

THE SWATANTRA PARTY

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artisan and the worker, the doctor and the lawyer, the businessman and the industrialist, the writer and the teacher. Each of these classes can thrive only in a society where there is freedom of expression and freedom of choice for the producer, the investor and the consumer, where man gets a fair return for hard work and for enterprise..."¹

We have here a clear statement of the outlook of those who formed the new party. They sought to stem the tide of statism which had gathered momentum as a result of the policies of the Congress in the name of socialism. They opposed these policies—of which joint co-operative farming was a symbol—because they hurt the small farm and, what was more serious, threatened to engulf the freedom of the people and the free way of life.

The meeting came to the conclusion that "social justice and welfare can be reached more certainly and properly in other ways than through the techniques of so-called socialism." It set down in 18 principles an alternative road to social justice and welfare. Professor N. G. Ranga was invited to accept the leadership of the new Party; V. P. Menon and K. B. Jinaraja Hegde were nominated as Secretaries, and B. V. Narayana Reddy as Treasurer.²

THE TWENTY-ONE POINT PROGRAMME

The same evening addressing a public meeting in Madras, Rajaji christened the new party and gave it the present name. Two months later, the Preparatory Convention of the Party met in Bombay on August 1 and 2, 1959. Nearly 600 representatives from Madras, Mysore, Andhra, Kerala, Bengal, Delhi, U.P., Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujarat attended the Convention and discussed the principles outlined at the June 4 meeting. It adopted a 21-point *Statement of Principles*. The principles are :

1. The Swatantra Party is pledged to social justice and equality of opportunity for all people without distinction of religion, caste, occupation or political affiliation.
2. The Party holds that the progress, welfare and happiness of the people depend on individual initiative, enterprise

1. Swatantra Party : *Preparatory Convention* (Souvenir), August 1959, p. 9.

2. Actually Rajaji offered the leadership of the new Party to Jayaprakash Narayan who was then present in Madras. But he turned it down "on the ground that his belief in a non-party democracy precluded him from being a leader of any one Party". (Later at a press conference Jayaprakash Narayan welcomed the new party and gave it his blessings). Sarangpani Mudaliar : *Swatantra Party Collection of Comments*, Bangalore, July 3, 1959, p.62.

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WHY SWATANTRA

THE Swatantra Party which came into existence in 1959 was not, as popular imagination has it, just a reaction to the Congress Party's resolution on co-operative farming. The Nagpur Resolution marked the occasion rather than the cause for the formation of the Party. A careful study of the politics of this period would reveal the widespread feeling which prevailed in the country at that time in favour of an opposition party with a distinct programme of action. The 'ginger groups' which functioned before the advent of the Swatantra Party evidently failed in providing any alternative to the Congress. Many people all over the country were worried about the direction in which the Congress was taking the country. The time was ripe; what was needed was merely a specific issue to trigger off political action and the Nagpur Resolution only set the alarm. Apart from the historical evidence, which we now have, it would appear reasonable to any thinking person that political parties do not grow in a vacuum. Political, economic and social conditions provide the soil for their growth.

The issue was serious enough to bring together those people who felt that the time had arrived to organise resistance to the misguided and ruinous policies of the ruling party. The result was the meeting in Madras on June 4, 1959, convened by the All-India Agriculturists' Federation with Rajaji in the Chair.

It is significant to note that the meeting was attended not only by agriculturists of standing like Prof. essor N. G. Ranga, Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh, Bhailalbhai Patel, K. B. Jinaraja Hegde and Ramachandra Reddi, but also by M. R. Masani, S. Narayanaswamy, V. P. Menon and Khasa Subba Rao. M. R. Masani told the Preparatory Convention two months later :

"The principle for which the peasant proprietor stands and the free way of life of which he is the backbone he has in common with other sections of our people, such as the

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needs of the people, namely, food, water, housing and clothing.

8. The Party believes that every citizen has a fundamental right to educate his children according to his choice and in a free atmosphere untrammelled by official directives and that the state should afford facilities for such education without discrimination.
9. The Party holds that the paramount need is for increasing food production and that this is best attained through the self-employed peasant-proprietor who is interested *in obtaining the highest yield from his land.*

The Party believes in an intensive programme of agricultural improvement by promoting the material and psychological inducements for greater production without disturbing the harmony of rural life. The Party holds that there should be no disturbance of ownership, management and cultivation of land, but believes in a more effective programme than is being followed at present in respect of irrigation and the supply of material, implements, credit and marketing facilities.

The Party believes in the need for giving every kind of help to agriculture but is opposed to cultivation through organisations which reduce price ownership to an empty paper-title and which bring into being a loose kind of multiple ownership which is certain to sap the incentive of the farmer and his family, reduce output, and take us to a collective economy with official management. It is firmly opposed to collectivisation and bureaucratic management of the rural economy.

The Party takes note of the dissatisfaction amongst the rural population that adequate attention has not been paid to their needs. It holds that the level of life of the rural people should be improved by removing all such impediments as are likely to stand in the way of their attaining a high standard of life and by taking all steps necessary for the purpose in particular for maintaining a reasonable and steady price for agricultural produce, which is in parity with other prices.

10. In industry, the Party believes in the incentives for higher production and expansion inherent in competitive enterprise with adequate safeguards for the protection of labour and against unreasonable profits, prices or where competition does not secure the necessary corrective.

and energy. The Party stands for the principle of maximum freedom for the individual and minimum interference by the state, consistent with the obligation to prevent and punish anti-social activities, to protect the weaker elements of society, and to create the conditions in which individual initiative will thrive and be fruitful. The party is, therefore, opposed to increasing state interference of the kind now being pursued.

3. The Party holds that the state should foster and utilise the sense of moral obligation, the pride, satisfaction, and fulfilment felt by individual in serving others, which are inherent in our tradition, instead of adopting legislative or other forms of compulsion which commence with want of faith in the people and are consummated in the serfdom of the governed under the official machine, in an omnipotent state controlled by a political party voted to power. The Party, therefore, adheres to the principle of Trusteeship adumbrated by Gandhiji.
4. The Party holds that the policies of government should be founded on faith in the people and not on state compulsion and the encouragement of hatred and conflict between class and class, expropriation, repudiation of obligations and the conferment of more and more powers on the officials of government at the expense of the freedom of the citizens.
5. The Party stands for every effort being made to foster and maintain spiritual values and preserve what is good in our culture and tradition, and avoid the dominance of a purely materialist philosophy of life which thinks only in terms of the standard of life without any reference to its content or quality.
6. The Party holds that steps should be taken to remove the pervading sense of uncertainty that has been created by the present policies of the government and its varying forecasts of future plans, leading to the drying up of initiative and enterprise in land, shop and factory alike. The Party holds that a sense of stability and incentive for individual effort can be restored only by strict adherence to the fundamental rights and guarantees specified in the Constitution as originally adopted in respect of freedom of property, trade and occupation, and just compensation for any property compulsorily acquired by the state for public purposes.
7. The Party holds that in the policies adopted for national development, priority must be assigned to the basic

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16. The Party believes that the state will best serve the nation by encouraging and affording facilities for a decentralised distribution of industry and by limiting its own regulatory function to the prevention and punishment of anti-social activities wherever called for.
17. The Party stands for the creation of opportunities for full and lasting employment in all sectors of life. It stands for a programme of all round industrialisation with a view to developing national resources and reducing unemployment. It believes in a balanced development of capital goods industries, organised consumer goods industries, and rural industries that afford supplementary employment in the small-scale processing of the products of agriculture.
18. The Party stands for a fair deal for labour, whether in the field, factory or office and for correlating to wages, increased productivity and for workers' right to organise for the purpose of collective bargaining. It stands for harmonising the interests of capital and labour when they get into conflict.
19. The Party is opposed to any form of political pressure being put on officials to deflect them from the course of fair and just discharge of duties without discrimination. It stands for the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and for the full play of the powers of judicial review given to the Courts by the Constitution.
20. The Party shall in all matters keep before itself the cardinal teaching of Gandhiji, maintaining faith in the people and in the efficacy of truth and non-violence.
21. The Swatantra Party holds that democracy is best served if every political party allows freedom of opinion to its members on all matters outside the Fundamental Principles of the Party. It, therefore, gives its members full liberty on all questions not falling within the scope of the Principles stated above.

