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SWATANTRA PARTY



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General Secretary's Report

Third National Convention

Bangalore, February 1 & 2, 1964

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GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

FRIENDS,

This Report covers a period of just over two years from the Second National Convention of the Party in Agra in November 1961 till the end of 1963. It is largely a factual statement. Even so, responsibility for whatever is contained in this Report is entirely that of the General Secretary, since it has not been found possible to place this Report before the Central Organising Committee owing to the absence of any meeting in advance of the Convention and the fact that it is due to meet right on the eve of the Convention on January 30.

The Second National Convention

The Second National Convention was held in Agra on November 25 and 26, 1961. Around 730 delegates from all parts of the country participated.

Led by Professor N. G. Ranga, the Party's President, a mile-

long procession wended its way through the bazars of Agra and finally terminated at Swatantra Nagar, the venue of the Convention.

The main business before the Convention was the adoption of the draft Election Manifesto prepared by the Central Organising Committee. After being placed before the General Council of the Party, the draft Manifesto was discussed for five hours at the Convention and finally adopted unanimously.

Among resolutions adopted at the Convention were those on the renewed Chinese aggression, on the democratisation of Union Territories, on the protection of the rights and special interests of the Hill Tribal peoples and their adequate participation in governmental institutions, and on the General Secretary's Report.

Considerable enthusiasm was demonstrated at the announcement of the merger of the Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa in the Swatantra Party and at the presence on the platform of the Ganatantra leaders, led by Mr. R. N. Singh Deo and Mr. P. K. Deo.

General Elections

The period immediately after the Agra Convention was marked by the General Elections of February 1962 to Parliament and the State Assemblies.

The Swatantra Party's candidates for Parliament and State Assemblies stood for election on the basis of the Party's Manifesto adopted at the Agra Convention, which set out its own positive philosophy and way of life and its criticism of the policies of the government of the day.

The principles of the Party and the issues it desired to raise were brought to the notice of the electorate by means of speeches, posters, leaflets, film slides exhibited in a thousand cinemas, a series of five press advertisements, and a cartoon strip book. The propaganda material put out by the Central Office of the Party maintained throughout a high ideological level.

Over 1000 candidates were nominated for the State Assemblies and around 170 for election to the Lok Sabha.

The performance of the Swatantra Party in the General Elections was hailed by most sections of the press in India and abroad and by people generally as satisfactory and as a notable achievement for a Party then barely two and half years old. Taking the rough with the smooth, the Party had every reason to be satisfied with the progress recorded.

Perhaps the most encouraging comment in the world press was to be found in the editorial in *Life* of March 16, 1962, which said:

"A strong Swatantra opposition looks like the best hope for India. Its platform is anti-statism, pro-Bill of Rights, strongly in favour of small business and independent farmers and free labour unions, pro-private capital both domestic and foreign, and against shilly-shallying with Red aggression. Above all, in this campaign it stood for a clean and efficient government that puts first things first, which in India's case means roads and education instead of industrial 'gigantism', inflation and overplanning. . . . The free world can wish this little party a big future."

A significant feature of the election results was that, as far as can be ascertained, every single seat in Parliament and the State Assemblies carried by our Party was a predominantly rural one, thus testifying to the validity of the Party's claim to be predominantly a peasants' party.

State Assemblies

The results of the elections to the State Assemblies released by the Election Commission showed that the Swatantra Party had emerged as the second biggest Party in the country though, naturally, it trailed a long way behind the ruling party. The Swatantra Party won 207 seats in the State Assemblies as against 153 won by the Communist Party, 149 by the PSP and 115 by

Jan Sangh. The breakdown of Swatantra representation in the various State Assemblies was as follows:

Bihar	50
Rajasthan	36
Orissa	36
Gujarat	26
Andhra	19
Uttar Pradesh	15
Madras	9
Mysore	9
Punjab	4
Madhya Pradesh	3

The Swatantra Party became the official Opposition in four States—Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa and Gujarat.

Parliament

In so far as elections to the Lok Sabha are concerned, the Swatantra Party polled about 10,257,000 votes, or around 9 per cent of the total poll. Its share in the proportion of votes secured in several States was significant. The Party obtained 25 per cent of the votes polled in Gujarat, 18.57 per cent in Orissa, 18.21 per cent in Bihar and 18.10 per cent in Rajasthan. In these States, the number of votes polled by the Swatantra Party was around half of that polled by the Congress Party.

The Swatantra Party in the Lok Sabha numbered 25 members as compared with the Communist Party which numbered 29. In the Rajya Sabha, the Party's strength went up from seven to eleven.

In order that the achievement of the Swatantra Party may be suitably assessed, it is necessary at this point to mention that the popular vote for the Congress Party in the parliamentary poll shrank to 44.72 per cent. So too, in the States, the Congress Party secured a majority of votes in only three States—Gujarat, Maharashtra and Mysore. These figures are encourag-

ing. At the same time, they indicate the extent of the ground still to be covered by the Swatantra Party before it can hope to win power at the Centre and in the States.

The Campaign

It may not be out of place to mention some features of interest about the election campaign. The first of these was the very widespread popular response to the Party's Manifesto and policies. Very little resistance was encountered in putting across our point of view to the electorate. The way in which Mr. Nehru directed almost all his fire at the Swatantra Party showed an awareness on his part that the only serious challenge to his regime came from our Party.

Whatever deficiencies emerged were due to weaknesses in our own organisation and its inadequacy to carry out the task of conveying our message to the electorate and of garnering the response in the form of votes for our candidates. Several elements combined to contribute to this absence of an adequate 'conveyor belt'. The first was the short time we had been in existence. Secondly, the limitations in the way of our resources in trained and devoted workers and in finance. The response to our appeal for funds was disappointing. It was a story of "too little and too late". Even the modest contributions we received could have been put to much better use if they had come six to twelve months earlier.

