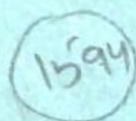


SWATANTRA PARTY

Second National Convention

Agra, November 25 & 26, 1961



GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

by

M. R. MASANI, M.P.

THE SWATANTRA PARTY

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FRIENDS,

This Report covers the period of nineteen months from the First National Convention of the Party in Patna in March 1960 till now. This is a factual statement. Even so, the responsibility for anything contained in this Report is entirely mine.

First National Convention

The First National Convention of the Party was held at Patna on March 19 and 20, 1960. Over 700 delegates from all parts of the country participated. A conservative estimate of the audience at that Convention placed it at a lakh of people who flocked to the open sessions. The *Hindu* of Madras commented: "All roads in Patna led to Ashok Nagar", as the venue of the Convention was named.

The Party flag was hoisted by Rajaji amidst the chanting of hymns and in the presence of over 10,000 people.

The Convention immediately settled down to the serious business of discussing and adopting a Constitution and a Statement of Policy entitled "To Prosperity Through Freedom", drafts of which had been circulated to the delegates. These drafts were discussed at length at the closed sessions. The democratic character of the discussions was a point of comment by Bombay's *Times of India* which wrote: "The tenor of the debate over the party's programme showed that members were keeping their eyes open and were reluctant to accept everything as it was presented to them."

Resolutions on the party's flag, the General Secretary's Report, on National Defence and on Tibet were adopted.

The year and a half that has passed since the Patna Convention has been marked by the growth of the Party's organisation in various parts of the country. It is natural that, in a country of this size, activity and public response to it should be somewhat uneven.

Reconstitution of State Committees

The Central Organising Committee decided that, in order to avoid the diversion of energies of members that would be involved in holding elections to the various bodies within the Party organisation, the existing *ad hoc* committees in the States should be reconstituted to the extent necessary. An Organisation Sub-Committee was appointed for the purpose by the Central Organising Committee, consisting of Professor N. G. Ranga, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. K. M. Munshi, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal, Mr. Kamakhya Narain Singh and Mr. M. R. Masani. This Sub-committee had three meetings in Madras on January 9, April 18 and July 30, 1961. The fourth meeting took place in Bangalore on October 31.

The main work of the Sub-committee was the reconstitution of the General Council and of the Executive Committees in the various States and the nomination of office bearers, wherever it

had become necessary. This process was generally completed by the end of July 1961.

Membership

The membership of the Party in the various States as at the end of September 1960, which was scrutinised by representatives of the Central Office, stood at 3,19,358. The membership in each State was:

Andhra	18,996
Assam	265
Bombay	5,674
Bihar	80,842
Delhi	2,881
Gujarat	11,617
Himachal Pradesh	6,160
Kerala	78
Madhya Pradesh	2,000
Madras	28,838
Maharashtra	1,922
Mysore	8,823
Orissa	1,957
Punjab	22,109
Rajasthan	7,104
Uttar Pradesh	1,18,176
West Bengal	1,916
TOTAL :	3,19,358

The Central Office is grateful to Sardar Basant Singh, Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu, His Highness Raja Anand Chand of

Bilaspur, Mr. Shyam Sunder Prasad, Mr. B. K. Mistry, Mr. R. V. Murthy, Mr. Kailash Pati Singh, Mr. Piloo Mody and Col. H. R. Pasricha for their kind co-operation in undertaking the work of scrutiny on its behalf.

The General Council

The General Council met on July 30, 1960, in Bombay. 28 members of the Council, 17 Presidents and Secretaries of State units, and 8 special invitees were present.

Spokesmen of each State Party reported on developments in their respective States and the problems encountered by them.

Resolutions were passed by the Council on the Central Government Employees' strike, Repression in the Punjab, the draft of the Third Five Year Plan, China and Tibet, Assam, threats to National Unity and Democracy, and the next General Elections.

The Council met again in Agra on the eve of the National Convention to consider the draft Manifesto.

The Central Organising Committee

The Central Organising Committee of the Party met on three occasions since the last Annual Convention of the Party.

The first meeting was held on July 29, 1960, in Bombay when resolutions were prepared for the General Council meeting on July 30 on various subjects such as the Central Government Employees' strike, the Third Five Year Plan, China and Tibet, Assam, the situation on the Punjab, the threats to national unity and democracy, and the next General Elections.

