

Swatantra Party

MID-TERM REPORT



***Adopted by the General Council of the Swatantra Party
on November 15 - 16, 1969***

SWATANTRA PARTY

Mid-Term Report

Normally, a Political Party in India or elsewhere comes out with a Manifesto only on the eve of General Elections every four or five years. The Swatantra Party at its National Convention in Bhubaneswar in October 1968, decided that its responsibility to the people and to the electorate as a whole called for an exercise in the nature of a Mid-Term Report which would state

- (a) what the Party has been able to achieve in the Union Parliament and in the States since the General Elections of February 1967, and
- (b) what the Party proposes to do between the publication of the Manifesto and the General Elections of 1972.

What follows in Part I of this Report is in the nature of a political balance sheet.

PART I

April 1967 - September 1969

Election Results

The Swatantra Party had set for itself the following targets for the General Elections of 1967:

- (a) to wipe out, in conjunction with other democratic parties, the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha by carrying a large number of seats for the Swatantra Party;

Thus, though falling short of the targets it had aimed at, the Swatantra Party's performance was unquestionably creditable.

Significance

Certain significant features emerged from our performance in the 1967 elections, the most important of these being the further confirmation of the basically rural character of the Swatantra Party. The figures in the statement on p. 32 bear out the fact. 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 represent India's peasants.

Similarly, in regard to the Lok Sabha, 42 of the 44 seats carried by us were in rural or semi-urban constituencies. In other words, 98 per cent of Swatantra MPs represent the unorganised and relatively neglected section of our population.

A second feature is the basically non-capitalist character of Swatantra legislators. The following breakdown of Swatantra MPs in the Lok Sabha effectively answers the BIG LIE that the Swatantra Party is a party of princes and capitalists:

Agriculturists	19
Professionals	12
Businessmen & Industrialists	9
Former Princes	4
	44

The third significant feature is the spread-over of Swatantra legislators. Barring the states of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal, the

- (b) to eliminate or drastically to reduce the Congress majorities in the States and to establish Swatantra or Swatantra-led Governments in Orissa, Rajasthan and Gujarat; and
- (c) to become the official or the principal Opposition in some States and to increase our strength in others.

To what extent were these objectives 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 our 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 we emerged as the *official* opposition, and in Andhra the principal Opposition in the State Assembly. Our 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.

the seven Assembly seats. By-elections are always a difficult proposition, particularly when the ruling Party is able to concentrate its ample resources obtained by misuse of power and patronage, whereas an opposition party like ours is starved of funds even more acutely than during General Elections.

Mini-General Elections

The Party with its poor resources had to participate in General Elections in the States of Haryana in May 1968, and in Bihar, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in February 1969.

Our poor performance indicates weak organisation in the States concerned; an absence of adequate appreciation by candidates themselves of the Party's policies and a consequent inability to expound them to the electorate; and last but not least the terrible paucity of material resources.

Record in Opposition

(A) *Parliament*: Opposition but not for Opposition's sake has been the watchword of the Party's Group in Parliament. There was neither blind opposition nor unthinking support. Every issue was judged on merits and on the touchstone of pragmatism. Hence it was that occasions arose when the Party took the initiative in moving motions of censure against the Government and others when our Group in Parliament declined to support such motions sponsored by some other Group on grounds unacceptable to us on merits.

A high sense of responsibility without the self-righteousness of the Congress Party on the one side and the unhelpful vehemence of some Opposition

Swatantra Party is represented in all other State Legislatures ranging from one member in the Punjab to 66 in Gujarat. Thus, we are a truly national party *in the real sense of the term*, and this has been conceded by the Election Commission which has recognised the Swatantra Party as one of the seven national parties.

Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, is the refutation of the thesis that in India only a party that professes statism, comprehensively described as the Permit-Licence Raj, is acceptable to the people. By polling 8.54 per cent of the popular vote, by leading a coalition government in one State, by emerging as the leading Opposition in Parliament and certain State Assemblies, the Swatantra Party, the youngest national party in the country, has proved that a large section of the people, particularly rural folk, are willing to discard dogmas and extend support to liberal middle-of-the-road policies.

In view of the fact that Nehru confidently expected the Party's early mortality; and that lip-service to the catch phrase of Socialism is deemed essential for the success of any party, the Swatantra Party, like the soldier from Waterloo, could take credit for the simple fact that it has survived. But it has more than survived. It has also conquered in more than one sphere of activity.

