

For Farm Family and Freedom

1842



**Swatantra Party Programme
for Prosperity
1971**

Swatantra Party

ELECTION MANIFESTO

1971

PART I

The Swatantra Party had hoped to fight the coming elections on an agreed programme of a democratic alternative offering clean and good government on the basis of the AICC(O) Resolution of June 28, 1970, which the Swatantra Party and the Jan Sangh had welcomed and accepted.

The Swatantra Party adheres to its original commitment and will contest the elections on the basis of the agreed programme spelt out in the AICC(O) Resolution which would have been, and should still be, the agreed minimum programme of an alternative Government.

Within the scope of that programme, the Swatantra Party places in the forefront the following points:

Defence of the Constitution Fundamental Rights and Liberties

A stable democracy must be based in the sanctity of the Constitution which should not be tampered with. This calls for unqualified acceptance of the important role assigned to our Judiciary by the Constitution and an equally unqualified guarantee of the maintenance of the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution. Unfortunately, systematic attempts are being made from some quarters, both within and outside the country, to wreck the Constitution of our nascent democracy which would destroy the liberty of the

masses of India and would enable a government in the future legally to deprive them of even their modest personal belongings like the small farm of the poor cultivator and the provident fund and insurance policy of the salaried employee.

Maintenance of Law and Order

There has been an unfortunate abdication of law and order. The lives and liberties of the people have to be protected by effective enforcement of law and order. No quarter should be given to manifestations of violence from whatever direction they may come.

Employment

The damage done to the economy by mistaken policies and faulty planning has to be undone. The starting point must, as Mahatma Gandhi used to stress, be Employment. The creation of adequate employment opportunities is linked inescapably with the growth of the economy as a whole. The number of totally unemployed, partially unemployed and seasonally unemployed persons in India is estimated to be between 100 to 150 millions. By a strange phenomenon, in a developing economy thousands of technicians are unemployed. We started the Fourth Five Year Plan with a backlog of 13 million unemployed persons. To these must be added 28 million job seekers who will enter the employment market. This means that by 1975, we will be faced with the gigantic problem of having to find full-time employment for at least 41 million, besides the large body of partially and seasonally unemployed persons.

The problem of unemployment has to be tackled by undertaking a massive programme of Public Works. Such a programme will help:

- (a) to employ a large number of people throughout the country in productive work;
- (b) to extend markets for manufactured goods in rural areas;
- (c) to bridge the transport and communications gap between different parts of the country;

- (d) to provide expeditiously much needed inputs to rural areas in order to quicken the pace of agricultural development;
- (e) to create developing markets for consumer goods, automobiles and other ancillary industries, and generally
- (f) to improve the standard of living of the masses.

The resources needed for such a programme have to be accorded priority in the national budget. To start with, an annual outlay of Rs. 250 crores should be made by way of wages, material and equipment for road building. This will provide employment for at least one million people, besides creating job opportunities for another 1.7 million persons.

A programme providing house sites and rural housing, drainage, minor irrigation, afforestation and rural electrification, provision of pure drinking water in every village and village roads to open up the countryside should be implemented and is the best means of providing massive employment. A gigantic effort will have to be made to construct millions of houses for the poor in urban and rural areas every year. Liberal loans should be given for house construction. For this purpose, a special Central Housing Authority will give long-term low interest loans to persons desiring to construct and own their own homes.

For the educated unemployed, a separate Corporation will be set up which will help to reorient the skills of young people and provide them with financial and technical assistance to set them up in self-employment in industry, handicrafts, trade and transport.

In all programmes of rural works and for the educated unemployed, a substantial part of the allocations will be used in a manner whereby the beneficiaries will be those belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other poorer sections of society.

A department of Economic Opportunities will be added to the Government of India with a budget of its own of at least Rs. 1,000 crores over the first five year period.