In their opening remarks to the Convention, both Rajaji and Masani set forth in greater detail the political and ideological orientation of the new party. Masani said :

"There has been, since the achievement of Independence, a double imbalance in our polity. By reason of there being no acceptable alternative at the elections, the ruling party has in Parliament and in the Legislatures of the States been so numerous and so powerful that there has been no opposition worth the name. Such a state of affairs does not conduce to the health of a parliamentary

The Party stands for the restriction of state enterprise to heavy industries such as are necessary to supplement private enterprise in that field, such national services as Railways and the starting of new enterprises which are difficult for private initiative.

The Party is opposed to the State entering the field of trade and disturbing free distribution and introducing controls and official management with all its wastefulness and inefficiency.

The Party believes that in the field of production, the free choice of the producer and the consumer must be given basic place and importance.

11. The Party stands for the preservation of the freedom of small and self-employed artisans, craftsmen and traders who are in danger of losing their occupational opportunities by reason of the policy of statism. These persons perform a great, widespread, and inexpensive function in our society, and their gradual extinction will be a national misfortune and add to our unemployment problem.
12. The Party stands for greater thrift in public expenditure. It holds that taxation should be kept at such levels as will not interfere with reasonable living standard for the people, both rural and urban, and which while being necessary and sufficient for the carrying on of administration and such social and economic services as are taken up by the state, is yet not so high and exacting or so ubiquitous as to prevent capital formation and private investment.
13. The Party is opposed to a programme of development based on crippling taxation, abnormal deficit financing and foreign loans which are beyond the capacity of the country to repay.
14. The Party is opposed to all policies that lead to excessive inflation, high prices that reduce the value of savings, endowments and fixed incomes, and which create undue hardship for the present generation in the hope of a distant gain.
15. The Party believes that the cost of Public Administration should be reduced considerably. It stands for integrity and efficiency in the services. It is against the expansion of the bureaucratic machine, with a hierarchy of officials asked to do work which is best done by citizens and private agencies, resulting in unproductive waste of national resources.

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the expense of the freedom of the citizen. We hold that the state should foster and utilise the sense of moral obligation felt by individuals to serve others and the pride and satisfaction such service gives, which are inherent in our tradition rather than adopting legislative or executive compulsion. We hold that every effort should be made to foster and maintain spiritual values. We hold that the present policies and trends of the ruling party lead to the increasing dominance of a purely materialistic philosophy."⁴

As mentioned earlier, the Preparatory Convention laid down a set of twenty-one principles which constituted the Party's fundamental philosophy. They constituted the core of the Party's economic thinking and were basic. They set the limits of ideological loyalty to the Party. Beyond these the individual member of the Party was free to hold his opinion. It is worth noting that this freedom was incorporated as the 21st Principle.

Incorporating this freedom as part of its basic document the Swatantra Party broke new ground in India's party politics. It symbolised Swatantra's opposition to regimentation in all spheres of life and its belief in individual initiative as the mainspring of progress. The Party made this belief the basis of intra-party democracy by freeing its members from undue restriction of the party whips and the rules of discipline.

The 21st Principle has sometimes been interpreted as a clever device for not taking a party line on matters inconvenient to it. There was more than a tinge of sarcasm in the suggestion that an opposition party could afford this luxury. What if the Party was in power? N. Dandekar, the Party's General Secretary, has answered the critics thus :

"When in office, the Party will necessarily have to take a stand on many important issues on which no clear guidance is to be found in the first twenty principles. But whether in office or in Opposition, the Swatantra Party assures its members the freedom of expression contained in the Twenty-First Principle. If the Swatantra Party were in power and the language issue came up before Parliament, every member will have the right and will to be allowed to express his opinion freely on the floor of the House according to the dictates of his conscience. No attempt will be made to gag him."

He went on to point out :

"There have been occasions in the past when even the national leadership has differed on issues like Prohibition, Birth Control, Language, Punjabi Suba, etc. All these issues fall outside the fundamental principles of the Party. The national

democracy. It is bad for the government, because it creates arbitrariness on the one side and flabbiness on the other. It is bad for the opposition because it breeds irresponsibility caused by lack of hope in ever achieving power.

"All the parties in existence hitherto have adhered to socialism or communism of one brand or another. Communist and socialist parties cannot by their very nature function as an effective opposition to the government of the day, because, ideologically, they are merely satellites of the ruling party. The most they can do is to egg the government on to slide faster down the slope of collectivism. The result has been that, at the last elections (1952) in most constituencies, the voters did not have an opportunity to vote for any way of life other than the communist or socialist. To a man who believed in any other ideology, the choice between the Congress, the Praja Socialist Party, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party candidates was a Hobson's choice. For all political purposes, a large part of the electorate was thus disenfranchised. It will now be possible for the country and the electorate to have before it a clear alternative."³

Inaugurating the Convention, Rajaji summarised the Swatantra Party's basic philosophy and ideological moorings. He said :

"The Party is based on the truth that the progress, welfare and the true happiness of the people of our country, as in other countries, depend on individual incentive, enterprise and energy. The state is merely an aggregation. We hold that state interference and state management destroy individual incentive, enterprise and energy.

"We therefore stand for the great principle enunciated by Gandhiji and constantly emphasised by him, of maximum freedom for the individual and minimum interference by the state. We hold, as I have said before, that our fundamental article of faith for the policies of government should be founded on faith in the people and not on state compulsion and certainly not on the encouragement of hatred and conflict between class and class or on expropriation of lawfully held property, repudiation of obligations and on the conferment of more and more powers on the officials of government at

3. Swatantra Party: *Preparatory Convention* (Souvenir), August 1959, p. 8.

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A reduction in indirect taxation will bring down the price of commodities in daily use. Direct taxes will be so regulated as to release the productivity of our people which will meet the country's needs and raise its level of prosperity.

Agriculture : Agriculture will receive priority and be put on a sound basis so that it will contribute to the emergence of a viable industrial sector. The Party will respect the property rights of the peasants in their holdings, big or small, provide incentives and remove uncertainties. The Party stands for the independent and self-employed farmer, who needs facilities for the intensive cultivation of his land—fertiliser, seed, tools, credit and improved techniques.

The Swatantra Party will : (a) give special attention to speedy electrification in rural areas; (b) establish small-scale modernised industries in the countryside in order to divert surplus agricultural labour; and (c) provide technical education and workshop services to help agricultural and other machinery being kept in good order.

Collective Farming : The Swatantra Party stands for land reforms without expropriation in any form. The Party believes in every form of genuine co-operative effort such as service co-operatives, industrial co-operatives, consumer co-operatives and co-operative banks, but not as a means to collectivisation of land.

Fair Deal to the Farmer : The Swatantra Party has emphasised the need to establish small-scale modernised industries in the countryside in order to divert surplus agricultural labour. To this end, it will give priority to the speedy electrification of rural India. It will also provide technical education and set up workshop services to keep agricultural machinery in good condition.