By-Elections

Since February 1967, the Swatantra Party contested 4 by-elections to the Lok Sabha and 9 to the State Assemblies. All, except one (Ankleshwar) had been annexed by the Swatantra Party in 1967. Of these the Party won one of the Lok Sabha seats and three of

maturity and loyalty to the highest patriotism — the good of the country before the good of the Party. In debate, its members have made a sober and effective contribution, arising from education, experience and specialised study. Their impact on the policies of Government can be measured in terms of what they have actually done, and also in terms of what they might have prevented Government from doing.

Though in Opposition, the Swatantra Party had the satisfaction of seeing many of its important policies being adopted by the ruling party as its own. Among these were:

- a. *A Holiday in Planning*: Our repeated criticism of the Five Year Plans and their deleterious effect on the national economy went home. The Government in effect took a holiday from planning as we pleaded time and again.
- b. *Ombudsman*: We were the first in the country to demand the setting up of the institution of the Ombudsman on the lines of the one prevailing in the Scandinavian countries. In fact a member of our Party in the Lok Sabha had moved a Private Member's Bill for the purpose. Though government did not favour it, they were forced subsequently to bring their own Bill for the setting up of a Lok Pal and Lok Ayukt.
- c. *Company Contributions*: The Party's position taken as far back as 1961 that financial contributions from Joint Stock Companies to the funds of political parties should not be permitted has now been adopted by Parliament.
- d. *Administrative Reforms Commission*: This Commission set up by Government has been making

Parties on the other has been a hallmark of our participation in the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament. It was in this spirit that the Party opposed the following among other measures:

- (a) Increases in railway and postal rates — for the reason that these increases would hit the common man already bearing more than his share of the burden.
- (b) Increases in direct and indirect taxes—on the ground that these increases were harmful, uncalled for and largely intended to finance wasteful projects and other fads of Government.
- (c) The Essential Commodities Act—as it would act as a weapon which, apart from making corruption more profitable, would only serve to raise prices in the black market and increase the harassment of traders by officials.
- (d) Bank Nationalisation Act—a measure motivated by political considerations and rammed through Parliament in unseemly haste after cheating Parliament of its rights by rushing through an Ordinance less than 36 hours before Parliament was scheduled to meet.

There were many other issues and measures that provoked our opposition in almost every aspect of Government policy.

The Party has functioned as a responsible democratic Party; a 'third' force which judges issues not on Party lines, but on merits — a stance which has sometimes earned it brickbats from both the Congress and Opposition benches but which has nevertheless impressed the country as a sign of its honesty, vigilance,

single largest in Andhra and present in some strength in Tamil Nadu and Mysore. Unfortunately, the virus of defection infected the Party's groups in Gujarat and Rajasthan. While our elected strength of 66 was reduced to 54 in Gujarat, in Rajasthan we were reduced from 49 to 28. Nevertheless in both these Assemblies our Groups functioned satisfactorily.

For instance, in Gujarat, our Party initiated as many as twelve Bills extending from amendments to the Gujarat Panchayat Act to a Bill seeking the abolition of land revenue. Over 30 resolutions were moved in the State Assembly calling upon the State Government to do such things as:

- (a) Enquire into the administration of cooperative societies,
- (b) Recommend the establishment of a refinery in North Gujarat,
- (c) Positive measures to increase food production,
- (d) Establishment of an Agricultural University in North Gujarat,
- (e) The development of Salaya as a port in Saurashtra, and
- (f) Recommend that experts and not party workers should be appointed on consultative committees.

In the Rajasthan Assembly our members focussed the attention of the Assembly on the sorry plight of unfortunate people in the famine stricken areas in the State and pilloried the Government for its failure to take adequate steps to alleviate the people's sufferings.

In Andhra, where our strength in the State Assembly falls short of the minimum required for recognition, our

recommendations many of which conclusively vindicate not only the Party's policy but even the criticisms made by the Party's members in the House from time to time.

- c. *Decontrol and Delicensing*: Though halting and slow, there is a discernible trend towards delicensing of industries and decontrol of various items, e.g. sugar, which has been partially decontrolled and cement which has been completely decontrolled. This again is a vindication of our policy and an indication of the effectiveness of Swatantra criticism.