Our new and sketchy organisation had not only to contend with the overwhelming predominance of money power in the hands of the ruling party, its well-oiled and well-greased machine built up over generations in the course of the struggle for national independence and now utilised for an altogether different purpose but also, in many places, against the weight of official patronage and displeasure and the misuse of the administrative apparatus. If we did not do much better, it was not for lack of popular response to our policies but because we were faced by a much superior machine and by the

conservatism of large sections of the electorate who had got used to 'voting Congress' since the days of Mahatma Gandhi.

Some Lessons

It would not be correct to evade the task of drawing appropriate conclusions and lessons from the experience of the General Elections, even though this might involve a certain measure of self-criticism.

The most outstanding of the lessons to be learnt is that, while ideas do count, it is organisation that counts a great deal more, particularly in a large country like ours with an electorate which in large measure has yet to acquire literacy and political experience. The moral is simple. Our Party has to build its structure on a sound and more broad-based social basis.

The Party has, in particular, to devote specific attention to massive sections of the people like Harijans, Adibasis, small farmers, industrial and agricultural labour, shopkeepers, youth and women. Specific attention to the needs of these classes of our people, many of whom are under-privileged in social and economic terms, is called for. For a Party which has put the needs of the Common Man in the forefront of its programme and Manifesto, such a task is a moral and political imperative.

Since, in a controlled economy, the Party can never hope to compete with the ruling party in obtaining financial support from those in business or others possessing the necessary means, the Party will have to work in order to overcome this handicap by relying on the small man for the material resources with which to build its organisation.

Another task that the General Elections showed we have to face is to improve discipline within the Party. During the General Elections, certain candidates were nominated in more than one State without the sanction of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, and not every candidate behaved in a disciplined manner. While in a country as big as ours a certain amount of autonomy must be allowed to the units of the Party at State,

District and Constituency levels, the need is for a greater measure of cohesion and discipline to be achieved.

The need to deploy our limited resources of men and money to maximum effect and not to dissipate them too widely is another lesson that emerges from the 1962 Elections. The fact that many more candidates were put up than was in the Party's interest is shown by the fact that no less than 516 of the Party's Assembly candidates and no less than 75 Parliamentary candidates forfeited their security deposits. The fact that the Communist Party won a slightly larger number of seats in Parliament though they had fielded 137 candidates as against our 170 might also be worth pondering. Over-enthusiasm is, however, a fault which in an infant party like ours might well be forgiven.

We have also to learn from the sound practice of democratic parties in other parts of the world of adopting their candidates well in advance of elections. In Britain, the Labour, Liberal and Conservative Parties adopt prospective candidates right through the life of the existing Parliament so that the person so nominated is given a chance to nurse his constituency over a number of years and to show progress. In the 1962 elections, our Party emulated the bad example set by the Congress Party of adopting practically the whole list of candidates a few weeks or days before nomination day. There was competition between all parties in the clever-clever game of first seeing the other fellow's list and then choosing one's own candidates! Since the Swatantra Party believes in incentives as part of its economic thinking, it would be well for it from now on to select its prospective standard bearers in good time and give them ample opportunity and incentive to show results before they are finally nominated a few weeks before nomination day.

At the Centre and in all the States except three the country has minority governments with deceptive majorities. For this punishment which the people have to bear, the Opposition parties and the voters are alike responsible. Needless inter-oppositional contests between democratic opposition parties, which could and should have been avoided, enabled the ruling

party's candidates to get elected in numerous cases on a split vote.

There are two solutions for this. The first is a reform of the electoral law by which some system of proportional representation, or the second ballot, making a clear majority necessary, might be established. Till, however, some such reform is brought about, the only way out is for electoral adjustments or understandings to be reached between Opposition parties loyal to the Constitution and the free way of life. For failure to achieve this, the Swatantra Party at least cannot be blamed, for it was the only Opposition Party which endeavoured vainly before the General Elections to bring about such an understanding or adjustment (as distinct from an alliance or united front) with all other Opposition parties except the Communist Party.

Candidates' Convention

Soon after the General Elections, the Party called a Candidates' Convention in Bombay on April 7 and 8, 1962. Over 200 candidates who had fought, successfully or otherwise, as our Party's nominees attended. Many of the candidates present related their own experiences during the proceedings and made suggestions for the better functioning of the Party. The Convention concluded with all present standing to take the following Pledge:

"I pledge myself to work for the implementation of the Manifesto of the Swatantra Party and for the establishment of a regime honestly and diligently promoting the welfare of all classes of people without discrimination.

"I pledge myself to do everything to further the development of a well balanced two-party parliamentary system and the restoration in full of moral values in public life and administration.

"I dedicate myself to the national task undertaken by the

Swatantra Party of opposing the Statism which the ruling party has adopted as the basis of its policies."

Recognition by Election Commission

On August 4, 1962, the Election Commission communicated a draft notification it proposed to issue in regard to the recognition of the Parties and the allocation of symbols to them on the basis of their performance in the General Elections. While proposing to give recognition to the Swatantra Party along with the exclusive use of its symbol, the Star, in the eight States of Andhra, Bihar, Gujarat, Madras, Mysore, Orissa, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, the right of parties, in States where they did not enjoy such recognition, to have the first option of using their own symbols was done away with. On August 14, the General Secretary wrote to the Election Commission protesting against this decision and suggesting the restoration of the Star and other party symbols to the list of free symbols in States where the respective parties were not recognised along with the first option to their use, as was the position during the last General Elections. It is a matter for regret that the Election Commission on September 24, 1962, in its official notification decided to discontinue what it described as "a system of partial reservation of symbols for some Parties in some States." That is where the matter stands at present.