The Swatantra Party stands for a fair deal to the farmer. It will : (a) abolish taxes on land except to the extent necessary for maintaining ownership records; (b) take steps to support an adequate level of agricultural prices in parity with the prices of industrial commodities required for rural life; and (c) establish an insurance fund against natural calamities.

The Swatantra Party will repeal all those amendments to the Constitution which have enabled the Congress Party to expropriate land belonging to peasant proprietors through grossly inadequate compensation and will secure real compensation to those agriculturists who have been so expropriated under the guise of land reform.⁶

6. The Party's vigorous opposition to the Constitution (17th, 24th and 25th) Amendments stems from the fundamental policy that the state shall not take away the rights of the citizen be he agriculturist or urban dweller and that property acquired by the state shall not only be compensated at market value but be justiciable in a court of law. The 17th Amendment was opposed not merely because it discriminated against agriculturists.

leadership agreed to disagree among themselves and carry on with the business of the Party which is to protect individual liberty, oppose statism and prescribe the kind of economic policies which will lead the country to prosperity.”⁵

PROMISES AND POLICIES

On March 19 and 20, 1960, the Party held its first National Convention at Patna. Over a thousand delegates from various parts of the country attended and adopted a Statement of Policy entitled, “To Prosperity Through Freedom.” This document spelt out in greater detail the principles adopted at the Preparatory Convention of the Party. The election manifestoes for the three general elections which followed were based on the Statement of Policy. Swatantra's policies are clearly set out in these documents. The following paragraphs outline the highlights of these policies.

The Common Man : The Swatantra Party places the citizen with his natural urge for self-expression and freedom in the centre of its programmes and policies. It is committed to the view that the State exists for the individual, not the individual for the state. In taking this view, it has drawn its inspiration from the political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi according to which the ideal is to keep the functions of government to a minimum and create a social arrangement in which power would be diffused so that the citizen is not hampered in his natural growth. Only thus can be created a climate of freedom in which the citizen would grow to his full stature.

The Swatantra Party stands, first and foremost, for the common man; for providing him with food, clothing and shelter. Top priority must be given to the supply of clean drinking water in rural areas and to housing not only in urban and suburban areas but also in the countryside. Government's policies should be aimed at fuller employment, production of more foodgrains, more small irrigation works, more schools and more small industries producing goods which the common man consumes.

These objectives are within the reach of the country if funds now spent on spectacular and gigantic projects unrelated to the immediate needs of the people or in great part being wasted in unproductive enterprises, are diverted to a programme of cheap clothing and the stimulation of small-scale, modernised industries. This would provide gainful employment to a large body of labour at low capital cost, making it possible for all able-bodied persons in the country to find employment.

Taxation : The Party will enforce a drastic reduction in the excessive burden of taxes which now hampers production and employment. These include, *inter alia*, the reorganisation and reform of the sales tax in order to minimise harassment and help the small traders in the country.

5. *Swatantra Newsletter*, No.62, August-September, 1967.

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would be a quasi-judicial authority to indicate the necessary priorities and allocations.

The Swatantra Party will streamline the working of government undertakings by organising commercial management and adequate supervision under statutory boards independent of political interference.

Planning : The Swatantra Party is opposed to centralised planning of the Soviet type. This does not mean that it is opposed to the idea of planning. It accepts democratic planning through persuasion as in France, Britain and the Scandinavian countries. The Party has often spoken of dismantling the Planning Commission in its present form because it has threatened to become a parallel executive. Moreover, the body is unknown to the Constitution of the country. Its past record has shown that it is inefficient as a planning agency. The Party will therefore seek to replace it by expert advisory bodies which can deal with the specialised problems relating to agriculture, industry, labour and other fields. The Swatantra Party is also opposed to the country's dependence on foreign aid which has only increased foreign debts, without any programme of exports in order to meet the country's obligations. The Party will endeavour to halt this grievous policy without damage to national reputation. The Party will support and encourage the flow of foreign equity capital into the country at its own risk.

Labour : The Party accepts the workers' right to organise in order to improve their conditions of life and work. Strong and responsible trade unions managed by the workers themselves and not, as at present, playthings in the hands of political parties, are an integral part of a democratic industrial order. The Party stands for the workers' right to collective bargaining without governmental interference.

The Swatantra Party stands for closer association of workers and the management of industries so that a spirit of partnership may develop.

The Party would urge the acceptance of a fair wage as a basic principle for attaining a satisfactory wage structure. Encouragement would be given to "progress sharing" through an increase in earnings of employees alongside an increase in productivity without detriment to the overall aim of national prosperity through the reduction of costs.

The Constitution of India : The Swatantra Party stands committed to the Constitution of India and its democratic philosophy. This is why it has opposed the Constitution (24th and 25th) Amendment Bills which have been passed by Parliament on the specious argument that the ruling party is merely fulfilling its electoral promises. By these amendments, the citizen is now at the mercy of the state for not only the right to property but all other rights can be abridged.

The Swatantra Party rejects the contention that the Constitution stands in the way of economic and social progress by impeding the implementation of the directive principles of state policy. The Party is

The Swatantra Party stands for an adequate wage to landless agricultural labour and for the protection of permanently employed labour in agriculture.

Industry and Trade : The Party will seek to ensure the widest possible distribution of industrial ownership through measures such as the establishment of societies and trusts through which the small man may make his modest investment. It will also facilitate the provision of shares to employees so that a large body of employees may have a stake in the concerns for which they work.

Role of Government : The role of government in trade and industry should primarily be that of a helper and regulator, not a participant. The business of government is to govern. There is a great deal that government can do in a developing country, through the development of roads and other forms of communication, transport and cheap electric power. Today, these functions of government are neglected, while government needlessly and inefficiently enters the field of trade and manufacture of products, sometimes of little significance to the life of the country. *The Swatantra Party has always believed in a mixed economy in which government and free enterprise can function together in a fruitful partnership in the service of the community.* But it also subscribes to the view that till the public sector of the country's economy is rationalised and run on sound business principles, there ought to be no further expenditure of the tax-payer's money in the government sector.

The Party holds that a great part of the process of industrialisation must take place through the dispersal of industry so as to reduce regional disparities. It stands for the preservation of the freedom of the small and self-employed artisan, craftsman and trader. The Party stands for promoting or strengthening the spirit of industry which is to be distinguished from what is called industrialisation.

The Swatantra Party will seek to rectify the confusion and corruption which have distorted the functioning of the economy through controls, permits, licences and quotas which are at the disposal of politicians and officials. At its 1968 Convention, the Swatantra Party called upon the government to dismantle the whole pernicious and complex apparatus of controls except to the minimum extent that may be temporarily necessary. Even these minimum controls, it said, should be administered through an independent tribunal thus putting an end to the present permit-licence-quota raj.⁷

Monopoly : The Party is opposed to monopoly and concentration of power whether in the state or in the free sector. It will promote anti-monopoly legislation wherever necessary, and apply it equally to the public and private sectors of the economy. Where owing to temporary scarcity of certain vital resources regulation becomes inevitable, there

7. *Swatantra Newsletter*, August-December 1968, p. 12.

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Government's foreign policy has been an utter failure as it is clear from the continuing violation of our territorial integrity and our pitiable diplomatic isolation in the world.

The Party believes that, when the country's territorial integrity has been violated first by Communist China and then by Pakistan, the concept of non-alignment has lost all meaning and our foreign policy needs to be reviewed and brought into closer relation to the realities of the international situation.