Meanwhile, Swatantra MPs continue to wage an unrelenting campaign in Parliament for such measures as:

- a. Reorganising the Planning Commission on the line recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission as originally suggested by a Swatantra M.P. as early as 1962.
- b. Abolition of food zones and the need to allow the free movement of foodgrains throughout the country.
- c. Total repeal of the Gold Control Act.
- d. The provision of cheap credit to agriculture and the lowering of rates for electric power for agriculture etc.

In brief, the Party's record in Parliament has indeed been creditable and one worthy of the biggest Opposition Group in both Houses.

(B) *State Assemblies*: Our Party is the recognised opposition in the States of Gujarat and Rajasthan, the

The Swatantra Party in Orissa is in a coalition government with the Jana Congress since the last General Elections. This by itself is a major achievement, particularly in the current context where most coalition Governments in States have fallen like nine pins, despite the fact that the numerical majority of the ruling coalition Government is not large and there have been attempts engineered by the Opposition to pull it down.

The latest student troubles are in fact the handiwork of certain opposition parties to discredit the coalition government and throw it out of office. All such attempts have so far failed. Two no-confidence motions were defeated with convincing majorities. This stability is based not only on a numerical majority but due to the understanding and goodwill the Government enjoys among many members in the Opposition as well and the people in general. Another reason is the excellent rapport maintained between the coalition partners. Both entered into an electoral understanding based on a common programme *before* the last General Elections and the coalition is therefore not a post-election marriage of convenience.

The coalition has set an example of consultation with parties in the Opposition by including several opposition leaders. For instance in:

- (i) a committee on employment;
- (ii) a relief committee to discuss matters relating to relief work and expenditure;
- (iii) a committee to go into student indiscipline which also includes leading educationists in the State which has submitted its report;
- (iv) an industrial advisory committee.

Legislators have taken up cudgels for the peasantry in particular in securing relief for them from draught, floods, cyclones and fires. Some measures like the Land Revenue Enhancement Act have not only been bitterly opposed within the Legislature but taken to the Supreme Court. Similarly, the Party opposed the Drainage Cess Bill which was actually an additional tax which the peasants in some districts of the State had to pay on the ground that the Government is morally bound to provide drainage as an obligation for the payment of land revenue. The Party's Group in the State Assembly was also active in exposing corrupt practices, particularly of Ministers and in demanding adequate protection against Naxalite violence.

In the Mysore Assembly, though we number only 12, our members introduced a number of Bills, among them the 'Public Men Enquiry Bill'. Persistent pressure is being brought on the Government to abolish land revenue.

Similarly, in Tamil Nadu, we have consistently opposed all anti-kisan measures and hasty land reforms. Our Party in the legislature has been playing the role of the balancing wheel in the administration of the State.

With active and vigorous leadership, adequate research and information services supplied by a well-staffed secretariat and a certain measure of training our Members of Parliament and Assemblymen could give an even better account of themselves than they have been able to do.

At the Ministerial level, Ministers are encouraged to take decisions even on important issues without having to refer them to the Cabinet every time.

To ensure the financial probity of the administrative cadre officers are compulsorily required to submit an annual property statement.

A Committee has been formed to suggest economies in administration. Further recruitment has been strictly controlled and steps taken to divert many officers to productive assignments and employment.

To inspire confidence among the people, it is necessary to ensure that Ministers' reputations are beyond reproach. Therefore, when allegations were made against some members of the present Ministry including the Chief Minister, the latter invited a former Justice of the Supreme Court to examine the allegations including those against the Chief Minister himself. Unfortunately, a writ from the High Court prohibited the State Government from making the report public. But the commission's Report exonerated the Chief Minister. Similarly, true to their pledge at the time of the General Elections, the coalition Government appointed a Commission of Enquiry to go into charges of corruption against Ministers of the former Government. The Commission's findings have since been released and the State Government is currently taking legal action.

An interesting development is the initiative taken by the Orissa Government in tackling the Naxalite menace in joint consultation and cooperation with the neighbouring States of Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Inheriting an administration thriving on bureaucratic red tape and inefficiency, the coalition has succeeded to a considerable extent in reducing it. High power committees and Cabinet sub-committees have been formed for this purpose.