Prices

Inflation and rising prices have eaten into the meagre living standards of the poor and middle classes, particularly those with fixed incomes. Among the measures that will have to be taken to combat rising prices is the abolition or reduction of the excise duty on all articles of daily use by the common people. Inflation is a major enemy of social justice. All inflationary policies should be abandoned and a stable currency established. The need for a resort to deficit finance and other inflationary measures has arisen from unproductive expenditure on administration and on prestigious and unremunerative projects. There has to be a drastic reduction in the cost of administration and a stopping of all expenditure on showy and unproductive projects.

Agriculture

Agriculture is and will continue to be India's basic industry and deserves to be given an appropriate priority. Peasant proprietorship and family farming have proved to be the most productive and socially desirable form of cultivating the land. Nothing should be done to weaken this system on which our entire rural life is based. At the same time, land reforms should be speedily completed and implemented. The tenants and share croppers have to be assured security of tenure and fixed and fair rents. Landless labourers should be guaranteed a minimum wage and given an assurance that they will share in the fruits of more intensive farming and will be gainfully employed throughout the year. Facilities for the insurance of crop and cattle should be provided to our farmers. Support prices for agricultural products calculated to give a fair margin of profit to the cultivator should be assured.

Production

The twin problems of unemployment and rising prices can basically be solved primarily by creating favourable conditions for a rapid and massive increase in production. In order to achieve even a modest annual growth rate of 6 per cent,

the net value of output of industry and mining will have to increase from Rs. 6,200 crores in 1970-71 to Rs. 15,300 crores in 1980-81, requiring fresh capital investment of Rs. 12,000 crores. For instance Aluminium production will have to increase five times to 500,000 tonnes; Petroleum products from 14 million tonnes to 45 million tonnes; Cement from 11 to 32 million tonnes; finished Steel from 4 to 15 million tonnes; Commercial Motor Vehicles from 31,000 to 175,000; Machine Tools from a value of Rs. 28 crores to Rs. 115 crores.

The expansion of the Indian economy, whether in agriculture, trade or industry, can only be achieved if governmental policies provide incentives for hard work and enterprise which are at present lacking. Among the factors that provide such incentives are a stable currency, reasonable direct and indirect taxes and reducing the mass of red tape in which all economic activity is enmeshed. The needs of production and of social justice alike call for remuneration to be linked with productivity.

The efficient functioning of trade and industry depend on the market mechanism being allowed to work smoothly and with an awareness on the part of business and industry of their social obligations. Where controls are not capable of immediate abolition the administration of all permits and licences should be entrusted to autonomous boards of economists and experts at both the Union and State levels.

Monopoly has to be combated. The only real cure for monopoly is the encouragement and restoration of competition. Where monopoly conditions cannot be avoided, a reasonable amount of regulation becomes necessary.

Minorities and Backward Classes

In a country such as India which has a wide variety of ethnic origins, religions and languages, the treatment of Minorities and Backward Classes assumes great and considerable importance. The provisions in the Constitution for the protection of the rights and interests of all minorities and those who work under handicaps, such as Harijans, Adivasis and other Backward Classes, should be effectively

implemented. All forms of discrimination including untouchability should be removed. The guarantees provided in the Constitution for the protection of the religion, language and culture of all such groups should be respected and enforced, so that any sense of insecurity that may exist may be removed. The prompt redress of their grievances should be the responsibility of the Government. Equality of opportunity and education is a principle which should not only be accepted but worked out in every legitimate and equitable manner. The provision of adequate employment facilities in government services is another urgent task that has yet to be adequately fulfilled.

A Commission on Civil Rights should be set up which will look into and help correct discrimination against any section of the people in education, employment, economic activities and ensure effective assertion of equality of opportunity in economic and social life.

Conclusion

This is not so much a manifesto as a call to action. It is a plea to the people of India that they act before it is too late and the lights of liberty are finally dimmed.

The Swatantra Party calls upon the people of India to reject and defeat the ruling Congress Party which is

- (a) attempting to subvert the Constitution of India;
- (b) seeking the assistance of the Communists who have extra-territorial loyalties;
- (c) failing to restore law and order throughout the country, and
- (d) following out-moded and suicidal economic policies which have failed to achieve rapid progress.