The Congress Party's oft-repeated opposition to military alliances is meaningless. In the face of the aggressive intentions and activities of some of our neighbours, proper defence alliances with reliable powers are not only expedient but legitimate. The Party regards Communist China and the U.S.S.R. as the principal threats to freedom in Asia and calls for the building up of a system of regional security by the countries of South and South-East Asia, Japan and Australia in which it would like to see India play its proper part. It is in this direction that security lies. The Party stands for a more imaginative policy towards the peoples on our borders so as to help the defence of the country as a whole and strengthen the bonds between us.

In this context, the Party supports the Government and the people of South Viet Nam and their allies in resisting the aggression and expansionism of Communist China and its North Vietnamese satellites and deplores the suicidal attitude of the Congress Government which in effect gives aid and comfort to this country's enemies.

The Party stands pledged to a firm and vigilant policy in dealing with Communist China and for active steps to end its aggression and to re-occupy Indian territory in its possession at the earliest possible moment. The Party stands for the liberation of Tibet and for the recognition of the Dalai Lama as the Head of the Government of Tibet in exile.

While the Swatantra Party believes that normal and friendly relations between India and Pakistan are required in the interest and security of the entire sub-continent, it is of the view that Pakistani aggression in 1965 deprived Pakistan of whatever *locus standi* it might have had in regard to the Kashmir problem.

Electoral Reform : The Party stands for a reform of the electoral system which would : (a) reduce the influence of money power and the expenses incurred by the candidates ; and (b) evolve such a system as would result in fair and proportionate representation of the will of the electorate in Parliament and State Legislatures. This will reduce, if not end, the distortions that now exist in the composition of the present Lok Sabha and many State Assemblies.

Public Services : More than anything else, the Party will give the country a clean administration. It will ensure that there is no interference by politicians either of the ruling or any other party in day-to-day administration. In order to secure this, the Party will urge that the Union

firmly of the view that the fundamental rights guaranteed to the people of India by the Constitution not only do not obstruct the enactment of measures for achieving social and economic progress but are essential for the preservation of democracy, and, in particular, for the protection of minorities and other weaker sections of the people from abuse of authority by the party in power.

The Party therefore considers its duty to resist the 24th and 25th Amendments to the Constitution which violate the Constitution and the rule of law, frustrate democracy, jeopardise the freedom of person, religion, education, association and speech and expose all property to expropriation.

Education : The Swatantra Party is convinced that in this age of science and technology, it is necessary to promote a scientific outlook among people and make them suitably oriented to the needs of changing times. In its educational policy, the Swatantra Party has emphasised the right of every citizen to educate his children according to his choice in an atmosphere unrestricted by official directive. It is opposed to the nationalisation of text books which have already done considerable harm to education. It will work for raising academic standards throughout the country and improve the status of teachers and professors all over India so as to increase their mobility. Above all else, it stands for the autonomy of universities and research bodies because it believes that government restrictions are harmful to the spirit of education.

Media of Mass Communication : The Party is opposed to the state monopoly in broadcasting and the official controls and regulations on the other media of communication.

All-India Radio which is today a state monopoly should be converted into an autonomous corporation like the British Broadcasting Corporation ; other radio networks should be allowed to enter into competition with it. Similarly, the Films Division which today is the hand-maid of one ruling party's propaganda, should be made autonomous for the dissemination of authentic news.

The proposed press legislation is part of the policy of the ruling Congress to destroy the fundamental rights of our people. Under the pretext of "diffusing ownership of the Press", the government seeks the power to manipulate shareholdings so as to ensure a dominant position for itself and for the communists, fellow-travellers and opportunists upon whom it relies for support. The result will be the stifling of all independent projection and critical interpretation of news and views.

The Swatantra Party will therefore give whole-hearted support to the Press in its struggle for liberty. Regarding freedom of speech and expression, so essential for the very existence of democracy, the Swatantra Party pledges itself to fight this dangerous legislation.

International Relations and Defence : The Swatantra Party regards enlightened national self-interest as well as progress towards unity as the bases of a sound foreign policy. Judged by this test, the Congress

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annum and Rs. 100.00 respectively. Annual renewal fee was fixed at Re. 1.00.

A category of "sympathiser members" was created whereby anyone who sympathised with the Party's principles but was unable to work for the Party could be called a Party member merely by signing a pledge form but without paying any subscription. On the basis of these, Party elections on a national scale were conducted in 1964 and 1967.

At the Bhubaneshwar Convention in October 1968 the Constitution of the Party once again underwent changes with regard to certain aspects of membership subscription; the most important being concessional subscription to those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes who could now be enrolled at Rs. 1.50 with a renewal fee of 50 paise. For "sympathiser members" a fee not exceeding 25 paise was fixed.

Another important change was that membership subscription was based on the Calendar year. Thus all subscriptions expired on December 31. Hitherto, it had been on the basis of what may be called "club membership," i.e., one year from the date of enrolment. This practice was not found convenient because membership was spread over wide areas in the villages. The Party elections of 1969 and 1971 were conducted under the rules amended in October 1968.

In September 1971 the membership provisions underwent a further change. The entrance fee-cum-subscription which had been raised to Rs. 3.00 in 1964 was reduced to a uniform Re. 1.00 for all (including those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Tribes and other backward classes). While the renewal fee was also Re. 1.00 for general members those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Tribes and other backward classes continued to pay a renewal fee of 50 paise.

This then has been the somewhat chequered career of the Party's membership subscription. The main reason for increasing the subscription in 1964 has already been dealt with. The reasons advanced for reducing were : (a) that people, particularly in the rural areas, found Rs. 3.00 a year too much to pay, and (b) that there was need to broaden the basis of the Party and enable all those who wished to work for the Party to do so.

All Workers and Life Workers are issued Cards. The printing and distribution of Workers and Life Workers Cards is centralised at the National Headquarters. The tabulated statement appearing on the following page gives the membership position in 1964, 1967, 1969 and 1971.

A feature to be noted in connection with enrolment is the fact that while State/Regional Units are free to enrol, they do not have the right to reject any applicant without the consent of the National Executive. Specific cases for rejection of enrolment applications have to be brought to the National Executive with adequate reasons as to why rejection is recommended. Again, in regard to disciplinary action, the National Executive alone can, on the recommendation of the concerned unit or on

President and the Governors of the States, who should be non-party men, should in their discretion be the appointing authorities of all members of the Public Service Commissions. It should also be their special responsibility to protect the members of the public services.

Culture, Religion and Education : India is a mixture of racial, religious and linguistic groups ; its culture is a composite culture. The framers of the Constitution sought to protect the rights of the minorities. The Swatantra Party is of the view that while the component States of the Indian Union have their autonomy they should do nothing to unsettle the process of integration. To help this process it will carry out effectively the provisions of the Constitution, relating to the rights and interests of the minorities and will work for the welfare of *Harijans*, *Adivasis*, and other backward classes.

In the process of integration now taking place, organisations of various communities have a part to play. The Party does not look upon them with disfavour and will not seek to get them banned.

The Party stands for the establishment of permanent quasi-judicial commissions for minority affairs at the Centre and in the States.

MEMBERSHIP PATTERN

Till February 1964, the Party's membership was based on the mass-party pattern. The subscription was 25 paise for Ordinary Members and Rs 10.00 for Permanent (Life) Members. On this basis, and on the eve of the Second National Convention at Agra in November 1961, it was estimated that Party membership was around 3,50,000. Membership was open to all above 21 years of age.