The eminent economist, Prof. B. R. Shenoy, was invited to advise the State Ministry on economic reforms and a summary of his Report was placed before the Legislative Assembly in March this year.

An effective self-help scheme to provide the educated unemployed has been taken up whereby graduates coming out of the universities can get liberal, long-term loans for creating a self-employing and self-generating farm, poultry, fishery, dairy and workshops.

After 1967 General Elections the Orissa Government has been able to promote and maintain industrial peace and harmonious relationship between the employer and the employee, leading to higher industrial production.

The Government of Orissa deserves to be commended for the manner in which it tackled communal riots in the state with restraint, firmness and without loss of life.

There has been a deliberate attempt to decentralise authority. For instance, district authorities have been now vested with adequate powers to run primary and secondary education and manage examinations.

- (b) the Union Government has also agreed to construct a General Cargo Berth at Paradeep. This was necessary to attract industries around the Port area and also to develop commercial transactions at the Port.
- (c) the Express-Way linking Daitari and Paradeep Port was scheduled to be completed by 1965 and yet was left incomplete by the previous Government even in 1967. This has been completed and put to use.
- (d) the demand for a Fertiliser Plant based on coal at Talcher has been conceded by the Union Government. This project will cost Rs. 72 crores.
- (e) a new Policy Resolution has been announced for development of industries, incorporating various concessions and facilities. As a result, number of proposals have started coming in and some private industrial units are actually under construction.
- (f) four units under the Industrial Development Corporation of Orissa have been completed during the period after 1967 and have been commissioned. A number of new project reports are under preparation such as a lime complex, a chemical complex, a ferro-vanadium project etc. and the pace of industrialisation is being accelerated. Steps are being taken to revive and revitalise the cooperative sector and small scale industrial units by changing the pattern of management freeing them from domination by the Government.
- (g) the essential rail link between Talcher and Bimlagarh (with extension to Koira valley) and the alignment is now under survey.

The Coalition government came into being on the basis of a 21-point programme. Though it would be somewhat out of place to list all these points, it might be useful to record some of them which have been implemented:

1. Land Revenue has been abolished.
2. Panchayat tax has been abolished and Panchayati Raj law has been modified.
3. Primary education has been taken out of the control of Panchayat samities.
4. Separation of the executive and judiciary has been completed.
5. Priority is being 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. The report has since been submitted and is under consideration. Another evaluation committee is looking into the affairs of Panchayat Samity industries, pilot projects, etc.
7. A bill has been introduced for setting up of a Lokayut.

Apart from the above, the Swatantra-led Coalition Government has achieved the following which were not in the 21-point programme:

- (a) making the Union Government concede the demand for a rail link from Cuttack to Paradeep Port—which is an essential link and yet was neglected due to lack of demand by the previous Government.

stration has been a reasonably good one, the same cannot be said about the functioning of the Party organisation outside. There has been a failure to echo and follow up the lead given by leaders of the Party in Parliament and State Assemblies. No parliamentary work can be effective if an issue that is raised on the floor does not find its echo in public meetings organised by the Party in cities, towns and villages throughout the country but of this there has been a singular lack.

State and District Committees function only nominally, and have failed to become a channel or conveyor belt by which millions can be educated either in regard to the resolutions of the National Executive or the stand taken in the legislatures. The record in regard to what Gandhiji called "constructive work" is also very sketchy.

A number of instances of indiscipline on the part of the party functionaries and legislators have come to public light and damaged the prestige of the Party.

All in all, the fact has to be faced that the enthusiasm for the Party generated as a result of the last General Elections has not been maintained.

Balance Sheet

Any attempt to strike a balance sheet on a canvas as wide as this is bound to be difficult.

By and large it may be said that, in terms of the targets we set before ourselves in the General Elections of 1967, we did well. We failed to improve on this during the Mini-General Elections in February

The State Government has found it necessary to continue to pursue the policy of compulsory procurement of foodgrains on a monopoly basis. Coupled with zonal restrictions, this has resulted in unremunerative prices for the farmers. This is not to say that the coalition government is not aware of the need to remove these restrictions, but their inability to do so is due to their apprehension that doing so in isolation would react to the disadvantage of the State as the food-grains produced in the State would be sucked out elsewhere where they would find higher prices.