The Swatantra Party will do everything possible to activate the energies of the people and thus enable them to enjoy to the full the fruits of their labour. Talent and hard

work will be rewarded, inventiveness encouraged, the poor and the oppressed protected and given the hope of a better future. For this to happen, however, the present government which is sapping the vitals of the nation must first be removed. After that the long delayed reconstruction of the country can be taken in hand so that we can begin to fulfil Gandhiji's dream that we may be able to 'wipe the tear from every eye'.

PART II

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

New Delhi, June 28, 1970

THE POLITICAL CRISIS

India has entered the Seventies with a disturbed political balance and uncertain political perspective. The unbroken pre-eminence of the Congress Party, which had led the struggle for Independence in the country's national life, came to an end with the unfortunate events of 1969. The Congress Party and its Government which possessed a middle-of-the-road character had been a factor contributing to stability and continuity of policy. Developments following the Presidential election have created a vacuum in our political life which has to be constructively filled.

Today, our young democracy is faced with many threats. The biggest of these is the crumbling of law and order and the emergence of violence in several shapes and forms. These threats the Central Government is unable to counter because of its dependence on the Communist Parties with their extra-territorial loyalties, creed of violence and proclaimed designs to wreck the country's democratic Constitution.

A major threat to order and stability comes from the activities of the Communist Parties and notably of the Naxalites who represent the totalitarian threat in its most extreme form. When President's Rule was promulgated in West Bengal there was a sigh of relief in that State and also throughout the country. Unfortunately, the expectations arising out of President's rule were dashed to the ground. Not only has there been no improvement in conditions in that unfortunate State, but the threat to the lives, liberties and properties of the people continues.

Indeed, it is possible to claim that Naxalite activities have been on the increase since the proclamation of President's Rule and that the glorification of Mao Tse Tung on Indian soil is being allowed to proceed with impunity. This is so because of the political predilections of the Governor and also because of the pusillanimous attitude adopted by the Prime Minister and her colleagues in the face of the threat to the lives and liberties of the people of Bengal and to the security of the country.

Another quarter from which violence erupts is the area of communal clashes, the latest manifestation of which has been in Bhiwandi and Jalgaon in the state of Maharashtra. Here again, there has been widespread concern at the inability of the authorities to deal adequately with these disturbances.

Yet another source of violent clashes have been boundary and linguistic disputes. The Union Government has failed to resolve these problems essentially because its attitude towards them is conditioned by considerations of political and partisan expediency. The Congress is of the view that inter-State disputes should be invariably referred to a standing and high level judiciary machinery whose decisions should be final and binding on all concerned.

The Union Government's abdication of its responsibility to maintain law and order is accompanied by a refusal to accept responsibility for the protection of the lives, liberties and properties of the citizens — and this by a specious argument in the nature of an alibi that this is the responsibility of the States. Its failure is aggravated by the propaganda of some of its leading personalities which has struck at the dignity of the Supreme Court and the Fundamental Rights of the citizen embodied in the Constitution. There is a deliberate attack on the Fundamental Rights of the citizen to his property which threatens to develop into an attempt to amend the Constitution in a manner that would give Government the right to expropriate arbitrarily even the poor peasant's modest holding of land.

The near stagnation of the Indian economy is another factor that threatens the stability of the country. Inflation proceeds apace and nothing is done to ensure a dependable currency and a stable price level. The people's capacities for initiative and enterprise are handicapped by red tape and unnecessary restrictions. This has resulted in the slowing down of industrial expansion and the establishment of new industries.

Perhaps more deplorable than anything else is the lowering of the standards of public life. Commencing with intrigues during the Presidential Election last year, there has developed a cynical disregard of the standards of democratic behaviour. This is further exemplified by the gross misuse of Radio and Television. These instruments of mass propaganda are used for loaded propaganda in favour of the Ruling Party. There are attempts to deprive the Civil Service of their role as independent advisors to browbeat the Press and misuse the office of the Governor. Fair and free elections have become almost impossible due to the large-scale misuse of governmental machinery and money.