General Council

The General Council of the Party met only once during this period on February 10, 1963, in Bombay. Seventy members, including Presidents and General Secretaries of State Units who are *ex-officio* members, were present.

The General Council adopted a comprehensive resolution on the National Emergency.

Another matter considered by the Council was an appeal that

had been addressed to it by some members of the Party in Bihar against a decision of the Organisation Sub-Committee and the Parliamentary Board at a joint meeting in Madras in July 1962. The Council took note of the fact that the appeal had been withdrawn on the previous day. The Council unanimously adopted a resolution reaffirming its confidence in the Central Organising Committee, the Organisation Sub-Committee, the Parliamentary Board and their members including Mr. K. M. Munshi, Vice-President, and Mr. M. R. Masani, General Secretary, against whom unjustified allegations had been made in the appeal.

Central Organising Committee

The Central Organising Committee of the Party met four times during the period under review. The first meeting was in Agra on November 27, 1961, immediately after the Second National Convention had ended. It discussed publicity and other plans in connection with the impending General Elections.

The second meeting took place in Bombay on March 15, 1962, when the results of the General Elections and the Party's performance in it were reviewed. A Parliamentary Board was set up to supervise, guide and coordinate the activities of the Party in Parliament and State Legislatures.

The third meeting took place in Bombay on February 9, 1963. An important decision taken by this meeting was to authorise the preparation of a scheme for a revised basis for Party membership.

The fourth meeting was held in Madras on August 4 and 5, 1963. It was decided that the Party's members in Parliament should support a motion of no-confidence during the forthcoming session of the Lok Sabha in the light of discussion with other non-communist opposition groups.

The meeting discussed and approved a scheme for a radical change in the structure of Party membership by dropping the

25nP. membership adopted by the Party from the Congress Party and placing membership of the Party on a serious and modern basis common to democratic parties throughout the world. Readiness to work for the Party was to be one of the essential elements of membership. There was to be another category of Associates of the Party who would indicate their adherence to it but pay no subscription. The meeting appointed a Sub-Committee to draft necessary amendments to the Constitution to be placed before the General Council and next National Convention of the Party.

It was decided that the National Convention should meet towards the end of the year and that it should be held at modest cost in a hall and that excessive expenditure on items such as a *shamiana* should be avoided.

The final meeting of the Central Organising Committee before this Convention is scheduled to take place in Bangalore on January 30 and 31.

Organisation Sub-Committee

The Organisation Sub-Committee of the Central Organising Committee met on six occasions during this period.

On March 14, 1962, it met in Bombay and took action in connection with the merger of the Ganatantra Parishad with the Party. It also took various decisions in connection with the need to strengthen the Party organisation.

At its meetings in Bombay on April 7, 1962, in Delhi on November 7, 1962, in Delhi again on January 12 and 13, 1963, in Bombay on February 10, 1963, and in Madras on August 3 and 4, 1963, the Sub-Committee took various decisions of an organisational nature.

There was a joint meeting of the Parliamentary Board and the Organisation Sub-Committee in Madras on July 21 and 22, 1962. The meeting reviewed the functioning of the Party in both Houses of Parliament and dealt with various queries raised in this connection. It also gave guidance to Members of

Parliament in regard to issues coming up before the impending session. The meeting also reviewed the functioning of the Party in the various State Assemblies.

Parliamentary Board

The Parliamentary Board held five meetings during the period under review.

At its first meeting in Bombay on April 7 and 8, 1962, the Board considered the functioning of the Swatantra Party's group in Parliament. Office bearers for both Houses were nominated. It was decided to support the candidature of Dr. Radhakrishnan as President of the Union and that of Sardar Hukam Singh as Speaker of the Lok Sabha. It was also decided that the Party should give similar support to the candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the Union.

Professor N. G. Ranga was nominated as the Party's candidate for the Chittoor by-election.

The Parliamentary Board met on November 9, 1962 in Delhi and reviewed developments concerning the Chinese attack and the National Emergency. A statement which would act as a guide to our members in Parliament and outside was issued. The Board called for the banning of the Communist Party under the Defence of India Ordinance and Regulations as a Fifth Column of communist imperialism in this country. The Parliamentary Board also gave guidance to members of the Party in regard to their participation in joint defence committees.

Another meeting of the Parliamentary Board was held in Madras on January 12 and 13, 1963. Developments in connection with the Cease-fire and National Emergency were considered.

The Board met again in Madras on April 23, 1963, and nominated Mr. M. R. Masani as the Party's candidate for the Rajkot Parliamentary by-election. It approved the U.P. unit's support to Acharya Kripalani's candidature in Amroha and that of Mr. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya in Jaunpur.

The final meeting of the Parliamentary Board was on August 3 and 4, 1963, when issues coming before Parliament during the forthcoming session were considered and it was decided to support a motion of no-confidence in the Government which should be tabled by the Party's members in the light of discussion with other non-communist opposition groups.

Finances

The finances of the Party have been in a most disheartening state since the last General Elections. Owing to the drying up of contributions during the period, the small subventions that were being made by the Centre to the various State units have had to be discontinued since March 1962.

Even the Central organisation, sketchy as it has been, has been starved of funds. As against the budget of Rs. 10,000/- per month sanctioned by the Central Organising Committee, the Treasurer, despite his best efforts, has found himself unable to provide more than Rs. 44,300/- over a period of twenty-two months from March 1962 to December 1963 (inclusive).