It was decided that Anti-Inflation Day should be observed on September 18 and Flag and Founder's Day on December 9, 1960.

The next meeting of the Central Organising Committee was held on March 4, 1961, in New Delhi.

A resolution on the Government's Budget proposals, which had just then been introduced in Parliament, was adopted.

A resolution was also passed in regard to Chinese aggression.

It was decided that an Election Fund of Rs. 1 crore should be raised and that an appeal signed by Rajaji should be issued to the people to subscribe to the Party's funds.

The General Secretary reported to the Committee on the condition of the Party's organisation in various States. The inspection of membership records carried out on behalf of the Central Office showed that the total membership of the Party around the end of September 1960 stood at 3,19,358. The only State where inspection was not facilitated and could not be carried out was Madhya Pradesh.

At the invitation of Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal, President of the U.P. Party, it was decided that the next National Convention of the Party should be held in Agra in November 1961.

It was decided that preparation of the draft Election Manifesto of the Party should be taken in hand and that the draft should be submitted to the Central Organising Committee in advance of the Second National Convention of the Party at which it would be presented for the approval of the delegates.

In regard to the selection of candidates for Parliament and Assembly elections in 1962, it was decided that State units should send lists to the fullest extent possible, by June 30, 1961, to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, which had been set up by the Central Organising Committee.

The third meeting of the Central Organising Committee was held in Baroda on October 7, 1961.

Two draft manifestos, one prepared by Rajaji and the other by Mr. K. M. Munshi and Mr. M. R. Masani, on the basis of various drafts received from Professor Ruthnaswamy, Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu and others, were discussed. It was decided that a drafting group consisting of Professor Ranga, Mr. K. M. Munshi and Mr. M. R. Masani should undertake the revision of

the draft which would then be finalised and settled by them along with Rajaji. This draft manifesto should be released for publication by the end of October for discussion by the press and general public in advance of the National Convention before which it would be placed.

Mr. Paliwal reported on the preparations for the National Convention in Agra. The programme of the Convention and various arrangements were finalised.

The procedure for the selection of delegates and the representation of various States were decided by the Central Organising Committee.

The Central Organising Committee passed a resolution protesting against the arbitrary arrest and detention of Jathedhar Udham Singh Nagoke, President of the Punjab unit of the Party.

The objectives and strategy of the Party in the General Elections, as worked by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, were considered and generally approved.

Finance

The finances of the Party continue to be in an altogether unsatisfactory state as a result of the inadequate response given to the Party's call by the large majority of those with the means to assist. The reasons for this distressing attitude seem to vary from fear of reprisals from those in office in a controlled economy to shortsightedness and an inadequate awareness of the necessity of making sacrifices for the way of life in which one believes. Contributions aggregating the amounts shown against the names of each State unit were made by the Centre during the period April 1960 to October 1961:

Andhra	Rs. 27,525.00
Assam	12,412.50

Bihar	Rs. 52,112.50
Delhi	12,662.50
Madhya Pradesh	28,401.00
Maharashtra	12,412.50
Orissa	29,650.00
Punjab	27,525.00
Rajasthan	27,525.00
Uttar Pradesh	52,112.50
West Bengal	12,412.50
TOTAL:	Rs. 2,67,226.00

The total expenditure incurred by the Central Office in regard to its establishment and activities totalled Rs. 1,08,605.25 during this period of 19 months or an average of Rs. 5,700 per month. It will be seen from this that the Party apparatus has to function on a shoestring. The absurdity of the situation would be obvious if it were to be suggested that a political party functioning over an area and with the population of the whole of Western Europe from Scandinavia to Greece and Spain were to spend for its Secretariat every month a sum of £425! Yet, that is what the Swatantra Party has been driven to do. The Central Office apologises to all concerned for not being able to give better service by reason of its being starved of funds, staff and other facilities. The General Secretary would like to thank the members of the staff of the Central Office for their hard and concentrated efforts to cope with their tasks in difficult circumstances.