The record of the Swatantra-led coalition government in Orissa, without being spectacular is solid. Of all the State Governments, it is the Orissa Government alone which has given the people good government, stability and progress. The present Administration is accepted by the people of Orissa as honest and one that is endeavouring to do its best. To balance this approval is the criticism that just not doing wrong things is not adequate. A government has also to do the right things. More dynamism could have been shown. There is also a lack of public relations. Whatever the Government is able to do is not adequately publicised either within Orissa or the rest of the country. In both these directions, a new approach and a fresh start need to be made. Given all these limitations, the Swatantra Party can be reasonably proud that the first State Government it has had the opportunity to lead has brought the Party so much credit and goodwill.

Party Organisation

While the record of the Swatantra Party in Parliament and State Assemblies and in the Orissa Admini-

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) to build up units of the Party at lower levels,

(ii) to 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 rights 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 even been checked.

(g) The Party appears to lack the will to grow in spite 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.

1969 in the Northern States and, though, we succeeded in gaining a slightly larger percentage of the vote, we marked time in so far as the number of seats was concerned.

Our work in Parliament and State Assemblies has been reasonably good.

Our Administration in Orissa, led by an able and honest Chief Minister, has brought us credit. It is a pity that not enough has been done to make known the good work that is being done.

In regard to field work, the picture is unsatisfactory. Our criticism of the Congress Government, often vindicated by subsequent events, has not been given the weight it should by the public because the Party organisation could not make the necessary effort to explain our policies at the mass level. In the result, the Party is losing credibility and influence. This lost ground needs to be made up.

Among the reasons for the absence of meaningful Party activity that one would expect from the premier opposition party in India are the following:

- (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

overcome because it did not have the honesty or courage to admit its mistakes and turn away from the path of State Capitalism in the shape of "Permit Licence Raj" on the one hand and heavy and wasteful "investment" in Government enterprises on the other. On the contrary the faction in the Party which is in power is injecting larger and larger doses of the same poisonous drug, as, for example, the nationalisation of banks. The developments on the political front, including those during the Presidential election and the subsequent breaking up of the Congress Party into two are only a reflection of this basic economic and social malaise.

Already, before this crisis had erupted, the common people had seen their hopes of the fruits of Independence turning sour. The picture that the politicians presented to them was by and large one of self-seeking all round, petty parochialism and linguistic chauvinism, indiscipline starting with Parliament and ending with our colleges, bureaucracy, corruption and economic stagnation. As a result, there was widespread cynicism on the part of the people who felt that the country was drifting and lacked a sense of purpose and a public philosophy.

As aptly described in the inaugural address to the UNCTAD Conference in Delhi in February 1968, in India "the home of one-seventh of all the human race, after twenty years of independence many billions of people have yet to experience more than the feeblest manifestations of progress. Those who believe as I do that India is engaged in a task of deep meaning for all the developing countries must be gravely concerned by the uncertainties that cloud her national

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.

PART II

October 1969 - March 1972

During the past few months, the country has been passing through an acute crisis which shows every sign of recurring with renewed intensity and which is likely to threaten the political stability and smooth functioning of our young democracy.

This political crisis is basically a reflection of the permanent economic crisis arising from the signal failure of the Five Year Plans and the State Capitalist policies of the Congress Government to deliver the goods. These policies and plans have resulted in economic stagnation, inflation, increased unemployment and idle capacities. Faced with the failure of its basic policies, the Congress Party has been going through internal convulsions which it was unable to

As the Party of Liberal Democracy, the Swatantra Party will have to carry the heaviest part of the burden of defending democracy, building a front of national democratic elements and resisting totalitarian trends.

The political life of the country appears to be entering a new phase which is likely to bring with it new realignments. The events of the past few months have exposed the strain under which all parties are functioning.

Disintegration has of course proceeded fastest in the Congress Party where the established leadership, resting on the concept of a Maginot Line defence, have been outflanked by the Prime Minister and her associates in combination with Communists and fellow-travellers. There are now two Congress Parties, two Socialist Parties and three Communist Parties. What may be expected in the coming months and years is a war of movement and not of static positions. Such a situation calls for greater initiative, dynamism and flexibility on our part. A mere repetition of principles, however valid and sound, will not suffice. The people will expect Ideas to deal with the problems of the day. An innovative approach is what they would expect to these problems.