It will be seen from this that the Party apparatus has to continue to function on a shoe-string. Considering that the Party functions over an area as large as the whole of Western Europe and with a comparable population, that it should be expected to do so with such insignificant resources would be looked upon as a laughable proposition in any part of Europe. The British Liberal Party, our counterpart in the U.K., which covers an area negligible in comparison to our own and which has only seven members in Parliament, spent during the year 1963, according to its published accounts, £87,713 or Rs. 1,169,506. The Liberal Party in Israel, even a smaller country, which has a strength in Parliament comparable to our own, collects a yearly subscription of Rs. 50 from each member

and has a secretariat which is magnificently staffed. In this context, the General Secretary would like to thank the altogether inadequate staff of the Central Office for the hard and devoted work put in by them under such difficult conditions. The General Secretary would at the same time like to thank Mr. K. M. Munshi, the Party's senior Vice-President, for his unfailing readiness to be of help to the Central Office whenever approached for it.

There are two basic reasons for our distressing experience. The first is the supine and cowardly attitude of the larger part of Big Business in India which, aside from a few honourable exceptions who practise enlightened free enterprise, continues to turn its back on a Party that stands for a way of life in which free enterprise can flourish, while lavishing its financial support on the ruling Party which is progressively engaged in destroying a free economy.

All one can do is to deplore the fact that fear of reprisals from those in office under a highly controlled economy and the short-sightedness of those who wish to make a quick rupee through obtaining permits and licences should thus combine with an inadequate awareness of the need to make sacrifices for the way of life in which one believes. The Party must persist in its work in the strong conviction that, however unworthy the attitude of many of those in business may be, it has to work for the cause of a free society of which competitive free enterprise is an integral part.

The second reason for the Party's financial plight is the failure of Party members to contribute adequately from their own pockets by way of subscriptions, as members do in other countries, and to collect small contributions from those in their respective towns and villages. Small contributions in the way of the poor man's mite spread over a large number of people can give just as much money and in a manner much more satisfying to all concerned than dependence on a small number of people with means.

Literature

Notwithstanding these limitations, the Central Office was able during the period under review to bring out the following publications and to make a certain number of copies available to the various State Units:

1. *Swatantra Souvenir*, 1961
2. *To Prosperity Through Freedom—Swatantra Party Election Manifesto* (in English, Hindi & Urdu)
3. *Your Questions Answered*
4. *You Are In The Soup All Right* (Cartoon booklet in English, Hindi & Urdu)
5. *Swatantra Answer To Chinese Communist Challenge*
6. *Time For A Change*
7. *Swatantra Alternative To Third Plan*

The *Swatantra Newsletter* continues to be published and distributed monthly, having reached its fortieth issue in December 1963. An average of 2000 copies is distributed to State Units, fraternal organisations and sympathisers in India and abroad. Keen interest has been evinced in the Newsletter in academic circles, both within the country and elsewhere.

Organisational Developments

On April 7, 1962, a meeting of the Presidents and General Secretaries of State units was held in Bombay with Prof. Ranga in the chair and various organisational problems were discussed.

The Party's position in regard to panchayat and municipal elections was clarified in the course of a circular to State units which announced the following decision of the Parliamentary Board in the light of this discussion:

- (1) that the Party should adhere to its stand not to contest elections to Gram Panchayats in the name of the Party, and
- (2) that a decision in regard to whether or not elections to zilla

parishads, panchayat samitis or municipal bodies should be contested in the name of the Party should be left to each State unit.

Trade Union Work

In view of the need to evolve a clearer picture of Swatantra Party policy in regard to Labour and to offer better guidance to members of the Party functioning in Trade Unions throughout the country, the Central Office convened an informal meeting of Trade Union workers on July 28 and 29, 1962, in Bombay. The meeting was attended by twenty-six Trade Union functionaries and workers from thirteen industrial centres in the country.

The meeting discussed ways and means of creating greater interest within the Party on problems of labour and in the development of Trade Unions on sound lines. While reiterating the Party's stand that Members of the Party should help the workers to organise Trade Unions controlled and managed by themselves in a spirit of service rather than of leadership, it was felt that the Party should seek to educate workers about the evils of political exploitation and domination which are so widely rampant in the Trade Union movement in India today.

The Conference endorsed the Party's policy not to seek to establish yet another central organisation of Trade Unions inspired or dominated by the Party and advised that members of the Party should seek to establish or develop independent Trade Unions unaffiliated to one or the other of the existing politics-ridden Trade Union Federations. Members of the Swatantra Party should carry on their political propaganda among the working classes in the name of the Party, while those functioning in Trade Unions should devote themselves to redressing the economic grievances of the workers concerned.

The Conference decided to recommend to the Central Organising Committee of the Party the establishment of a Labour Advisory Committee, which would advise the Central Organising Committee of the Party on matters of policy

concerning labour; encourage and guide members of the Party in the formation and development of Trade Unions; encourage members of the Party to serve the working class through the amelioration of their problems such as housing, education and medical relief; organise the training of members of the Party functioning in Trade Unions in the principles and practice of genuine Trade Unionism; act as a liaison between Trade Unions and Swatantra Party members of Parliament and State Assemblies with a view to ensuring that their problems are ventilated and the grievances of workers are brought to the notice of the legislature; and prepare and publish literature explaining the Party's Statement of Policy in regard to labour.

The Organisation Sub-Committee considered the report of this meeting when it met in New Delhi on November 7, 1962. It was decided that, as advised by the meeting, a Labour Advisory Sub-Committee should be formed with the General Secretary as Chairman and the following members: Mr. G. Latchanna M.L.A. (Andhra), Mr. V. N. Raghavan, (Mysore), Mr. A. P. Das (Orissa), and Mr. Subramanian (Madras).

Swatantra Forum in Calcutta

During the past few months, a welcome development has been the birth in Calcutta of the Swatantra Forum. This is a group of intellectuals, business executives and professional people, who are primarily interested in the philosophy of the Swatantra Party and its development and projection among the intelligentsia. Such a development was badly needed and is to be welcomed.