The international policies of the present Government are reducing India to the position of a Soviet satellite. The latest instance of the failure of the Indian Government to participate in the Conference of South, South-East and East Asian countries called by the non-aligned Government of Indonesia to consider ways and means of preserving the

Independence and integrity of a small and neutral country like Cambodia was a betrayal of our international obligations to our neighbours.

It is a matter of deep concern that Government's foreign policy with respect to Pakistan has resulted in a massive and continuous influx of refugees from East Pakistan.

In these circumstances, it is imperative that the threat to the integrity and democratic structure of the nation must be countered and defeated. This becomes a pre-condition to any amelioration or improvement in the position of our country and the conditions of life of our people.

The Congress Party is endeavouring in Parliament and outside to meet this threat by Constitutional and proper means. This effort can, however, be made effective and meaningful only if the people of India can see the coming together of nationalist and democratic parties and elements who are prepared to shoulder consequential responsibilities in the country to improve the lot of the common people. Democracy and nationalism must go together. Without democracy, nationalism can easily degenerate into fascism; and without nationalism, democracy may destroy the unity of the country.

The consolidation of national democratic forces to repel the threat of communist subversion and communal virus and open up the path of ordered progress resulting in a richer and better life for our people becomes one of the primary tasks for the Congress.

The Congress Party appeals to all nationalist, democratic and socialist parties, groups and individuals in the country to cooperate in this effort both in Parliament and outside.

The issues which should provide a meeting ground for all democrats and patriots are:

- (a) the unity and security of India;
- (b) the defence of the constitutional liberties of the people and preservation of democratic institutions;
- (c) the maintenance of law and order; and
- (d) establishment of a secular society based on principles of social and economic justice and equality of status and ensuring effective opportunity to all to earn livelihood and attain a basic minimum standard of living.

National Unity and Security

The present threats to the unity and security of the country which come from both within and without have to be firmly repelled.

A serious threat to national unity is posed by those who hold and preach that India is a multi-national State. The Muslim League's two-nation theory resulted in India's partition; this multi-nation theory can

lead to the country's complete Balkanisation. India is one nation and Indians are one people, despite their vast variety of languages, creeds, religions, castes, customs, modes and manners.

There should be no quarter given to extra-territorial loyalties or interference by others in the country's affairs. Totalitarian parties committed to the destruction of plurality of political parties and of a democratic polity including an independent judiciary cannot claim and enjoy democratic rights in an unfettered manner.

The liberation of Indian territory under the illegal occupation of China and Pakistan should be one of the key objectives of India's defence policy.

Our international relations have to be placed once again on a footing of genuine non-alignment in place of the present one-sided policies. Each issue as it arises should be examined on its merits and the present drift to satellitism should end. Normal and friendly relations between India and Pakistan are essential in the interest and security of the entire sub-continent. Good neighbourly relations need to be developed, but such an approach has to be reciprocal and on a basis of mutuality. Appeasement is no way of solving such a problem.

Defence of Constitutional Liberties and Preservation of Democratic Institutions

The defence of the constitutional liberties of the people is an urgent task. This calls for unqualified acceptance of the important role assigned to our Judiciary by the Constitution and an equally unqualified guarantee of the maintenance of the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution.

While the Congress Party recognises the value of the Federal principle in the Constitution and is zealous of the rights and autonomy of the States, it feels that the threat of divisive, disruptive and violent forces calls for another look at the role of the Union and State Governments. There is no reason why a strong Centre should mean weak states or strong states need mean weakness at the Centre. There is need for additional strength to govern at both the Union and State levels, each within their respective spheres. The Congress Party does not envisage any need for amendment of the Constitution on this issue. There is need, however, to invoke Article 263 of the Constitution and set up an Inter-State Council to advise the President in this regard. This Council would go a long way in relieving Centre-State tensions that are in a way unavoidable in our multi-party set up.