The Swatantra Party has always looked upon the removal of the Congress Government at the Centre as the primary need of the country, since there is no prospect of improvement in policies or the people's condition without such a change of government. The desire for change is clear among the people. "Twenty years is enough" is a widespread sentiment. This dissatisfaction is, however, not limited to the Congress

life. India is an exceptionally dramatic case because of its size and location on the troubled Asian continent but is by no means the only country where hope has dwindled to despondency."

The General Elections of 1967 had aroused hopes among the common people that they would benefit from a change of administration in many States from the Congress Party to a combination of other parties. Unfortunately, the so-called "United Front" Governments in Punjab, Haryana, UP, Bihar, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh were all thrown out by the people as they did not live up to the expectations of the people and this gave all Opposition Parties a bad name throughout the country.

The credibility of all political parties had already been badly impaired by their own misbehaviour. While politics intruded into every walk of life, whether it was education, sports, literature and the arts, there was very little evidence of grassroots citizenship, with the result that the gulf between the top echelons in public life on the one hand and the mass of the people on the other had widened considerably.

During the past few months, these trends have accelerated considerably, disclosing a signal lowering of the standards of our public life. Cheap demagoguery, the politics of the *fait accompli*, breach of faith, the stab in the back, political defections, the smearing of opponents, false charges of conspiracy and the personality cult have become a part of the armoury of certain sections of our political life who have been rewarded for their undemocratic methods by momentary victory. All these are symptoms which, if not checked, will lead the country down the slippery slope of dictatorship.

2. A genuine concern for the underprivileged including the tribal peoples has to be felt and articulated. The Indian people are not interested in any ism but they are concerned with activity that bears on the satisfaction or otherwise of their needs. The Party, while adhering to its fundamental precepts which have been vindicated by the developments of the last decade, has to concentrate on the issues of the day in which people in various parts of the country, especially toilers on the farms and in the factories and self-employed people, are interested. They should be assured a minimum standard of living through the creation of adequate employment opportunities.

3. The generation gap, which has alienated Youth, will need to be bridged by a conscious approach to the young and an understanding of their needs and aspirations. Firm resistance to the destructive and subversive activities among them instigated by communists and others will have to be accompanied by an open-minded and generous approach to the discontent of the young folk as a whole.

4. The Party's demand that Agriculture should be put first and that the top heavy order of State Capitalist priorities practised during the past twenty years be reversed has been fully vindicated and is being mouthed with various degrees of mental reservation by other political elements. A fair deal for the rural people in the abstract and concretely the provision of inputs to the agriculturist and support of the system of peasant proprietorship would, however, mean little unless conditions are created in which the benefit of a higher level of production goes to the bulk of the cultivators. This has not so far happened in India. The prevalence of tenancy and share cropping systems

Party and its policies. It extends to the entire political establishment including Opposition parties. On the part of the Swatantra Party, this calls for a reorientation of a far-reaching kind.

The task of the coming two years and a half will be to effect that reorientation which should be marked by an emphasis on the following aspects:

1. The need for social change and the rapid modernisation of the social and economic structure. Our country lags badly behind not only the advanced countries of the West but even a large number of Asian countries many of whom, such as Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China in Taiwan, Hongkong, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore have made rapid progress during the past two decades. Our task is *nothing less than to build a modern and happy India.*

The Swatantra Party is not a party of the *status quo*. Since its very inception, it has called for radical changes in economic and social policies. Indeed, it has been the only real, radical Opposition to the State Capitalist regime that has been established ever since Independence was achieved. The Party will have to give more forceful expression to this desire for change and underline its resistance to obscurantism and reactionary attitudes, whether they are cloaked in slogans of the so-called Left or the so-called Right. The Congress and Communist Parties and the Jan Sangh which rely on outmoded dogmas and traditions may be described as Parties of Memory. Can the Swatantra Party present itself to the people as the Party of Hope?

has betrayed its obligations to the free way of life and cheerfully got on the band-wagon of "state socialism" for the last two decades. Refusing to stand up to wrong policies as a result of cowardice and a desire for a quick rupee through permits and licences, the leaders of the business community have at the same time failed to educate their class on their social responsibilities. Gandhiji's call for Trusteeship, which finds a place in our Party's Manifesto, has failed to evoke an adequate response except in the case of a small enlightened fringe of industry and trade. It is time therefore, that the task of educating the ranks of Business in regard to an awareness of their social obligations is taken up and that we do not hesitate to criticise the leadership of business when it fails to live up to its responsibilities.