Literature

Notwithstanding these limitations, the Central Office was able, during the period under review, to bring out the following

publications and to make a large number of copies available to the various State units:

- 1 Report of the First National Convention, Patna, March, 1960
- 2 "To Prosperity Through Freedom"
- 3 "Inflation: Your Personal Enemy"
- 4 "The Fight Against Inflation"
- 5 "Labour's Friend — Congress or Swatantra?"
- 6 "What's Wrong with the Third Plan?"
- 7 "Socialism—An Ism that is now a Wasm"
- 8 "Inflation — Your Hidden Enemy"
- 9 "Co-operation or Coercion?"
- 10 "Congress Path to Communism"

States Conventions

Various State units organised their annual conventions during the period under review:

Tamil Nad

The Madras State unit of the Party held its first State Convention at Coimbatore on August 14, 1960, with five thousand delegates and over 10,000 visitors. The Convention was inaugurated by Mr. K. M. Munshi and presided over by Miss Khurshed-ben A. D. Naoroji. Among those present at this Convention were Rajaji, Professor Ruthnaswamy and Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddy.

Andhra

Guntur was the venue of the Andhra State Convention held on November 5 & 6, 1960. It was a massive show of the people's regard for the Party and, in spite of very heavy rains,

thousands of peasants gathered to attend the open session apart from the numerous delegates who were present. Party leaders from other parts of the country were present on this occasion and the function was inaugurated by the President of the U.P. unit of the Party, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal. The General Secretary, Mr. M. R. Masani, had the privilege of presiding over the Convention.

Gujarat

Over 20,000 people attended the Gujarat State Convention held on November 20, 1960, which was inaugurated by Rajaji and presided over by Mr. K. M. Munshi. Over 5,000 delegates were present to hear Rajaji call upon the people to fight for individual freedom and urge upon the people to vote the Congress out of power in the next General Elections. Mr. Bhailalbhair Patel, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed leaders, delegates and others present.

Bihar

All roads in Darbhanga led to Dalsingsarai on March 11 and 12, 1961 for the first Convention of the Bihar unit of the party. The Convention's success was all the more creditable when it is known that the district of Darbhanga had hitherto been considered as a "Congress stronghold." Rajaji inaugurated this Convention which was presided over by Mr. K. M. Munshi. Professor Ranga, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal and Mr. M. R. Masani were also present on the occasion. The open session had a gathering of over 50,000 persons. The President of the district unit, Mr. Janki Nandan Singh, was Chairman of the Reception Committee. The General Secretary's report was presented by Raja Jagat Kishore Prasad Narain Singh. On the second day, the President of the State unit, Raja Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh, presided over the Convention.

Tours by Party Leaders

A great deal of touring was done by various leaders of the Party throughout this period.

Rajaji

In extent of area covered and intensity of effort, there is an unsurpassable record in this direction on the part of undoubtedly the youngest member of our party, Rajaji! Right from the time of the last Convention till now, he has been ceaselessly on the move, spreading the message of the Party in his incomparable way.

Immediately after the last Convention, Rajaji, along with the President and some other leaders of the Party, addressed meetings in Patna and Bhagalpur and then left on a tour of Punjab and U.P. His Punjab tour covered Chandigarh, Patiala, Ludhiana, Jullunder and Amritsar. Rajaji returned to Bihar and toured Darbhanga, Chapra, Betia, Muzafarpur, Hazaribagh. He then entered Banaras to begin his tour of the U.P. From Banaras, he proceeded to Allahabad, Kanpur and Lucknow.

On April 8, 1960, Rajaji reached Delhi. On April 10, after nearly three weeks of continuous touring, Rajaji returned to Madras.

In the following months, Rajaji was constantly on the move to one district of Tamil Nad after another.

In October 1960, Rajaji visited Kerala on an eight-day tour which took in its strike Trivandrum, Tiruvilla, Peermade, Kottayam, Alleppey, Ernakulam and Kozhikode.

After inaugurating the Gujarat State Convention at Nadiad in November 1960, Rajaji visited Surat, Bardoli, Baroda and Vallabh Vidyanagar.

On November 22, he was in Bombay when he addressed a mammoth meeting at Chowpatty sands. The next day he was in Poona, where he was received in the traditional Maharashtrian

manner by the Mayor of Poona. He also visited Shirwal, Satara, Karad, Sangli and then went on to Belgaum in Mysore State.

From the beginning of 1961 till September, except for occasional visits outside to attend Central Organising Committee meetings, Rajaji constantly toured Tamil Nad and also visited Andhra and Mysore States.

In October 1961, Rajaji was in Bangalore where he inaugurated the Mysore State election campaign at a crowded meeting in the Town Hall. From November 15 to November 21, Rajaji toured Rajasthan on the eve of this Convention.