Meanwhile, the Swatantra Club established in Delhi in September 1961 continues to function alongside of the Swatantra Party in Delhi, usefully complementing the latter's activities.

It is to be hoped that similar developments may take place elsewhere.

Another development which needs to be encouraged by the Party is the formation of Sections for women and youth.

International Contacts

The Liberal International, with which the Party has maintained informal contacts, sent messages of good wishes to the Party on the eve of the General Elections of 1962 and of solidarity after the Chinese Communist attack in October 1962.

The General Secretary, in his capacity as a Patron of the Liberal International, attended its meetings at the Hague in Holland in September 1962 and at St. Gall in Switzerland in September 1963.

Mr. Masani also attended the opening session of the Assembly of the British Liberal Party at Llandudno in North Wales on September 19, 1962, and a message of greetings from the Swatantra Party, which was read by the chairman of the Assembly, was warmly applauded.

In January 1963, the General Secretary visited Israel at the invitation of the Liberal Party of Israel to participate in a meeting of world liberals there. The statement adopted by the Conference referred *inter alia* to the progress made by the Swatantra Party in India as one of the most encouraging developments in Asia.

In November 1963, Mr. Masani visited Tokyo, where he had discussions with leading functionaries of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, the ruling party in the country. He then visited the Republic of China in Taiwan at the invitation of the President of the Taiwan National University to deliver a lecture there. It was this visit which provoked a diplomatic protest to Delhi from the Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry.

By-elections

Parliament

The Swatantra Party put up candidates in four by-elections to the Lok Sabha since the last General Elections.

The first of these was in Chitoor where the Party's President,

Professor Ranga, emerged victorious by a majority of 1553 votes over his Congress rival in August 1962. Considering that the seat had been held by the Congress Party since Independence, the following result is a matter of gratification to the Party:

N. G. Ranga (Swa.)	132,209
T. N. Viswanatha Reddy (Cong.)	130,656

The next by-election to be contested was that in Dohad where the Party successfully defended the seat that had been rendered vacant by the death of its sitting M. P. in the Lok Sabha in April 1963.

The voting was as follows:

Parshottamdas Haribhai Bhil (Swa.)	79,690
Narsibhai Kanjibhai Hathila (Cong.)	65,425

The Swatantra Party tripled its majority from 4,413 in the General Elections to 14,265 in the by-elections.

Then came the by-election in Rajkot in May 1963. This Congress stronghold had been carried by Mr. U. N. Dhebar by a majority of 41,033 votes in 1962, when the Swatantra Party had neither put up a candidate in the General Elections nor possessed any district organisation. The by-election resulted in the return to Parliament of the Party's General Secretary, Mr. M. R. Masani. The voting figures were as follows:

M. R. Masani (Swa.)	83,365
Jethalal H. Joshi (Cong.)	69,214
N. S. Bhalodi (Ind.)	3,425

As will be seen, the Congress majority of 41,033 votes was thus converted into a Swatantra majority of 14,151 votes, representing a swing in the electorate of as much as a third within a year.

The last of the by-elections was that in Cooch-Behar in December 1963. The result of the by-election was as follows:

Paresh Chandra Barman (Cong.)	1,22,205
Benoy Krishna Das Chaudhury (F.B.)	62,611
Dharamnarayan Barman (Swa.)	23,241
Dinesh Dakma (C.P.I.)	17,760
Ananda Barman (Ind.)	807

Assembly

State Units of the Party contested eight by-elections to various State Assemblies and won two of these.

Local Elections

While information in regard to the Party's activities in connection with local elections is very sketchy, some achievements may be worth recording. The first is the resounding victory of the Swatantra Party in elections to the Jaipur Municipal Council in December 1963, when the Party won 30 seats out of 43 seats. The Party has also obtained an absolute majority in six other municipalities in Rajasthan—Dungarpur (11 out of 12), Abai, Newai, Chaksu, Nadbai and Bandikui.

The Swatantra Party captured all 15 seats in the Jasdan Nagar Panchayat elections that took place in December, 1963.

Obituary

Party leaders expressed their deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of former Union President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in March 1963. In a moving tribute to Rajendra Babu, Rajaji wrote:

"Death is rapidly thinning out the old guard. Rajen Babu's death reduces the number to two who are bitterly opposed to each other politically, the Prime Minister and myself...."

Rajen Babu has left us, his example remains, than which there can be no better copy for the children of Bharat. His unostentatious grace, his utter simplicity, his charity of outlook, his deep humility and his broad humanity, to quote the noble words that were used by Parliament when they welcomed him as first President of India, are ineffaceable by death and remain for our inspiration for all time."

Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh

The Party suffered a serious loss in the passing away in December 1963 of Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh, a founder member of the Party. A former member of Parliament, Sardar Lal Singh was President of the All India Agriculturists' Federation. It was largely the efforts of the Federation that resulted in the formation of the Party and Sardar Lal Singh played no small part at the informal meeting in Madras in June 1959 which gave birth to the Party. He was throughout a member of the Party's Central Organising Committee. Rajaji has said about him:

"He was a champion of the peasants of our land and exposé of many fallacies that served to keep them down in the scale of national prosperity. He was more than any one else responsible for the founding of the Swatantra Party and for my being in it."

Mr. Kalyan Singh of Bhinai

The Central Organising Committee in particular and the Party in general lost a valuable colleague in the sad demise of Raja Kalyan Singh of Bhinai in April 1962. A soft spoken gentleman, Kalyan Singhji was nevertheless firm when the situation demanded it. He was responsible for the establishment of the Party unit in Rajasthan and its present strength in that State is in no small measure a result of his pioneering efforts.