7. In a multi-lingual and multi-religious nation like ours, maintenance of equality before the law and the protection of Minorities is a major task. A delicate balance has to be maintained between the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities. A great deal of work has been done by the United Nations on this subject. There can be no question that a sense of national integration demands that there should be no feeling of insecurity of person or property on the part of members of minority communities, of a denial of fair representation in public services, of equal opportunities in trade, commerce and industry and employment therein, of a fair deal in regard to admission to colleges and professional and technical institutions, of facilities for development of their languages and of some machinery for the redress of their grievances. The participation of all minorities, big and small, in national life is an essential precon-

and the failure of government to guarantee a price for agricultural produce comparable to the prices that the agriculturists have to pay for inputs and manufactured goods have deprived a larger number of agriculturists of the fruits of their labour.

5. The Consumer, who in other words is the Common Man, has been the forgotten factor in Indian economics and politics. While the Swatantra Party's philosophy and policies are based on the thesis that "the consumer is king" in a competitive economy, there has to be a balance between the legitimate interest of the producer and the consumer. Neither should be sacrificed to the other. The consumer has been sacrificed during the past two decades to the demands of Government on the one hand, labour on the other and the manufacturer on the third. The interest of the consumer can best be served by higher production. A big task faces the Party in this respect. Consumers, apart from buyers of goods, include depositors and customers where banks are concerned, policy-holders in so far as insurance is concerned, parents in relation to problems of education. These and other sections of society have to be organised in defence of their interests and the maintenance of a free society.

6. While the Party's stress on the abandonment of Statism and a return to the market and welfare economy and which ensures social justice must be maintained, the time has come for the Party to speak out more frankly and freely about the behaviour of the business community itself. The Swatantra Party believes in competitive free enterprise not because it is in the interests of businessmen but because it is an integral part of a free society. Unfortunately, a large section of the leadership of Indian business

Party to the remotest corners of the countryside. Building up a cadre of workers equipped for this task and with the necessary willingness to make the sacrifices thus becomes one of the main tasks of the Party in the next two years.

It is not only the carrying of the Party's message to the people that is necessary. Here again, sound policies and promises of improvement in the condition of those addressed carry conviction only to the extent that the sincerity of purpose of those who carry the message is accepted. If the way of life of the person and his day to day activities are clearly in conflict with his professed adherence to the Party's principles, his advocacy will bring little advantage to the Party or to the cause. Here, practice and profession have to bear some relation to each other.

Gandhiji, who was a great psychologist and understood the mechanics of politics, put his finger on the spot when he urged the members of the Indian National Congress, then engaged in the struggle for independence from foreign rule, to engage in some form of "constructive work" so as to convince the people they were sincere and their concern for alleviating the lot of the people was genuine.

Constructive work involves any kind of social or educational or humanitarian activity which may be expected to bring tangible improvements and provide results within a short period of time. Such, for instance, would be adult literacy, social work of various kinds, redress of civic and local grievances, the organisation of groups of people whose interests need to be protected and ventilated such as agriculturists, bank depositors, insurance policy-holders, employees of various cate-

dition to national integration. What is suggested is not any measure of appeasement of the unreasonable demands of communal elements of any kind but a more active policy of implementing the provisions and spirit of the Constitution.

8. The erosion of states' rights through encroachments by the centre have *inter alia* impeded the economic development of the states and is one of the factors responsible for large-scale unemployment. The time has come to rectify this distortion by restoring to the states the powers of dealing with trade, commerce and industry given to them in the Constitution.

9. Disputes between States and between the Union and the individual States have tended to plague our national life and to create further trends of a fissiparous nature. The quick resolution of such disputes has, therefore, become a national need. The Swatantra Party should work for the establishment of an Inter-State Council under Article 263 of the Constitution.

Any reorientation of the Party's approach to the problems of the day cannot however be expected to secure public response unless the Party is able to put across its point of view to the general public effectively. This raises the problem of organisation.