That Rajaji could do all this travelling at this age testifies to the power of his will and his belief in the righteousness of the cause.

The President

Professor N. G. Ranga, our President, has done a considerable amount of touring during the past year.

In April 1960, the President was in Gujarat where he presided over the Open Session of the Ahmedabad District Khedut Parishad at Jetalshar and addressed a meeting at Karansar. He also addressed public meetings at Nadiad, Anand and Jamnagar, concluding with a workers' meeting at Rajkot.

In September 1960, the President toured the important cities and towns of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. His itinerary included Kotah, Bundi, Ajmer and Bharatpur in Rajasthan, and Morena, Gwalior, Dalia, Indore, Ujjain, Dhar, Bhopal, Jubbulpore, Katni, Bilaspur and Raipur in Madhya Pradesh.

Mr. K. M. Munshi

Mr. K. M. Munshi, our senior Vice-President, extensively toured North Bihar and some areas in South Bihar between March 5 and 11, 1960. During his tours, he visited Patna, Muza-farpur, Dighwara, Malkhachak, Hajipur, Betia, Motihari, Sita-

marhi, Arrah, Biharsharif and Ranchi. He addressed workers' rallies, public meetings and press conferences explaining to them the aims, objectives and policies of the party. Later the same month, Mr. Munshi toured Rajasthan visiting Jodhpur, Ajmer, Kotah and Udaipur. Later in the year, he paid repeated visits to Gujarat. He also inaugurated the Madras State Convention at Coimbatore.

General Secretary

The General Secretary has visited most of the States where the Party functions in order to deal with the many organisational problems that arise from time to time.

More recently, in order to explain to the various State parties the party's election objectives and strategy, the General Secretary met the Executive Committee of the Rajasthan unit on April 14, 1961, of Bihar on May 12 and 13, West Bengal on May 13, Mysore on May 20, Bombay on May 31, Gujarat on June 4, Andhra on June 21 and 22, Madras on June 23, U.P. on July 9, Punjab on July 16, and Madhya Pradesh in Indore on September 10, 1961. At these meetings, the General Secretary conveyed the thinking of the Parliamentary Sub-committee and urged the State units to co-operate in giving effect to the Party's election objectives and strategy.

Liberal International

In February 1961, the General Secretary visited London where keen interest had been evinced by the Liberals in the development of the Swatantra Party in India. The General Secretary addressed a Press Conference in London on February 15, when searching questions were put to him by pressmen especially concerned with the ideological content of the party. Reporting the Press Conference, the *Birmingham Post* wrote: "The new wave in Indian politics threw up a ripple on the shores

of England today." The General Secretary also addressed a meeting called by the Liberal International, of which he is an Honorary Patron. The *Times Educational Supplement* of February 24 carried an exclusive interview with Mr. Masani where he was quoted as saying: "India has had enough of Mr. Nehru's Marxist tendencies." The rest of the interview dealt with the Party's attitude to education and student life.

The General Secretary also had occasion to have a discussion with the leader of the British Liberal Party, Mr. Jo Grimmond, in the House of Commons at Westminster.

Meetings and Rallies

At the call of the Party, members throughout the country observed various occasions with meetings and rallies in order to educate public opinion:

Anti-Inflation Day

Thus, September 18, 1960, was observed as Anti-Inflation Day at the call of the Central Organising Committee, as means to focus people's attention on the mounting inflation that faces our country as a result of the policies of the Congress Party. Leaflets dwelling on the evils of inflation and the consequent rise in the cost of living were published by the party and distributed in large quantities to the various State units who had, in addition, produced their own material.

Public meetings were held throughout the country on that day. Andhra held processions, Assam distributed leaflets in Khasi, Bombay City held meetings in its various wards, Madras had a procession of motor cycles, Maharashtra a torch-light procession, in Poona, where an effigy depicting the monster of Inflation was burnt and Uttar Pradesh distributed leaflets in Hindi and Urdu, the Punjab Party instructed Party workers to tour the villages with a view to educate the people on the

reasons for current inflationary conditions and a mammoth public meeting at Ahmedabad was presided over by a former Principal of a Law College in that city.