Demagogic attempts have been made during the last year to exploit Harijans and Adivasis for political and anti-national ends under the plea of espousing their grievances. In a country such as India with its wide variety of ethnic origins, religions and languages, the treatment of minorities and backward classes assumes great importance. There should

be complete equality as between citizens irrespective of their birth, religion, ethnic origin or caste and that all forms of discrimination based on such considerations should be removed. The guarantees provided in the Constitution for the protection of religion, language and culture of all such groups should be respected and enforced. There have to be special measures taken for the uplift of the poorer and more backward sections of the people. The prompt redress of the grievances of such sections should be the responsibility of the Government.

Equality of opportunity and education is a principle that should not only be accepted but be worked out in every legitimate and equitable manner. The provision of adequate employment facilities in all Government services is another urgent task that has yet to be adequately fulfilled.

A Commission on Civil Rights should be set up. It will look into and help correct discrimination against any section of the people in education, employment, economic activities etc. It will ensure effective assertion of equality of opportunity in economic and social life. The Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as the Commissioner of Linguistic Minorities will become a part of the new Commission.

While the Congress Party deplores all suggestions that cast doubts on the loyalties of any particular community, it would like to caution all communities against the efforts of certain parties, in particular the ruling party, to use them as pawns in their game of political aggrandisement. It is confident that the minorities will not fall a prey to efforts to exploit them, which can only harm their own interests as well as of the nation in the long run. The Congress pledges itself to strive actively to foster in these sections of the people a sense of security and of full participation in the national life.

To check communal disturbances, all those who are engaged in the administration of law and order should be made personally answerable for not taking preventive measures in time and not dealing effectively with breaches of communal peace. Other manifestations of violence should also be met with equal firmness.

Economic Policies

There remains the massive tasks of dealing with the economic and social needs of the people. The Congress Party would approach this with a pragmatic outlook and a sense of urgency.

The Congress is resolved to accelerate the implementation of the Directive Principles of our Constitution.

The evil of untouchability has not yet disappeared in several areas. The Congress is determined to take effective steps to eradicate this evil completely.

The starting point of all economic policy must, as Mahatma Gandhi used to stress, be Employment. The Congress Party stands for the right to work of every citizen. Jobs should be created by putting people to work to necessary and productive tasks with the objective of adding to the volume of goods and services required by the country. The creation of adequate employment opportunities is however linked inescapably with the growth of the economy as a whole.

The expansion of the Indian economy, whether in agriculture, trade or industry, can only be achieved if Government policies provide incentives for hard work and enterprise which are at present lacking. Among the factors that would provide such incentives are a stable currency, reasonable direct and indirect taxes and reducing the mass of red tape in which all economic activity is enmeshed. The needs of production and of social justice alike call for remuneration to be linked progressively with productivity. The governing consideration in organising public finance will be the fostering of rapid growth and amelioration of the distress of the weak and the under-privileged.

Employment

Urgent attention has to be paid to provide employment to our young people. The Congress is committed to a massive works programme. Every municipality and cluster of village panchayats must have works on hand where the needy can find immediate employment. The resources needed for the programme have to be accorded priority as is done with defence in the national budget.

For the educated unemployed, a separate Corporation will be set up which will help similar State bodies to reorient wherever necessary the skills of the young people and provide them with financial and technical assistance to set them up in self and other kinds of employment in small industry, trade, transport etc. A large number of educated young men and women will be needed for carrying out a crash programme of adult literacy and adult education.

In both those programmes of rural works and for the educated unemployed 25 per cent of the allocations will be used in a manner whereby the beneficiaries would be those who belong to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other poorer classes.

A Department of Economic Opportunities will be added to the Government of India. It will have a budget of its own of Rs. 1000 crores over a five year period. The amount will be used through State Governments for developing employment opportunities in rural and urban areas, in agriculture, and industry, principally small scale including Khadi and Cottage Industries. The Department will also assist in coordinating employment programmes in other Departments of Government, as also the work done for rural development, natural conservation and environmental improvement. These programmes will be developed to correct,

to the extent possible, regional disparities in development and give special attention to chronically drought affected and other poverty stricken areas.