Even Truth needs wings, and policies and principles, however sound, can make little impact on the people unless they are projected with energy, sincerity and zest. This involves a great deal of labour and hard work on the part of the workers and supporters of the Party. Above all, what is wanted is what may be described as a "conveyor-belt" of convinced, dedicated and articulate people to carry the message of the

those qualities. The stress on quality as opposed to quantity, the readiness "to turn the searchlight inwards" and to "amputate the diseased limb" are therefore, essential conditions to any attempt to develop the Party's organisation and work.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has recently performed a great service to India by drawing attention to these eternal verities. The response he has evoked among common people of all faiths and creeds bears testimony to the therapeutic value of goodness in public life.

Never has the Party had a more historic opportunity to project itself and its philosophy to a receptive people, waiting for an alternative to the Congress.

A triple programme of activity designed to secure these organisational objectives thus becomes necessary, the various aspects of which would be:

- (1) Active campaigning by present members of the Party to project the viability and validity of the Party's principles and policies to sections of the people they have not yet been able to reach.
- (2) The recruitment and enrolment of a large number of workers, especially from among young folk, who are prepared to be the Party's standard bearers in the coming years.
- (3) The training of Party workers so as to make them more efficient and articulate.

gories, share-holders, consumers, and parents of children in schools and colleges. Far more organised effort is necessary in order to ascertain local grievances and needs and to project them at public meetings, press conferences and to the administration. The task that faces the Party is thus colossal and calls for not only a much larger body of workers but for very much more intensive and dedicated work.

In the prevailing climate of cynicism about all politicians and their works, people will judge a political party quite as much by the quality of its leaders and workers as by the acceptability of its principles and policies. Unless the general behaviour of the members of the Swatantra Party is found to be superior to that of members of the Congress and other political parties, no amount of mere propaganda can be expected to convince or convert. This calls for disciplined working and for strict adherence to high ethical standards of behaviour. The Party should accept the Aristotelian concept that politics is ethics in action. Party leaders and workers can hardly call on business people to be aware of their social obligations or on labour to expect an increase in wages only when it is linked with productivity or on ministers to pay their taxes and act in an ethical manner unless their own conduct is above reproach. If the Swatantra Party is to make the grade in the coming years, it will have to eliminate all traces of cynicism and opportunism, connivance or excuses made for dubious personal behaviour or opportunist attitudes and measures. The Swatantra Party can never hope to succeed in the competition for "clever" politics with others in the field. It can hope to succeed only if it is shown to be different in quality and refuses to enter into competition with others who are busily engaged in displaying

Details of Urban—Rural Votes (1967)

ASSEMBLIES

STATE	RURAL				URBAN				GRAND TOTAL	
	Contested	Won	Lost	Total Votes Polled	Contested	Won	Lost	Total Votes Polled	Candidates	Votes
Andhra	83	29	54	1,336,915	6	Nil	6	24,980	89	1,361,895
Assam	12	2	10	43,005	—	—	—	—	12	43,005
Bihar	123	3	120	316,272	4	Nil	4	2,442	127	318,714
Gujarat	138	62	76	2,320,565	10	4	6	113,474	148	2,434,039
Haryana	12	3	9	96,410	—	—	—	—	12	96,410
J & K*										
Kerala	4	Nil	4	7,101	2	Nil	2	6,004	6	13,105
M.P.**	20	7	13	231,502	1	Nil	1	597	21	232,099
Maharashtra	20	Nil	20	73,686	13	Nil	13	63,015	33	136,701
Mysore	44	16	28	512,634	3	Nil	3	9,814	47	522,448
Orissa	101	49	52	909,462	—	—	—	—	101	909,462
Punjab	9	Nil	9	21,307	—	—	—	—	9	21,107
Rajasthan	106	48	58	1,475,184	1	1	Nil	24,487	107	1,499,641
Tamil Nadu	26	19	7	782,088	1	1	Nil	29,144	27	811,232
U.P.	196	12	184	971,666	15	1	14	70,887	211	1,042,553
West Bengal	21	1	20	102,666	—	—	—	—	21	102,666
H.P.	5	1	4	14,767	—	—	—	—	5	14,767
	920	252	668	9,215,030	56	7	49	344,814	976	9,559,844

* Did not Contest

** Candidates of the Lok Seva Dal (of the Rajmata of Gwalior) to whom we had lent our symbol.

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