While in terms of numbers this was satisfactory, the problem was one of verification. Though the Party's Constitution adopted at the National Convention held at Patna in March 1960 provided for the holding of Party elections once in two years, no Party elections were found possible because enrolment figures could not be verified. Apart from this was the problem of organisation. With a large but amorphous membership it became difficult to secure cadres. Therefore, at the Third National Convention of the Party held at Bangalore in February 1964, the provisions relating to membership were amended. The changes were of a radical nature and resulted in the Party's membership-structure undergoing some important changes.

The 25 paise Ordinary membership and Rs. 10.00 Permanent membership were replaced by three categories, viz., Workers, Life Workers and Members. The age for enrolment was reduced from 21 to 18. The rules for enrolment were tightened up. All applications for enrolment were to be screened by sub-committees of State/Regional Executives. Subscription for Workers and Life Workers was raised to Rs. 3.00 per

could not be one Swatantra Party in Bombay, another in Maharashtra and a third in Gujarat, but that these should all function as branches of a single Party.

"This is a fact which is commonplace in Britain where the Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties are organised with National Headquarters in London on the one hand and Constituency organisations consisting of the candidate, the Agent (or Organiser), and local branch on the other. The size of our country certainly justifies our interposing an additional tier, namely, the State unit. But that cannot mean that the State unit should claim territorial authority, seek a monopoly of developing the Party in that area, and question "interference" by the Centre. The National Executive of the Party and the Parliamentary Board are there precisely to guide and direct the affairs of the Party throughout the length and breadth of the country, whenever it is necessary in the Party's interests. The freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed to our members cannot be misunderstood to cover up organisational anarchy."

The Statement of Organisation incorporating this concept of the Party being a unitary one was endorsed unanimously by the General Council.⁸

PYRAMIDICAL STRUCTURE

The Constituency/*Taluka* Committee constitutes the base of the Party's organisational pyramid. The Committee is elected by the Workers and Life Workers of the Party residing in the constituency or *taluka*. The Committee elects its own office bearers. It also elects its representatives on the District Committee. Representatives of the various Constituency/*Taluka* Committees in a district constitute the District Committee.

A District Committee can be comprised either in respect of the revenue district or parliamentary constituency. District Committees if found unwieldy are free to form District Working Committees. District Committees elect their office bearers. Each District Committee also elects its representatives on the State or Regional Council.

State/Regional Councils are composed of elected representatives of District Committees in their State or Region.⁹

8. Space prevents a fuller discussion of this important question. For instance the "Ramgarh" affair where the Raja of Ramgarh as President of the Bihar Unit claimed total autonomy or in Gujarat where the question of centre/state relations within the Party was hotly debated.
9. Under the Party's Constitution the General Council at the National level can recognise a State or any part thereof as a State or regional unit. The Party has

its own, expelled members. State/Regional Units are however free to take disciplinary action short of expulsion. In such cases the expelled members have a right of appeal to the National Executive. Underlying these arrangements is the concept that there is only one Party and that is *The Swatantra Party*, the Units at the State/Regional levels being its branches.

TABLE I
Comparative Enrolment Figures

State/Regional Unit	1964	1967	1969	1971
Andhra Pradesh	4,310	6,565	9,713	4,131
Bombay	787	2,253	1,300	1,569
Delhi	—	771	698	866
Gujarat	6,354	11,645	9,674	4,227
Himachal Pradesh	316	—	1,404	1,327
Kerala	316	1,022	3,017	1,649
Kashmir	—	—	810	570
Maharashtra	169	395	513	343
Mysore	1,192	1,593	1,504	1,961
Orissa	1,113	3,926	6,395	5,520
Punjab	1,757	1,476	1,301	706
Rajasthan	3,490	5,059	7,386	5,062
Tamil Nadu	3,023	5,916	5,678	4,411
Uttar Pradesh	2,709	6,530	2,610	3,663
	25,852	47,151	52,003	36,005

This issue was debated by the General Council meeting at Bombay in March 1965, when centre/state relations *within* the Party in the context of the strategy for the 1967 general elections were discussed. The then General Secretary, M.R. Masani, in a note entitled "Tasks Before Us" observed :

"We must realise that there is only one Swatantra Party, and that is *The Swatantra Party*. Our leader, Rajaji, put his finger on this truth as far back as August 1959 in Bombay when he pointed out, in connection with our attitude in regard to a regional controversy then current in Western India, that there

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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In November 1969, the General Council adopted a Mid-Term Report. This report, the only one of its kind in the country's party politics, reviewed the Party's performance since the 1967 elections. In the words of the report it was intended to be "a political balance sheet" on the one hand and the programme of the Party between the publication of the report and the general elections (then scheduled) for 1972. The report concluded that the "enthusiasm for the Party generated as a result of the last General Elections (1967) has not been maintained". The following reasons were advanced by the Party for the unsatisfactory state of affairs :

- (a) The absence of adequate direction from the centre to lay down guidelines for work on matters relating to organisation and in regard to issues which need national airing particularly issues that affect the individual citizen.
- (b) An inadequate appreciation on the part of the Party's own rank and file and middle leadership of the principles and policies which the Party stands for, leading naturally to an inadequate understanding by the people at large of the Party's policies particularly when they run counter to prevailing emotional attitudes.
- (c) Failure on the part of State Units to develop their organisation in a methodical manner,
 - (i) build up units of the Party at lower levels,
 - (ii) spread the Party's message as widely as possible, and
 - (iii) to train the Party's cadres.
- (d) The unfortunate tendency on the part of some of our leaders to issue conflicting statements or, at times, statements that are contrary to the Party's policies.
- (e) Though the Swatantra Party has adopted an excellent Statement of Policy and Election Manifesto for 1967 and has from time to time adopted good resolutions, it has failed to make an impact because of its failure either to act or because of its partial failure to live up to its own principles. For instance though the Party is opposed to all monopolies it has denied the right of a free market to the rice producers of Orissa where it is the senior partner in a coalition government and it has also failed there to remove zonal restrictions.
- (f) Though the Party is against nationalisation of text books, progressive nationalisation of text books has not been checked.

State/Regional Councils elect State/Regional Executive Committees and their office bearers. The Councils also elect the State or Region representatives on the General Council. The number of members which each State or Region is entitled to send to the General Council is decided by the National Executive in proportion to the enrolment in the State or Region. Similarly, State or Regional Committees settle the strength of primary committees, their quota of representation on the District Committee and the strength of representation of District Committees on State/Regional Councils.

The State/Regional and National Councils are policy-making bodies. The Executive Committees at the State/Regional and National levels work within the broad framework of policies laid down by the Councils which in turn are governed by the policies of the Party prescribed by the Party's National Conventions from time to time and by the General Council and the National Executive in between National Conventions.

The Central Parliamentary Board is nominated by the National Executive. The Board comprises the leaders of the Party's groups in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha and the leaders of the Party's groups in the various State Assemblies. The President and General Secretary are *ex-officio* members of the Central Parliamentary Board.

Similarly, State/Regional Executives nominate their respective State/Regional Parliamentary Boards. The composition is decided by the units concerned.

The National Convention has so far met six times : the Preparatory Convention, Bombay, August 1959; the First National Convention, Patna, March 1960; the Second National Convention, Agra, November 1961; the Third National Convention, Bangalore, February 1964; the Fourth National Convention, New Delhi, December 1966; and the Fifth National Convention, Bhubaneswar, October 1968.