Mr. H. K. Baria

The Party's group in the Lok Sabha suffered a loss when, less than a year after his election, Mr. H. K. Baria passed away in December 1962. In a message of condolence, the Party's leader, Prof. Ranga, observed: "It is tragic that he should have died in the prime of life, just when his services through Parliament and outside are so badly needed during the present national crisis."

Mr. Muthuramalinga Thevar

The Group received a second blow when Mr. Muthuramalinga Thevar, an Associate Member of the Group in the Lok Sabha, passed away in November 1963. Mr. Thevar was an eminent leader from Tamilnad and President of the Forward Bloc.

Party Activities

The attention of the Party organisation has, from time to time, been focussed on important issues of the day. Thus, from January 3 to January 10, 1962, a week was observed to mobilise public opinion against "excessive taxation and wasteful expenditure" and considerable activity in this connection was reported by State Units in Delhi, Rajasthan, Bombay, Bengal, Mysore and Madras.

Defence Effort

The Chinese attack on India in October 1962 and the lead given by the Party in resistance to it resulted in a great deal of activity by members of the Party.

Members of the Party throughout the country took an active part in Defence Committees, whether official or unofficial. In

Madras, our members found it difficult to cooperate with the *Citizens' Committee* in view of the Chief Minister, as Chairman, insisting on Communist participation in its work. A similar difficulty was experienced by our State Units in Mysore and in Rajasthan.

Swatantra Party members of Parliament decided to contribute a month's salary to the National Defence Fund. Members of the Party in the various State Assemblies also made their contribution. Former ruling princes in the Party, including Mr. R. N. Singh Deo of Patna, Mr. Lakshman Singh of Dungarpur, Mr. P. K. Deo of Kalahandi and several others, came forward to make contributions from their privy purses and allowances.

Many members of the Party donated blood for despatch to the front.

In Bombay, the Women's Committee of the Party organised a drive on November 4 to collect woollen clothing and men's shoes for our jawans. The Women's Committee handed over to the Indian Red Cross over 1200 woollen coats and trousers, 900 pullovers, 100 overcoats, 100 sheets and 300 blankets apart from hundreds of pairs of shoes and other apparel. Money donated was used to make garments to be used at the front.

Gold Control Order

The Gold Control Order enacted in January 1963 came in for heavy criticism from Party spokesmen all over the country. Rajaji promptly labelled the present government as a "14-carat government" since the making of gold ornaments above 14 carats was banned. Rajaji said that the Order would deprive the poor people of their savings in gold which he said was the self managed bank which the poor carried on their persons.

Almost every State unit of the Party, in some form or other, drew the attention of people to the pernicious effects of the

Gold Control Order. The Party has come to be recognised by the goldsmiths, whose very livelihood was affected by this measure, as their staunchest champion among political parties.

17th Amendment

The 17th Amendment to the Constitution has become a major agitational issue on the part of the Party. The first major protest against this obnoxious measure was made by the Conference of Southern States in Bangalore on August 6, 1963, convened jointly by the Mysore Unit of the Party and the All-India Agriculturists' Federation. Inaugurated by a prominent lawyer, Mr. M. K. Nambyar, and presided over by Mr. K. R. Karanth, a former Congress Minister, the Conference was addressed by Rajaji, Prof. Ranga, Mr. Jinaraja Hegde and Mr. V. P. Menon.

Earlier, on July 31, the Swatantra Legislature Group in Andhra had waited in deputation on Dr. Radhakrishnan, President of the Union, in Hyderabad, to request the withdrawal of the Amendment.

At Junagadh, in Gujarat, the Party's General Secretary presided over the Saurashtra Kutch Peasants' Conference on August 24, 1963, and charged the Congress Party with having gone back on the assurance given by the former Law Minister, Dr. Ambedkar, that *no such measure would be allowed to touch ryotwari farmers.*

Throughout the country, State and local units of the Party contributed to the campaign against this measure in a variety of ways; training camps, seminars, conferences, visits to villages and the signing of petitions to Parliament were among the activities reported from one State or another.

Largely as a result of the Party's and in particular our President's dynamic initiative taken in cooperation with peasant organisations, nearly two lakh petitions have poured into the Lok Sabha secretariat protesting against the Bill.

Parliamentary Activities

The Swatantra Party group in both Houses of Parliament has, by and large, given a good account of itself. The initial gap caused by the absence of the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Group in the Lok Sabha has now been filled as a result of the Party's successes in by-elections and the new members in both Houses have been gradually acquiring the necessary experience and parliamentary instinct. In the meantime Mr. P. K. Deo had, as Acting Leader in the Lok Sabha, ably shouldered the responsibility. Participation of members of the Group in debates in both Houses has been getting increasingly frequent and assertive. Members of the Party are also increasingly active during question-hour and are making themselves felt. In the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Dahyabhai Patel has given good leadership to the Party.

The Swatantra Party is represented in the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament by Mr. Dahyabhai Patel and Sardar Kapur Singh. The Party is represented on the Estimates Committee by Mr. P. K. Deo. It is also represented on all Standing Committees and informal Consultative Committees attached to different Ministries. In Select Committees also our members have played an active part.

The Group in Parliament has throughout taken the initiative in developing closer cooperation with other democratic Opposition groups. In this context, it may be recalled that it was Prof. Ranga, our Leader, who took the initiative in calling a meeting of Party leaders a day before the commencement of the Session of Parliament in August 1963 which led to the tabling of a motion of no-confidence in the Government supported by all democratic Opposition parties.

Among the highlights in the life of the present Parliament have been the Union Government's Budgets in 1962 and 1963. While on the first occasion Mr. P. K. Deo assailed the excessive taxation and wasteful expenditure, in the following year

Mr. Dahyabhai Patel and Prof. Ruthnaswamy denounced the Finance Minister's proposal in the Rajya Sabha while Prof. Ranga, Mr. P. K. Deo and Sardar Kapur Singh exposed the attack on the standard of life of the people in the Lok Sabha.