Gandhi Jayanti

On October 30, in response to a call from the Centre, various units of the Party observed Gandhi Jayanti. In Bombay, for instance, it was observed with a public meeting. The General Secretary of the Party spoke along with Mr. Murarji Vaidya, the then Chairman of the Bombay unit, and Mr. R. V. Murthy, the unit's General Secretary.

President's Sixtieth Birthday

Professor Ranga, our President, completed sixty years of age on November 7, 1960. Party leaders from all over the country including Rajaji, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal, the President of the U. P. Party, Professor M. Ruthnaswamy, a member of the Central Organising Committee and others were present at the function got up at Vijayawada to facilitate him on the occasion. A silver salver was presented to Professor Ranga by Rajaji, on behalf of himself, Mr. K. M. Munshi, Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh, Sir Homi Mody, Mr. V. P. Menon, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal, Sardar Lal Singh, Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddy, Mr. A. D. Shroff, Mr. Murarji Vaidya and the General Secretary.

Flag and Founder's Day

In response to the decision of the Central Organising Committee, the party observed Flag and Founder's Day throughout the country on December 9, 1960. This day was to commemorate Rajaji's birthday. Prayers wishing Rajaji a long life were recited at meetings of party units from the district to the State levels

throughout the country. Many messages of felicitation were received from people not only from the party but eminent men outside it like the Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Sri Prakasa, Acharya Kripalani and others. In his tribute to Rajaji, Sri Prakasa stated that whenever Rajaji "could not agree with any particular point of view he never hesitated to express his own opinion regardless of the position and the personality of the other side." Acharya Kripalani stated that Rajaji's "political courage has been of the highest order throughout his career that has been marked by a combination of intellectual brilliance, with practical capacity that has passed test in a succession of top ranking political offices."

Republic Day

On January 26, 1961, party units throughout the country joined in observing Republic Day. There were meetings in Assam, Bihar, Bombay City, Baroda, Madras City and other parts of the country.

Maharani of Jaipur's Debut

One of the largest rallies in the country took place when the Maharani of Jaipur made her political debut on the party's platform in Jaipur on April 14, 1961. Jaipur saw a mass upsurge such as has not been seen by it before. Several thousand Rajasthani women lent colour to the scene. The Maharani was repeatedly applauded as she gave the reasons for joining the party. She said: "The veteran and revered leader, Rajaji, tried several times to point out the right road to the Congress. But when they would not listen to his counsel, he formed a new party which is the Swatantra Party. People all over the country welcome it because they saw in it new hope and enthusiasm. I too saw in it all the good qualities which were once those of the Congress Party. That is why I joined this party."

Second Anniversary and Tilak Day

The second anniversary of the party, which coincided with Tilak Jayanti, was celebrated by units of our party throughout the country in the first week of August, 1961. There were flag hoisting ceremonies where party leaders explained to the gathering the achievements of the party in the last two years and the goal it had before itself for the future. There were functions at Nellore, Vijayawada and Ongole in Andhra, at Patna in Bihar, Bombay City, Delhi, Madras City, Nasik and Poona in Maharashtra, Mangalore, Mysore and Bangalore in Mysore State, at Farrukhabad, Kamalganj, Neem Karori and Ghasirai Mandi in U.P. and in numerous villages of the Punjab.

Parliamentary Activities

The nine member Swatantra Party group in Lok Sabha and the seven member group in the Rajya Sabha have been active and have exercised a much greater influence on the tone and temper of Parliament than their numbers would warrant.

Corporate Contributions to Party Funds

No better evidence of the nature of the big lie indulged in by Congress and Communist propaganda that the Swatantra Party is a party of rich men could be provided than the voting record during the debate in Parliament in the Winter Session of 1960 on the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 1960. This debate went to show that the boot is on the other foot. While the Swatantra Party led all other opposition parties in totally opposing the proposal that Companies should donate to political funds, the Congress majority alone got the Swatantra Party's amendment defeated and kept the door open to such contributions and the entry of money power into politics.

At the end of the debate, Mr. Masani was able to say that

the man in the street could hardly be blamed if he came to the conclusion that the Capitalist Stooze No. 1 in India was none other than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the only party that wanted corporate funds to be used for political purposes.

Budget

During the discussions in Parliament on the Budget for 1960-61, our M.P.'s in both Houses were among the most responsible critics of the Government and speeches made by them were well received.