The Bombay Convention adopted the Statement of Principles; the Patna Convention settled the Statement of Policy; the Agra Convention adopted the Election Manifesto for the 1962 elections; the Bangalore Convention radically altered the structure of Party organisation; the New Delhi Convention adopted the Election Manifesto for the 1967 elections and the Bhubaneswar Convention carried out fairly extensive changes in the Constitution setting right lacunae and spelling out various provisions concerned with Party elections.

the following State Units : Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. Regional Units are : Andhra Region, Bombay, Kashmir, Maharashtra, and Telengana.

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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.

"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."

Further, the General Secretary's Report to the Fifth National Convention (October 1968) had this to say :

"As for resources, the Central Office continues to be as poor as a churchmouse, and I must continue the refrain of my predecessor who, in report after report, bitterly complained of the shoe-string budget on which the Central Office has been functioning. For a brief period of a year, before the General Elections and to meet the needs of the National Campaign, the Central Office staff was expanded by a modest half-a-dozen. Unfortunately, even before the dust had settled on the General Elections, we had to terminate the services of those who had been recruited and to shrink back to our usual inadequate size because of the paucity of funds. We were unable even to retain the somewhat more spacious accommodation which we had temporarily acquired. The present office is so woefully inadequate that I am unable to find any spot in the office where I could place a table and chair for me to work.

"The Central Office continues to work on a budget drawn up and approved by the Central Organising Committee¹¹ as far back as March 1960. I cannot do better than to repeat what Mr. Masani, the then General Secretary, stated in his report to the Fourth National Convention : "Indeed, the Central Office has not even been provided with the amount contemplated in the budget which was only Rs. 10,000/- per month."

11. The Central Organising Committee was the *ad hoc* executive at the national level till 1964.

- (g) The Party appears to lack the will to grow inspite of converting itself into a broad based democratic front, as was conceived by Rajaji and reiterated by him recently. It prefers to function within narrow limits.

The report contained a few general observations also which may be noted here. It admitted :

"A great part of these shortcomings are to be explained by the failure to raise financial resources at various levels right down to the Primary Unit and to the tendency to look to the National and State Headquarters for such support.

"The absence of adequate means of communication in local languages with the general public has been a serious handicap.

"These are matters that need to be set right while the Party still has the time. There is need for more field-work, more enthusiastic participation by the rank and file, and, above all, a greater appreciation by its own members of the validity of the Party's principles and policies."

A RICH MAN'S PARTY ?

The Swatantra Party has been accused of being a rich man's party. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Howard Erdman has commented :

"Swatantra may have had relatively wealthy leaders and it may have spoken on behalf of men of property in both rural and urban India. In these respects alone, was it a rich man's party ? No one who has seen the Party's financial records would conclude that it was generously supported by India's richest men."¹⁰

The General Secretary's reports to successive Conventions bemoaned the poor state of Party finances. For instance, the General Secretary's Report to the Third National Convention (February 1964) observed :

"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.

"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,

10. H. L. Erdman : *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*, Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 175.

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In May 1965 the General Council set before the Party the following targets for the 1967 elections:

- (a) Wiping out the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha by carrying a large number of seats for the Swatantra Party;
- (b) Elimination of the Congress majority and the establishment of Swatantra or Swatantra-led governments in two or three States, and
- (c) becoming the principal opposition in some other States.

To what extent were these targets achieved ?

- (a) In the Lok Sabha, the Party doubled its strength from 22 to 44, polling in the process 8.54 per cent of the popular vote.

While this by itself was not enough to secure recognition as the number was short of the quota required by 9 seats, the Party emerged as the single largest Opposition group in the Lok Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha.

- (b) The second target was also partially achieved with the emergence of a Swatantra-led coalition in Orissa. In Gujarat, though the increase in the State Legislature was spectacular (from 26 to 66), it was not enough to dislodge the Congress Party. In Rajasthan, the Party's increase was more modest, from 38 to 49.

- (c) In Gujarat and Rajasthan the Party emerged as the official opposition, and in Andhra Pradesh as the *principal opposition in the State Assembly*. The legislative strength in the Assemblies of Madras and Mysore also recorded a modest increase.

The total number of seats in the various State Assemblies annexed by the Swatantra Party was 259. Thus, though falling short of the targets it had aimed at, the Swatantra Party's performance was unquestionably creditable.

Certain significant features emerged from the Party's performance in the 1967 elections, the most important of these being the further confirmation of the basically rural character of the Swatantra Party. Of the 259 seats won by the Party in various State Assemblies, 252 were from rural constituencies and only 7 from urban centres. In other words, 98 per cent of Swatantra legislators were from the rural areas.

Similarly, in regard to the Lok Sabha, 42 of the 44 seats carried were in rural or semi-urban constituencies. In other words, 98 per cent of Swatantra MPs represented the rural sector.

A second feature was the basically non-capitalist character of Swatantra legislators. The breakdown of the 44 Swatantra MPs is

PERFORMANCE AT ELECTIONS

Third General Elections : In September 1961 the Election Commission recognised the Swatantra Party in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madras and Uttar Pradesh. The symbol STAR was allotted to the Party except for Bihar where the BICYCLE (the Janata Party's symbol) was approved (in view of the Janata Party's merger with the Swatantra Party and the fact that there was inadequate time to propagate the STAR). The BICYCLE was however replaced immediately after the general elections. In Orissa the Ganatantra Parishad (though formally merging with the Swatantra Party after the elections) contested on the Swatantra Party's Manifesto but with its symbol the BOW AND ARROW. In States where recognition was not given candidates of the Party were given the first option on the STAR. Thus the Party went to the polls of 1962 with a reserved symbol. Those in active party politics will doubtless realise the great value of a reserved symbol to any political party.

Facing the elections a little over two years after its formation the Party's debut could perhaps be considered creditable.

Putting up 183 candidates the Party carried 22 seats to the Lok Sabha. With a member of the Forward Bloc (Tamil Nadu) and 3 of the Akali Dal joining the Party as 'associate members' the effective strength of the Swatantra Party in the Lok Sabha rose to 26. For the State Assemblies, the Party set up 1038 candidates and carried 166 seats. With the 36 seats held by the Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa, 3 of the Forward Bloc, 4 in Himachal Pradesh and 1 in Mysore joining the respective Party Assembly groups the total strength of the Party rose to 210 legislators. The Party thus emerged as the second largest in terms of Assembly membership strength—second only to the Congress Party.

The Party became the Official Opposition in the State Assemblies of Bihar, Gujarat, Orissa and Rajasthan.

Fourth General Elections : In order to break away from the practice of nominating candidates at the very last moment, the Central Parliamentary Board began nominating prospective parliamentary candidates for the 1967 elections as early as June 1964, as "this would give a chance both to the prospective candidate and the electorate in the constituencies to get to know one another and enable the candidate to identify himself with the problems and aspirations of his constituents. Not only would this enable the candidate to nurse his constituency and improve his chances but would also make him a true representative of his constituency thus making the system of representative government more meaningful."²

12. *Swatantra Newsletter*, No. 45, July 1964.

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contests, the Party sacrificed the maximum number of seats. It set up a mere 58 candidates (as against the 179 that it had set up in 1967) and won just 8 seats polling in the process 4,445,143 votes working out to 3.08 per cent. On the following page appears a comparative statement of performance in the 1967 and 1971 elections.

Reporting to the General Council meeting at Bombay on April 18, 1971, the President, M.R. Masani, recounted in detail the developments which began with the acceptance by the Party in July 1970 of Congress(O)'s call for the consolidation of national democratic forces and culminating in his walk-out on January 3, 1971 in protest against the decision to do away with a common programme and replace it with the negative one of '*Indira Hatao*' at the insistence of the S.S.P., and the subsequent decision of the Swatantra Party's National Executive to continue in the front. He said that the Party should never have continued to be in the alliance once the latter had given up a common programme. He attributed the Party's helplessness to "go it alone" to the poor state of the Party's organisation then and the absence of adequate funds which made the Party's leadership feel that it was too late in the day for the Party to go it alone and that on balance it should be with the front.

