of uncritical friendship with the Soviet Union, we may one day suffer the fate of the countries of Eastern Europe typified by Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

(vii) Tibet

This National Executive once again deplores the further intensification of the process of genocide and suppression of Human Rights in Tibet and expresses its admiration for the heroic resistance being offered by the long suffering people of Tibet to Communist Chinese Imperialism.

The National Executive also deplores the refusal of the Government of India to sponsor a resolution in the U.N. to condemn the suppression of Human Rights in Tibet.

(viii) Soviet Arms for Pakistan

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party is of the view that the Soviet decision to arm Pakistan marks a complete defeat of the Government of India's policy of playing up to the Soviets in the hope of keeping them away from Pakistan and preventing them from taking up a posture of equidistance between Pakistan and India which the Soviet Union has now openly adopted.

The Government of India's refusal to support in Parliament even a resolution expressing regret over the Soviet action is, in the opinion of the National Executive, indicative of the extent to which the Congress Party has tied the country to the apron strings of the Soviet Union and has sought to reduce this country to the position of a Soviet satellite. The Soviet

decision to supply arms to Pakistan has now completely exploded the myth of Soviet friendship.

In these circumstances, the National Executive demands that the Government of India should

- (i) give up the present policy of satellitism which has invited contempt of Moscow and encouraged the Kremlin to take India for granted;
- (ii) cancel the proposed visit to Moscow by our planners in a ridiculous attempt to dovetail India's Fourth Plan with Soviet plans;
- (iii) put an end to the "Rupees Trade" racket, which has already ruined India's balance of payments position with the rest of the world and lost us considerable "free" foreign exchange.

Adopted on November 24, 1968

(i) Resolution on Unruly Behaviour in Parliament

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party expresses its deep anxiety with the manner in which some Members of certain Opposition Parties deliberately indulged in unruly behaviour in the Lok Sabha during the discussion on the Government Employees Strike in the course of the recent debate on the "No Confidence" Motion.

The National Executive, while congratulating the Party's group in Parliament for dissociating itself from such unparliamentary behaviour and for expressing its strong indignation, is of the view that Members of Parliament, particularly those belonging to democratic parties, have a special responsibility not merely to ensure the maintenance of Parliamentary decorum

and to set an example to all other legislatures in the country but also to guard against calculated attempts by avowed enemies of democracy to bring Parliamentary institutions into contempt and disrepute.

(ii) Resolution on Student Unrest

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party notes with deep concern the resort to violence by students in various parts of the country and particularly in Banaras, Calcutta, Allahabad, Amritsar, Gorakhpur and Delhi.

While the reasons for student unrest are in some respects genuine, it cannot be denied that certain political parties have taken advantage of this dissatisfaction for furthering their own political ends and thus vitiated the atmosphere in the campuses. Equally, the increasing participation in the internal politics of educational institutions of a most deplorable variety by university officials, teachers and students had only helped to worsen the situation.

The University authorities have not been sufficiently responsive to meet the many genuine and real grievances amongst students in many of the campuses in India. It is deplorable, for instance, that the recommendations of the Education Commission have not been fully implemented, though the report was released over two years ago.

This meeting of the National Executive is of the opinion that if the ideals formulated by the Education Commission for better education in this country are to be fully realised, it can be done so, only if politicians and political parties, University administrators, teachers and students fully realised their responsibility in keeping education free from party politics.

Annexure B

Texts of Resolutions adopted by the Fifth National Convention in Bhubaneswar on October 5 & 6, 1968.

(i) Mid-Term Manifesto*

The Convention is of the view that it would be desirable for the Swatantra Party to publish a mid-term Manifesto which should state *inter alia* (a) what the party has been able to achieve in the Union Parliament and in the States since the General Elections of February, 1967, and (b) what the Party proposes to do between the publication of the Manifesto and the General Elections of 1972.

To this end the Convention asks the National Executive to appoint a Committee to make an assessment of the situation and to prepare a draft mid-term Manifesto which should be published in the second

half of 1969, after approval at a meeting of the General Council of the Party.

Moved by Mr. M. R. Masani

(ii) Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Centenary

This Convention pays its homage to the memory of Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, in this Centenary Year for the noble services rendered by him to humanity by uplifting the backward and suppressed people and for upholding the dignity and divine spark of every person, as a human being.