The Chinese Communist attack in October 1962 and its aftermath provided many opportunities to the Party's spokesmen to give a lead to patriotic resistance to aggression, while exposing the policy of appeasement and its humiliating consequences.

In November 1962, a large number of our members in both Houses, while supporting the official resolution on Chinese aggression, spoke in support of the Party's amendments. Similarly, while supporting the Defence of India Bill, Prof. Ranga explained that our Party did so with a heavy heart because of the sacrifice of civil liberties involved.

In December 1962, Prof. Ranga and Mr. P. K. Deo sponsored a substitute motion during the discussion on the Cease-fire, which called for the severance of diplomatic relations with Peking, the refusal to negotiate till the Chinese Communists withdrew from Indian territory, the establishment of viable relations with Nepal and Pakistan, and the securing of massive military aid from friendly countries.

In January 1963, the Party moved an Amendment to the motion on the President's Address. Prof. Ranga, Maharani Gayatri Devi, Dr. B. N. Singh and Mr. Yaspal Singh in the Lok Sabha and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel in the Rajya Sabha voiced the Party's viewpoint. The leaders of our group in both Houses called bluntly for the rejection of the Colombo Proposals when they came up for discussion.

August 19, 1963, was a red letter day in Parliamentary history when the democratic Opposition united to press a Motion of No Confidence in the Government. The attack on behalf of the Party was led by Mr. Masani and Mr. P. K. Deo.

In September 1963, our members in both Houses disassociated themselves from the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill and declined to serve on the Joint Committee to which it was

referred. On September 19, despite our Party's reluctance to indulge in a walk-out, our members had to resort to this step in protest against the refusal of the Government to agree to this far reaching measure being circulated for eliciting public opinion.

The last Session of Parliament in November-December was mainly concerned with economic policies. The mid-term appraisal of the Third Plan produced two effective speeches by the Leader and the Deputy Leader of our Party in the Lok Sabha. Commenting on this discussion, the weekly journal *Commerce* in its issue of December 14 wrote:

"On going through the full text of the speech of Mr. Masani, for instance, one does not find him opposed to planning as such or to State participation in economic development. This is also true of Prof. Ranga. But both Prime Minister Nehru and Finance Minister Krishnamachari persisted in their game of trying to create a wrong image of these two Opposition leaders by repeatedly stating that they were against planning It is time that such responsible leaders as Mr. Nehru and Mr. Krishnamachari refrained from indulging in half-truths."

The debates on the Companies (Amendment) Bill, the Banking (Miscellaneous Clauses) Bill and the Unit Trust Bill found the Swatantra Party members in both Houses leading the opposition to these measures directed towards over-regulation and State Capitalist monopoly.

The present office-bearers of the Swatantra Party in both Houses of Parliament are:

LOK SABHA

Leader	Professor N. G. Ranga
Deputy Leader	Mr. M. R. Masani
Secretaries	Mr. P. K. Deo
	Sardar Kapur Singh

Treasurer
Chief Whip
Whip

Dr. B. N. Singh
Mr. C. L. Narasimha Reddy
Mr. Himmat Singh

RAJYA SABHA

Leader
Deputy Leader
Secretary
Whip

Mr. Dahyabhai Patel
Prof. Ruthnaswamy
Mr. Loknath Misra
Mr. J. K. P. N. Singh

The Challenge

So far this Report has been a recital of a mainly factual nature. Before it concludes, the General Secretary may be permitted to make a few observations about the organisational challenge to the Party and how it can be met.

The gulf between the people on the one side and the ruling Party on the other is constantly widening. Among the common people, there is seething discontent. The country's disastrous military defeat resulting from the Nehru Government's foreign policies and the almost complete failure, in the economic field, of its pattern of planning are opening the eyes of more and more people. There is widening cynicism and a lack of faith in the honesty of purpose of the Congress Party and its Government.

On the other hand, the proceedings of the recent session of the Congress Party at Bhubaneshwar have revealed a perverse desire to persist in policies that have proved an unmitigated failure. Guilty men, wedded to communism and removed from public office for dereliction of duty, were allowed to strut about preaching "democratic socialism". Never has so much nonsense been talked within a period of some four days as from that platform enveloped in a fog of Marxism and neutralism. Congress ministers have travelled back from Bhubaneshwar to

Delhi carrying the ideological junk of past decades in their baggage.

Faced with a Government operating with the dead hand of the past lying heavily on it, the people desire a change. But no alternative government presents itself to their eyes.

The crying need, therefore, is for the emergence of an effective Opposition between now and 1967, providing the people with an alternative government to which they can give their mandate in the next General Elections.

While the policies and programme of the Swatantra Party undoubtedly respond to the needs and interests of the vast majority of the Indian people, the question arises whether the Party is organisationally geared to the task of displacing, single handed, those in office. To those who know the facts, the inadequacy of our resources in men and money is obvious. The 'conveyor-belt', as I have described it earlier, of devoted and dedicated men equipped with the Party's message and able to reach the thousands of our villages has still to be set in motion. The Party's General Secretary, by reason of his position and the nature of his functions, has unfortunately more than a fair share of awareness about this lack as also about the deficiencies in the way of organisational competence and discipline which only too often mark the Party's functioning. Membership books are often neither efficiently distributed nor collected. During the past year, only two units of the Party, the Delhi State Unit and the Rajkot District Unit (with the consent of the Gujarat State Unit), have remitted to the Central Office the Centre's quota of membership subscription. Repeatedly, State Units overlook the necessity of getting the approval of the Parliamentary Board to the nomination of candidates in by-elections or belatedly seek approval to nominations already filed when it is too late to withdraw them. Not all members of Parliament and State Assemblies pay their modest subscription to the Party which is intended to facilitate the effective functioning of their legislature group.