The Third Plan

On two occasions, the Swatantra Party divided the Lok Sabha on the Third Five Year Plan. First in September 1960, when the outline of the Plan was being considered by the House, Professor Ranga, the leader of the Party in the Lok Sabha, moved a substitute motion giving several reasons why the Plan should be rejected altogether. Naturally, our motion was defeated by 221 votes to 9, but it was the first time that the House had refused to accept a Five Year Plan unanimously. When questioned about the need for dividing the House, Mr. Masani observed: "However few we may be, we shall record our dissent because, when the time comes, when this Plan fails and when the people call us to account, we shall be able to come forward and show who were the people who warned the Government, though their warning was not listened to."

The next occasion came in August 1961, when the Third Plan itself came up for consideration. Once again, Professor Ranga moved a substitute motion which was the only one put to the vote, since all other opposition groups tamely withdrew their amendments. The Swatantra amendment was defeated by 132 votes to 10.

Punjab Enquiry Report

Responding to requests from our State unit in the Punjab as well as from other friends in that State, the General Council appointed a Committee headed by Mr. K. M. Munshi, with Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, Sardar Kartar Singh Compbelpuri and Mr. C. B. Agarwalla as members, to make an impartial appraisal of the situation in Punjab with particular reference to the repressive measures taken by the government in that State. The Committee toured important centres like Jullunder, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Patiala, etc. meeting leaders of the agitation, our own party officials and other independent men.

A report was submitted by this Committee signed by Mr. K. M. Munshi and the other members and was released for publication on October 19, 1960. It received widespread publicity. The Report denounced the repressive measures adopted by the Punjab Government and the consequent suppression of civil liberties. The *Free Press Journal* in an editorial on that commented that the report was "an excellent effort at restoring perspective to the confusion prevailing in the Punjab as a result of the Punjabi Suba agitation." It described it as "a damning indictment of the Kairon Ministry's handling of the situation." The *Tribune* characterised it as a "balanced document", while the *Indian Libertarian* of Bombay called it "a feather in the Swatantra cap." The Delhi weekly *Thought* in its issue of October 22 commented that the Enquiry report is "notable for the impression of fairness that it conveys."

Punjab Unity Convention

An example of fruitful co-operation among democratic political parties on issues which threaten democracy itself was provided by the Punjab unit of the party which took the initiative and organised a Punjab Unity Convention in April 1961. It met on many occasions at different places of the State. At its first

meeting in Patiala, the terms of reference of this joint venture was defined. Briefly, they were opposition to (i) Curtailment of civil liberties; (ii) Growing economic and general distress as a direct result of the crippling taxation policy of government; (iii) The alarming widespread corruption in all branches of governmental machinery.

A Board has been constituted by the Convention consisting of Master Tara Singh of the Akali Dal, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke of the Swatantra Party, Sardar Harbhajan Singh of the P. S. P. and representatives of the Republican Party and the Hindu Mahasabha.

Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke's Arrest

The President of the Punjab Unit of the Party, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, was the first leader to be arrested by the Punjab Government as a result of Master Tara Singh's fast.

In a joint statement issued by the President and General Secretary of the party, we protested against the arrest and described it as nothing short of an outrage. Protest meetings were organised by our party units in the principal towns and cities of the country. Resolutions denouncing his arrest and demanding his immediate release from prison were passed. After more than two months in prison, Jathedar Nagoke was released in October 1961.

Statement on National Integration

The Organisation Sub-committee of the Central Organising Committee issued an important statement on National Integration in July this year. This statement coming in the context of the current hysteria that is being sought to be fostered by the ruling party was well received by the press and the public as a balanced one.

General Elections

In January, 1961, the Central Organising Committee appointed a Parliamentary Sub-committee consisting of Professor Ranga, Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. K. M. Munshi, Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal and Mr. M. R. Masani.

Party's Objectives and Strategy

The thinking that has guided the Parliamentary Sub-committee in its work embraces the following broad propositions, namely

- (1) That the twin objectives of the party in the coming elections are:
 - (a) The achievement by the Swatantra Party of the position of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, thus providing an alternative government to the country;
 - (b) The best possible representation of the Party in the various State Assemblies, consistent with the first objective set out above.
- (2) That limited funds available to the Party at the Centre should be earmarked for a restricted list of Parliamentary constituencies which would be selected by the Sub-committee on a national basis and that in regard to any further Parliamentary constituencies and Assembly constituencies that may be contested, the financial burden should be shared between the State Party and the candidates themselves.