This Convention calls upon all Swatantrites and people at large to participate enthusiastically in all the Centenary Celebrations and help the causes of the Harijans, Girijans (Adivasis) and all other suppressed people to achieve their Human Rights which are enshrined in our Constitution under the inspiration of Bapujee.

* This was the only one to be adopted on October 5 in the Closed Session. The rest were adopted at the Open Session on October 6, 1968.

This Convention wishes to point out that the Swatantra Party's principles and policies seek to carry out Mahatma's concepts of good government and progress, to the greatest extent possible. And it is therein that this Party differs from other parties, including the present Congress Party and the policies followed by the Congress government at the Centre.

Moved from the Chair

(iii) Achievements of the Orissa Government

The National Convention of the Swatantra Party congratulates the Orissa Unit of the Party and its leader, Shri R. N. Singh Deo, for having provided, in coalition with their Jan Congress partners, a clean, stable and democratic Government to the people of Orissa. The success of this Government is like a beacon light to the people of India, who are at present surrounded by a sea of political turmoil and instability. During its short tenure of office, the Swatantra-led Government has fulfilled several of its promises, — the abolition of land revenue and Panchayat Taxes, abolition of Zilla Parishad and reorganisation of Panchayats, institution of public inquiry against corrupt officers and politicians, ending of unproductive State enterprises and strict maintenance of law and order. The Convention also notes with great satisfaction the Orissa Government's successful rehabilitation of those affected by the cyclone and the expeditious and efficient implementation of their drought relief measures. The Convention hopes the Orissa Government will be able before long to develop a foodgrains policy more in conformity with the policies and ideals of free trade and fair prices for the agriculturists.

Moved by Mr. M. R. Masani

Seconded by Mr. B. P. Singh

(iv) Agriculture

The first and foremost requirement for agricultural progress, namely the creation of conditions in which the benefit of higher agricultural production goes to the cultivators, has not been fulfilled in India. The prevalence of tenancy—mostly oral—and of share cropping systems and the failure of Government to guarantee a price for agricultural produce comparable to the prices that the agriculturists have to pay, have to a large extent deprived the agriculturists of the fruits of their labour.

The National Convention therefore resolves

I. that the Swatantra Party should henceforth work actively:

- (a) for the achievement of security of tenure for tenants and share croppers and with necessary exceptions leading to proprietary rights on payment of just and fair compensation to land owners, (b) for the prescription and enforcement of a statutory minimum wage and the provision of

reasonable living conditions to farm labourers and (c) for securing guaranteed floor prices to farmers and peasants for agricultural commodities which are at (or nearly at) par with the prices paid by the agriculturists for purchase of their requirements with reference to a particular base year in which price relationships were considered satisfactory;

2. that the Government of India should set up a Drought and Famine Relief Fund to meet the urgent short-term needs of drought affected areas and in particular to undertake the following drought relief measures in such areas:—

- (a) providing drinking water supply and making available well-digging rigs at nominal charge;
- (b) declaring a moratorium on debt repayments and tax arrears in areas where drought occurs in two successive years; and
- (c) granting long-term loans for land improvement through co-operative societies and/or Land Mortgage Banks.

This Convention also expresses its grave concern over the growing unemployment and underemployment among agricultural labourers due to many causes and urges the Government to develop facilities for alternative employment. To this end the Committee to be appointed by the National Executive to prepare the Mid-Term Report, should examine these matters as well when submitting its report.

Moved by Mr. B. P. Singh

Seconded by Mr. M. R. Masani

(v) Permit-Licence-Quota Raj

The National Convention of the Swatantra Party notes with regret that, despite positive evidence of continuing economic deterioration as a result of Government's policy of relying for economic development upon all-pervading system of Permits, Quotas and Licences, and despite the findings of their own Committees set up to enquire into such matters that the policy of controls and licensing, far from developing a well ordered economy, had only retarded its growth, the Government persists in its ill-conceived policy.

The Swatantra Party has repeatedly warned the Government that the system of controls is an obstacle in the way of national economic progress. It only results in the widespread growth of inefficiency and corruption, and is calculated to help the Party in power to perpetuate its rule.

The Convention once again calls upon the Government to dismantle the whole pernicious and complex apparatus of controls except to the minimum extent that may be temporarily necessary. Such minimum controls as are so retained should, however, be administered through an independent Tribunal, thus put-