The April meeting of the General Council conducted what might be described as "an agonising reappraisal" and came to the conclusion that the alliance had harmed the Party in ways more than one and that the Party would perhaps have fared better had it gone alone. In the Council's view the alliance had :

- (a) lost credibility in the absence of an alternative programme;
- (b) blurred the Party's image;
- (c) burdened the Party with having to defend the misdeeds of the Congress(O) during the period its members were in office, and
- (d) cost the Party dearly in terms of minority votes because of the alliance with the Jana Sangh.

The elections of 1971 fortunately did not rob the Party of its national character in terms of recognition by the Election Commission as a national party.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

A word about the Party's publicity campaign in the elections. The Swatantra Party claims the credit for innovations in the use of the newspaper and film media to project its image and promote its point of view. The Party made a deliberate effort to give an ideological content to its publicity campaign.

revealing : Agriculturists—19, Professionals—12, Businessmen and Industrialists—9 and Former Princes—4.

The third significant feature was the spread-over of Swatantra legislators. Barring the States of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal, the Swatantra Party was represented in all other State Legislatures ranging from one member in the Punjab to 66 in Gujarat. Thus, the Party did acquire a truly national character in the real sense of the term, and this was conceded by the Election Commission which recognised the Swatantra Party as one of the seven national parties.¹³

Mini-General Elections of 1968-69 : In 1968-69 the Party had to face general elections (commonly referred to as mid-term elections) in the State of Haryana in May 1968 and in Bihar, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in February 1969.

The Party contested 155 seats in all, viz, Bihar (42), Haryana (31), Punjab (6), Uttar Pradesh (72) and West Bengal (4). It won 11 seats in all, viz, Bihar (3), Haryana (2), Punjab (1) and Uttar Pradesh (5). As many as 120 lost their deposits. In terms of votes polled, the Party's share was : Bihar — 130,638 (0.87%); Haryana—207,843 (8.18%); Punjab—43,006 (0.91%); U. P.—293,781 (1.25%); West Bengal—8,927 (0.7%) Total 684,195 (1.15%).

The Party fared badly in the elections. The reasons for the Party's poor performance were not far to seek. The Party's resources were just about exhausted by the 1967 elections. Coupled with poor resources, the Party's poor performance indicated weak organisation in the States concerned; absence of adequate appreciation by candidates themselves of the Party's policy and the consequent inability to expound them to the electorate and the terrible paucity of material resources.

Lok Sabha Elections of 1971 : With the split in the Congress, political life in the country entered a period of intense turmoil. The Swatantra Party enthusiastically welcomed the AICC(O) call of June 28, 1970 for the consolidation of opposition and democratic forces with a common programme. But on November 12, 1970, the Congress(O) Working Committee watered down its earlier resolution and merely authorised its President to evolve "the necessary mechanism for achieving maximum understanding for united action by all democratic parties."

On January 3, 1971 the President of the Swatantra Party, M. R. Masani, walked out of the so-called Grand Alliance on the ground that the alliance could no longer be described as one, bereft as it had been of a common programme. Nevertheless with the elections less than a month away the Party had no option but to negotiate what was at best an adjustment of seats. In the interest of preventing inter-oppositional contests, the Party sacrificed the maximum number of seats. It seat up a

13. Based on the assessment in the Mid-term Report adopted by the General Council on November 15 and 16, 1969.

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The novel features of the publicity campaign included :

- (a) A series of press advertisements in twelve languages inserted in 75 newspapers and periodicals spread throughout the country;
- (b) A one-minute film in four languages exhibited in 450 cinema houses;
- (c) Gramophone Records with Rajaji's message;
- (d) Kites with the Star symbol; and
- (e) Cartoon booklets and strips.

Apart from the above a large number of brochures have been produced by the National Headquarters of the Party ranging from Souvenirs to pamphlets explaining the Party's position on various issues, e.g., devaluation of the rupee, economic policy, gold control, the Nath Pai Bill, government servants, the various Union budgets, etc.

PERFORMANCE IN ORISSA

The only State in India where the Party has been in power has been Orissa where the State unit has been in power in a coalition; first with the Jana Congress (1967 to December 1970) and with the Utkal Congress since March 1971.

The coalition government with the Jana Congress was based on a pre-electoral pact with that party. They went to the polls in 1967 with a 21-point programme. This programme had the approval of the National Executive of the Swatantra Party. The question therefore of assessing the extent to which the Party's unit in Orissa was able to implement its programme has to be related not to the general policy of the Party but to the 21-point programme. The major achievement was the fact of its having been in office for four years—a privilege that was denied to coalition governments elsewhere. This was because the Orissa coalition was a principled alliance and not a post-election patchwork arrangement.

The twenty-one points of the alliance pact were :

1. Establishment of a clean and good government.
2. Ruthless elimination of corruption, favouritism and nepotism at all levels and setting up of a Commission of Enquiry into charges of corruption by Ministers.
3. Setting up an institution of the type of ombudsman for the eradication of corruption.
4. Increasing the efficiency, uprightness and integrity of administration and the elimination of administrative delays.
5. Establishment of the Rule of Law.
6. Change of outlook of the Police for public service and increasing their efficiency and sense of discipline.

TABLE II
Results of General Elections of 1967 and 1971

Party	Seats Contested		Seats Won		Votes Polled	Votes Polled	Percentage	Percentage
	1971	1967	1971	1967	1971	1967	1971	1967
Congress(R)	442	516	350	279*	63,050,474	59,402,754	43.64	40.7
Congress(O)	239		16		15,252,340		10.56	
Swatantra	58	179	8	44	4,445,143	12,659,540	3.08	8.68
Jana Sangh	154	250	22	35	10,808,454	13,715,931	7.48	9.41
C.P.I.	86	109	23	23	7,099,327	7,564,180	4.89	5.19
S.S.P.	93	112	3	23	3,516,731	7,171,627	2.43	4.92
C.P.M.	86	59	25	19	7,184,560	5,140,738	4.97	4.21
P.S.P.	63	109	2	13	1,410,008	4,456,487	0.98	3.06
Others	442	160	53	44	19,702,728	14,704,053	13.54	10.10
Independents	1,118	865	13	35	12,030,888	20,051,200	8.33	13.60
Total	2,784	2,369	515	515	144,461,153	145,866,510	100	100

S. V. Raju

*The Congress(R) held 220 seats at the time of the dissolution of the Fourth Lok Sabha and the Congress (O) 65.

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The Mid-term Report adopted by the General Council recorded the various achievements of the Orissa coalition; some of the highlights being :

- (a) steps were taken to reduce bureaucratic red-tape and inefficiency;
- (b) an effective self-help scheme was launched to provide the educated unemployed with liberal long-term loans for creating self-employing and self-generating farm, poultry, fishery, dairy and workshops;
- (c) tackling with firmness, but without loss of life, communal riots;
- (d) attempting to decentralise authority by vesting in district authority powers to run primary and secondary education and manage examinations;
- (e) requiring administrative cadre officers to submit annual property statements compulsorily to ensure financial probity.