No Short Cuts

In an article entitled 'Our Mission' in *Swarajya* (republished in our Newsletter of August 1962) our discerning leader, Rajaji, had placed before us some thoughts about the appropriate role and functioning of our Party. He had pleaded for an avoidance of shortcuts and had urged that "as the Gita teaches us, we should work patiently through the discerning elements of the population and look to the steady dissemination of ideas through that medium.....For the same reason and consistently with the fundamental principles of our Party, we must lay stress on character and good example in all the ramifications of our work. If we adopt means of *adharma*, whatever be our motives, we shall build in haste and error and the structure must collapse."

In a speech on *Party Politics in India* delivered under the auspices of the Harold Laski Institute of Political Science in Ahmedabad a little earlier, in June 1962, the General Secretary of the Party had taken the liberty of stressing the need for organisational competence and discipline as pre-conditions to success. He had pleaded for creating "in the minds of the electorate the image of the Party as one that is made up of good men and true animated by a desire to serve the country and working hard for the cause. Such an image can be created only over a period of months and years by the good sense of the policies of the Party, the energy, enthusiasm, intelligence and unity with which those policies are advocated and the discipline by which they are supported. When political power and economic patronage are concentrated in the hands of the ruling party, as they are at present, only an Opposition party which is accepted as morally superior by the people at large can hope to make the grade. In the absence of such moral superiority, all talk about the corruption of the ruling party and all promises to provide good government will meet with scepticism."

Commenting on these two statements, *Mysindia* of Banga-

lore, a journal which has been a consistent supporter of the Party, wrote in its issue of November 4, 1962: "Rajaji and Masani have correctly grasped the problem, viz., the problem of leadership. If the leadership of the party is not able to create a superior image in the public mind, it is certain that the ruling party will continue its rule. In fact one of the common arguments of Congressmen is: 'Where are the men who can take the place of these experienced Congressmen?'"

The General Secretary wishes he could claim that there has been any appreciable improvement in regard to efficient organisation or maintenance of discipline during the year that has since elapsed.

Preparing For 1967

In such a context, it becomes necessary to face the fact that if the Congress Government in New Delhi has to be displaced in 1967, considerable progress will have to be made between now and then in the direction of increased and closer cooperation between democratic Opposition parties. While, of course, there can be no truck with the Communist Party of India in view of its totalitarian creed and its Fifth Column character, there is no reason why all other opposition parties should not adjust their activities to the common purpose which they have at heart—that of offering to the country an alternative government which would provide clean and efficient administration, social justice and the defence of the country against Chinese Communist imperialism, in which task they can be joined by those Congressmen who follow Gandhi and not Marx.

During the year preceding the General Elections of 1962, the Swatantra Party made repeated efforts towards the achievement of an electoral understanding with the other major Opposition parties. It was a matter of disappointment to us that these efforts did not evoke adequate response. The result is that today India is ruled by a Party which secured no

more than 44.72% of the parliamentary vote and that all States of India, except three, are similarly saddled with minority governments.

The Swatantra Party has kept up its efforts for closer cooperation with other opposition parties since the General Elections. It is gratifying to note that there has been a certain measure of unity in action developed since the Chinese Communist attack on this country in resistance to which the Swatantra Party, the Jan Sangh, the Praja Socialist Party and the Socialist Party found it possible to make their efforts converge in Parliament and outside. The first fruits of this inter-oppositional unity in action were to be found in the results of the Parliamentary by-elections in Dohad, Amroha and Rajkot last year when the object lesson was provided of what can be achieved when there is a single opposition candidate facing that of the Congress Party. Similarly, the motion of no-confidence in the Government moved in Parliament in August 1963 by Acharya Kripalani on behalf of all democratic opposition parties and groups provided an impressive spectacle of solidarity in furtherance of a common purpose.

The concern caused to the enemies of democracy and freedom in India by these developments was recently brought out in an article in the *New Times* weekly of Moscow of January 1964, published over the signatures of three senior researchers of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia, USSR Academy of Science, which analysed the sequence of events leading to the Jaipur and Bhubaneswar sessions of the Congress Party. These communist analysts bewail the fact that "the ideological bloc led by Swatantra includes not only jingoist parties like Jan Sangh, but also Right-wing socialists and, on a number of issues, even Congress supporters. This reactionary inter-party alliance encouraged the Rightists directly to challenge the Government. . . . The consolidation of the Rightist forces has compelled Congressmen anxious to bring their party programme to realization to reflect on the situation". Mr. Nehru's view that "many who agree with its (Swatantra Party's) views have refrained from taking the logical step of joining it" is also quoted.

Disappointing though the response may have been and ready though the Swatantra Party must be to 'go it alone', if necessary, its efforts at forging a broad-based National Democratic Front need to be continued in the wider interests of the country and in the hope that these efforts will sooner or later be rewarded by the support of intelligent public opinion.

There is no reason why, as is sometimes feared, the Party's initiative in this direction should be a reason for any slackening in our organisational efforts, which should enjoy the highest priority among our tasks. The Swatantra Party provides the only clear-cut alternative to the present Government's policies. The youngest of the major political parties, it has made an impact on public consciousness out of all proportion to its short term of existence. While enjoying a solid peasant base, the Party evokes increasing response from all other sections of the people. In Rajaji, the Party has a leader beyond compare. It can show its regard for him in no better way than by meeting its obligations to the people through hard, sustained and disciplined work inspired by devotion to the Party's philosophy and policies.

Bombay,

M. R. MASANI

25th January 1964



*With the Compliments
of
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