Agriculture

Agriculture is of course and will continue to be India's basic industry and deserves to be given an appropriate priority. Land Reforms should be speedily completed. Peasant proprietorship and family farming have proved to be the most productive and socially desirable form of cultivating the land and nothing should be done to weaken this system on which our entire rural life is based. At the same time, tenants and share croppers have to be assured of security of tenure and fixed and fair rents. Landless labourers must be guaranteed a minimum wage and given an assurance that they will share in the fruits of more intensive farming and will be gainfully employed throughout the year.

The needs of agriculture have to be met also by the promotion of cooperatives and agro-industries and a massive rural works programme which would embrace community programmes for the building of roads, the provision of tanks and wells, afforestation and land improvement measures.

Industry and Trade

Balanced and all-sided development would involve a considerable growth in the country's industry and trade. The efficient functioning of trade and industry depend on the market mechanism being allowed to work smoothly. Where controls are not capable of immediate abolition in the interest of the economy, the administration of all permits and licences should be entrusted to autonomous boards of economists and experts functioning under the control of Parliament at both the Union and State levels. Several key areas in the economy have already been nationalised. The urgent task now is to impart efficiency to government enterprises and make them adequately productive and profitable.

The Public Sector enterprises must in reality have autonomy of functioning. They will be freed from political interference. On the top management, as lower down, persons will be appointed strictly on their managerial ability. They will be clothed with autonomy and will be expected to show results. The Public Sector is capable of yielding substantial profits while enriching the economy.

Monopoly has to be combated. The only real cure for monopoly is the encouragement of competition and, where this does not exist, to restore it wherever possible. Special encouragement should be given to new entrepreneurs. Where monopoly conditions cannot be avoided, a reasonable amount of regulation becomes inevitable.

Education

In the coming years, the educational attainments of young people will determine how fast India will progress and how far they will be able to avail themselves of the opportunities of technological advance and economic progress. It is necessary to improve the quality of education at all levels, eliminate drop-outs in primary education, give a vocational bias to higher education and make university education more meaningful than it is today.

Children

It should be our ceaseless endeavour to provide the essential needs of healthy nourishment to all our infants and children.

Rooting out Corruption

Immediate implementation at the Central and State level of the decision to have Lokpal and Lok Ayukta should be effected. These independent authorities empowered to ensure clean administration, to remove injustice and partiality in administration must function free from any kind of political interference and will have full access to Government's records.

All personnel in the Administration, from the highest to the lowest, will be judged by their effort to satisfy the mass of the citizens—the consumer of Government services. At all levels of the administration, the citizens must feel that they are treated with courtesy, fairness and promptitude.

Foreign Aid and Capital

India should be self-reliant in respect to the basic needs of the people and we must step up and diversify our exports to achieve a favourable Balance of Payments and early repayment of foreign debts. Meanwhile foreign loans should be accepted on a strictly controlled basis. Such loans in the past taken for establishing industrial projects have not always been used economically and efficiently. These shortcomings have to be overcome. Foreign equity capital, however, deserves to be welcomed and encouraged in selected areas. It is particularly fruitful where it accompanies technological skill and knowledge and is so employed that it is self-repaying in so far as any particular project or field of production is concerned.

In the development of our mineral resources, in ship building, and in similar selected industries special extensive efforts will be made to invite joint participation of foreign capital on the basis of extinguishing their interest over a period of time through payment in material and products.

Labour

A good day's wage should reward a good day's work. A rise in wage should be linked with increasing productivity, otherwise it becomes inflationary and illusory. There should be closer association of employees with management as part of the Gandhian concept of partnership. The feeling on the part of the employee that he has a stake in the enterprise would promote industrial harmony and help productivity and efficiency. Various forms of creating employees' share in enterprise should be examined and promoted.

The Congress pledges itself to the maintenance of collective bargaining and the right to strike as part of a free society. While of course limitations on the right to strike are legitimate in the case of members of the civil services and employees of public utility, they should be accompanied by machinery for the reference of disputes between Government and its employees to compulsory arbitration and for the award of the arbitrator to be binding on all parties subject only to the control of Parliament.