Parliamentary Sub-Committee

The Sub-committee had four meetings: the first in Madras on April 18, the second in Madras on July 30 and 31, the third in Bombay on October 6, and the last in Bangalore on October 31, 1961.

The Parliamentary Sub-committee has given considerable time and attention to the evolving of the Party's objectives and strategy in the General Elections of February 1962. It has reviewed the situation in the various States and from time to time endorsed 55 candidates for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies on the basis of the recommendations of election committees set up in the various States.

Thus, on July 30 and 31, 14 Parliamentary constituencies in the States of Gujarat, Punjab, Andhra and U. P. were endorsed along with the relevant Assembly candidates. At the meeting on October 6, a further 26 candidates for the Lok Sabha were endorsed from the States of Mysore, Gujarat, U.P., West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan and Andhra. At the meeting on October 31, the Sub-Committee endorsed a further 15 constituencies from the States of Bihar, Gujarat, U.P. and Orissa.

The Parliamentary Sub-committee also had the task of allocating the Party's modest financial resources in regard to constituencies endorsed throughout the country in the light of the difficult situation prevailing in regard to the collection of contributions for the Party's election campaign.

Orissa Mid-term Elections

At its first meeting, the Sub-committee had before it the problem of whether or not to put up Swatantra Party candidates in the impending mid-term elections to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. On reviewing the position in the State and the lack of preparedness of the Party unit in the area, the Committee came to the conclusion that only the two sitting members of the party in the State Assembly should be permitted to defend their seats. Certain members of the party in Orissa were unwise enough to disregard the party's directives and to insist on standing for the elections. About half a dozen of them who stood were all defeated in the elections, some of them losing their

security deposits, thus justifying the wisdom of the party's decision. The Orissa State Executive was reconstituted and a new beginning made.

Orissa had the privilege of sending to the legislature the first elected representative of the Swatantra Party. He is Mr. Ghasiram Majhi who retained his seat from the Newapara Assembly constituency.

Symbol

Since April, 1960, the Party has been endeavouring to secure recognition from the Election Commission of India and the acceptance of its symbol of the Five-pointed Star. The Five-pointed Star was restored to the list of free symbols as early as April 13, 1961, but the Election Commission refused to accept the right of the Party to the exclusive use of this symbol on the ground that the Party had not secured the necessary percentage of votes in the last General Elections, despite the Party pointing out that such evidence could not possibly be forthcoming in the case of a Party that did not exist at the time of the last General Elections.

Finally in September 1961, the Commission at last reviewed the matter and issued a notification on September 22, setting out a new arrangement which would replace the old one. Arising out of this arrangement, the old category of nationally recognised parties has been abandoned and the status of each party is judged Statewise by the Election Commission. In the result, the Congress Party has been allotted an exclusive symbol in all the States of the Union, the P.S.P. and the Communists in all but three States, the Swatantra Party, the Socialists and the Jan Sangh in six States, and the other parties in lesser measure.

In so far as the Swatantra Party is concerned, the five-pointed star is the symbol exclusively reserved for the party in six States where it has been fully recognised, namely, Andhra, Bihar, Gujarat, Madras, U.P. and Himachal Pradesh. In so far as other

States of the Union are concerned, the candidates of the Swatantra Party will have the first option on the use of the Star but, in those constituencies where there is no Swatantra Party candidate, the symbol will be free for use by others.

Public Opinion Poll

In February 1961, the Indian Institute of Public Opinion, which is affiliated to the International Gallup organisation, analysed the structure of Indian political opinion. This poll of *urban* political attitudes covered the cities of Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bombay, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Cuttack, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Madras, Patna and Trivandrum. A thousand men and women of various age groups and various standards of education, literacy and illiteracy were covered by this poll. The question put to those polled was for which party they would vote if elections had been held then. The answer showed that, both in regard to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures, the support for the Swatantra Party was next only to that for the Congress Party, with the Communist Party, the Praja Socialists, Jan Sangh, the Socialist Party and the Hindu Mahasabha trailing behind in that order. The analysis also showed that there is a large floating vote of those who are still undecided in regard to their choice.

This survey confirms, what is now already clear, that an effective national opposition to the Congress Party can come only from the Swatantra Party.

M. R. MASANI

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