From the 21-point programme the following were implemented :

1. Land revenue was abolished.
2. Panchayat tax was abolished and Panchayati Raj law has been modified.
3. Primary education was taken out of the control of Panchayat Samities.
4. Separation of the executive and judiciary was completed.
5. Priority was given to irrigation schemes for improvement in agriculture.
6. An Evaluation Committee headed by Dr. P.S. Lokanathan was set up to look into the affairs of State sector industries. Another evaluation committee was appointed to look into the affairs of Panchayat Samiti industries, pilot-projects, etc.
7. A bill was introduced for setting up of a Lokayukta.

The Orissa coalition was a victim of developments following on the Congress-split. Several members of the Jana Congress defected to the Congress(R) and by late 1970 the coalition ceased to exist with the Swatantra Party carrying on alone in office for a brief period. On the eve of the general elections of 1971 the State Assembly was dissolved. In the elections that followed the Swatantra Party was returned with a somewhat reduced strength but was able to form a coalition government with the Utkal Congress and with a neutral Chief Minister, but this time on an agreed programme that was arrived at after the elections. Already there have been several differences between the coalition partners. To what extent this coalition will be able to withstand the stresses and strains that are inevitable in alliances formed after elections remains to be seen.

7. Freeing the administration from political pressures and ensuring impartiality and fair deal to the employees.
8. Equal justice and fair dealing to all.
9. Utmost economy in expenditure and strict avoidance of all wasteful expenditure.
10. Elimination of unnecessary controls, permits, licences and quotas and administration of remaining controls, permits, licences and quotas through a non-political independent statutory board.
11. Abolition of land revenue, reduction of tax burden and elimination of harassment in the collection of state dues.
12. Establishment, expansion and completion of existing universities.
13. Elimination of restrictive procedures and creation of proper conditions and freedom for expansion of business and industry and creation of increasing employment opportunities.
14. Introduction of Oriya as State language in all spheres of administration.
15. Special attention for the development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other Backward Classes and underdeveloped or backward areas.
16. Abolition of multifarious Panchayat taxes and entrusting Panchayats with resources of non-tax revenue and effecting real decentralisation as envisaged in the directive principles of the Constitution.
17. Liberating primary education from the control of Panchayat Samities.
18. Expansion of both technical and general education throughout the State with special attention to backward areas.
19. Re-orientation of development plans on a practical basis with the emphasis on the development of agriculture, provision of basic necessities for the people and the provision of the infra-structure for economic development.
20. Changing of the monopoly system in the Kendu leaves trade.
21. Appointment of a Famine Commission for enquiry and report on all aspects of the Orissa famine of 1966.

The General Council of the Swatantra Party at its meeting in November 1969 assessed the record of the Orissa coalition, and by and large was happy with the manner in which the government had functioned.

"The (above) questions inevitably lead to a game of numbers. How many candidates shall we set up? How many can we expect to get elected as MLAs? Consequently, our success or failure becomes a problem in 'Pure (almost esoteric) Mathematics' with as many 'variables' as there are constituencies to contest, candidates to choose from and rival candidates to defeat.

"Success in this sort of numbers game generally goes only to those who can produce the kind of investment necessary in terms of quality of candidates and magnitude of financial and material resources. But, perhaps, the most important factor is the patronage which only those in power can provide because massive resources flow towards those holding the reins of power.

"The game appears to exclude from its rules such 'minor' matters as principles, pragmatic policies and public morality!"

The 'Introduction' went on to ask whether the Swatantra Party was willing to compromise on its principles and policies? Was it willing to give the go-by to policies which in the present climate are admittedly not 'popular', but which the Party was convinced are in the long run the only path to the prosperity and happiness of the Indian people.

In an article entitled "Our Mission" written in August 1962, Rajaji had pointed out the dilemma of a liberal party in a country where the level of political awareness was low and appeals to emotions the prescription for quick success. He wrote :

"Our principles cannot make much of an appeal to those who would be lazy rather than active, who would like the State to do as much as possible for them, and relieve them of responsibility for their own lives. We cannot therefore touch the mass mind as easily as other parties can, who offer free gifts from the Exchequer or from other people's properties robbed by "legal" process. We cannot excite them with promises of egalitarian distribution of wealth, to be obtained somehow by somebody. We have to work hard and educate the educatable over the economics of freedom which we have adopted as our party's basis as distinguished from Statism and State Capitalism for which the Congress and the Communists stand."

Since the 1971 elections there have been three meetings of the General Council. The question of whether there was need to change party policy did come up in some form or the other at all these meetings. In fact, a committee was set up to review Party policy. A questionnaire was issued to the Party's units at the primary, district and State levels. The answers to the questionnaire were uniformly of the view that what was needed was not a change in policy but shifts in emphasis. Therefore the

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Accepting his full share of the responsibility as Party President for the Party's failure in the 1971 elections, M.R. Masani stepped down from the Presidentship of the Party. In his letter of resignation he observed on November 6, 1971 :

"I have done my bit of heart searching. On such occasions, it is good to recall the advice that Gandhiji used to give : 'Turn the searchlight inwards'. It is in such a spirit of self-criticism that one should approach the current situation which calls for courage of two kinds—first, the courage to carry on the fight for one's objectives, even though the form or method of this fight might change ; and secondly, the courage to admit one's mistakes and to learn from them.

"Among the conclusions to which I have come are :

- (1) That a great task of basic political education faces us all in India. This task is to educate the masses of our people, and indeed our elite also, on the values of democracy and the importance of the free institutions we have so far enjoyed ; and to impart some understanding of the fundamental laws of economics.
- (2) That, if existing democratic Opposition parties such as ours are to play any decisive role in bringing about such an awareness and in successfully defending our democratic Constitution and promoting the acceptance of sound economic policies in place of the present misguided ones, they can only do so under a new and fresh leadership which should preferably be of younger people."

Taking the cue from Masani's resignation, the National Executive ordered Party elections despite the fact that the term of office of the incumbents was to expire only towards the end of the year. New office bearers took over in a large number of cases. The principal office bearers of the National Executive are new and a number of new members were elected to the membership of the National Executive. The first step was therefore accomplished to some degree.

The next step that faces the Party is the nature and direction of its activities for the next few years, and, in particular the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Assemblies in several States.

Let us discuss the Assembly elections first. Is the Swatantra Party organisationally geared to meet the challenge ? Does it have the resources in men, money and material ? If not, should the Party count itself out as a political force ? Dealing with this squarely, the 'Introduction' to the Souvenir put out by the Swatantra Party in November 1971 says :

General Council at its Baroda Meeting on November 6, 1971 affirmed in the Manifesto it had adopted for the 1971 elections :

"More than ever the Swatantra Party is therefore convinced that the principles and policies it has stood for ever since its foundation are sound and that only their adoption and determined pursuit would make possible the speedy achievement of the legitimate objective of good life for the common man in this country."

Clearly, therefore, the Party has no intention of giving up any of the fundamental policies that it has stood for since its inception. By implication, the Party concluded that in the 1971 elections the electorate rejected Swatantra not because it found fault with the Party's policies. The electorate rejected Swatantra along with others for being partners of an unprincipled alliance with the negative aim of "*Indira Hatao*."

This paper may be concluded with the following conclusion from the 'Introduction' to the November 1971 Souvenir referred to earlier :

"The Swatantra Party's mission as its Founders conceived it is clear beyond doubt :

- To educate our people to recognise and so to avoid the road to serfdom and poverty that lies ahead of us ;
- To keep on educating our people so that they may also recognise and choose before it is too late the alternative road to freedom and prosperity ; and, meanwhile,
- To persevere with obstinacy in our endeavours to protect the Fundamental Rights and liberties of our people from those who claim that their electoral success early this year has given them the licence to destroy both."