

Swatantra Newsletter

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March 1960.

No. 5.

March has been a most eventful month for our Party. We held a highly successful National Convention on the 19th and 20th at Patna, where the public response surpassed our wildest expectations. Over 700 delegates came from all parts of the country and participated in the deliberations. But what staggered friends and critics alike were the mammoth crowds that coursed towards "Ashok Nagar", the venue of our meeting. A most conservative figure has placed the audience on the 19th and 20th at a lakh of people. The Pandal had been designed to accommodate 15,000, but thousands had to stand for hours on end within the Pandal while an estimated half a lakh had to rest content with hearing the proceedings through the loudspeakers outside the Pandal.

On the evening of the 19th there took place a magnificent presidential procession from the railway station to Ashok Nagar led by Prof. N.G.Ranga, Mr. K.M.Munshi and Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh. This procession was applauded and cheered by tumultuous crowds who had lined the entire route. It appeared as if all the people of Patna had turned out to give the Swatantra Party a rousing reception and welcome. As the "Hindu" observed, "All roads in Patna led to Ashok Nagar."

Local newspapers like the Searchlight, Indian Nation and Aryavarta devoted practically their entire issues during the days of the Convention to its proceedings.

The main business of the first National Convention was to give the Party a Constitution and to put "flesh and blood" on the Statement of Principles adopted by the Party at the Preparatory Convention held in Bombay in August. Both these tasks the Convention accomplished, and the businesslike manner in which they were attended to is a tribute to the delegates.

While the National Convention met on the 19th and 20th, the Central Organising Committee and the General Council met on the two previous days.

CENTRAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

The Central Organising Committee of the Party met on March 18th in Patna. 15 of the 23 members attended the meeting.

The Committee discussed matters relating to the Convention and other procedural details.

GENERAL COUNCIL:

The General Council met on the 17th afternoon and 18th morning in Patna. It decided to coopt the following members: Mr. N.C.Chatterjee, Mr. A.D.Shroff, Mr. Anand Chand M.P., Shri Ranga Reddi, Mr. Shankar Reddi and Shri Hari Hara Das M.L.A.,

A detailed examination of the draft Constitution and the draft Statement of Policy entitled "To Prosperity through Freedom" was made in the course of which certain amendments were made to both the drafts.

The General Council then took certain decisions which are reported below.

Membership subscriptions: The General Council of the Party has decided that the membership subscription of the Party should be Rs.0. 50 nP for all those who wish to join the Party, whether they are in urban or rural areas alike, without prejudice to what has been done. This decision will come into force from April 1.

Another decision of the General Council is that the annual subscription should be for the calendar year. This means that subscriptions already collected or to be collected in the coming months will be valid till December 31, 1960.

The following resolution on the Budget presented to Parliament during the current session, was also passed by the General Council:

THE BUDGET.

"The General Council views with strong disapproval the additional and new excise and other levies proposed in this year's Budget which will increase the cost of production and the cost of living and bring about a rise in prices, adding to the burdens of the poor and middle classes who have been already suffering grievously on account of the inflation caused by deficit financing, wrong priorities and the mistaken policies of the ruling party."

The minutes of both the Central Organising Committee and the General Council have already been circulated to members. A General Secretary's letter No. 7 drawing attention to certain decisions taken by these bodies has been circulated to all State and Regional parties.

NATIONAL CONVENTION:

The hoisting of the Party Flag by Shri C. Rajagopalachari on March 19th heralded the first National Convention of the Party. Over 10,000 people witnessed the unfurling of our Flag amidst the chanting of Vedic hymns.

The Convention immediately settled down to serious business, viz., discussion of the drafts of the Constitution and the Statement of Policy. The delegates' sessions, although closed to visitors, was thrown open to the Press. This gesture was highly appreciated by the Press and newspapers commented on the democratic nature of the discussions that prevailed at these sessions: The Times of India in the course of an editorial commented:

"The tenor of the debate over the Party's programme showed that members were keeping their eyes open and were reluctant to accept everything as it was presented to them."

The Convention also adopted the following four resolutions:

1. THE PARTY FLAG.

"This Convention approves of the white five-pointed star on a blue background as the flag of the Party."

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2. THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT.

"RESOLVED that the General Secretary's Report presented to the Convention be recorded."

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3. NATIONAL DEFENCE.

"This Convention confirms the Resolution adopted at Hyderabad on national defence.

"It reaffirms the desirability of forging bonds of cooperation with all South and Southeast Asian nations as the best means of facilitating aid to flow from the prosperous non-Communist nations of the world on honourable terms and so as not to give rise to mutual apprehensions.

"This Convention disapproves of the unresponsive attitude of government to the proposals and approaches of Pakistan while at the same time it is slow to react in a proper manner to the insulting and aggressive attitude of China. The policies of China in regard to India are a potential and growing danger which call for a more realistic and correct policy in regard to international friendship with the Non-Communist Powers. Such a policy is not inconsistent with our general policy of peace and disarmament to which the nation is rightly committed and to its declared policy of opposition to the use of nuclear weapons of any kind."

4. TIBET.

"Whereas the recent observance of the first anniversary of the Tibetan Revolution of March 1959 has come to the people of this country as a grim reminder of the cruel fate that has befallen a nation of peace loving people at the hands of aggressive and imperialist Communism;

"And whereas one of the great religions of the world has been subjected to brutal suppression by a God-denying ideology;

"And whereas the Swatantra Party believes that a strengthening of the moral order in the world can only result from the inner discipline which practice of religion gives to each people and the freedom and dignity of individuals in every free nation;

(contd.)

"The Swatantra Party looks forward to the time when Tibet will be free of its aggressors and the people of Tibet will enjoy a full and free life of national self-determination."

Publication of Constitution, Statement of Policy and Convention Proceedings.

Printed copies of the Constitution and the Statement of Policy in English and Hindi, will be made available to the State and Regional parties. It will be left to the State and Regional parties to print these documents in their own regional languages.

A brochure in English containing the proceedings of the Patna Convention, along with photographs, Constitution, Statement of Policy and resolutions is also being prepared.

RAJAJI'S TOUR TO NORTH INDIA:

Rajaji has undertaken an arduous tour of North India to spread the message of Swatantra. Before coming to Patna to inaugurate the National Convention, Rajaji visited Calcutta on March 15 and 16. Only a few days earlier, the West Bengal Swatantra Party had the privilege of electing Shri N.C.Chatterjee as its President. The reception given to Rajaji surpassed all expectations. Rajaji's visit was extensively covered by the local press. Most of the newspapers featured the Press Conference at which he issued a stern warning against Communist aggression and made a strong plea for the abandonment of the policy of non-alignment.

On the 16th, Rajaji addressed a big public meeting. At this meeting he said that he considered the Communist Party of India as his "first enemy" and the Congress as "enemy number two." He felt that actually "the Communist Party was ruling India through Nehru."

Rajaji strongly believed that the Swatantra Party would one day come to office. The first principle he would however enforce on the members was that no partymen should try to defeat the course of justice in the administration. Those who did not agree should remain in the Congress, he said.

Continuing, Rajaji said that the solution of all difficulties was freedom. He was glad that the people had realised that Communism was not good for the country. "But I tell you the present Congress policy is Communism clothed in wolf's coat. We are against Communism, that is to say, we are against imprisonment and against forced labour. If the Congress takes that policy, they are Communists so far as I am concerned. Therefore, I vote against the Congress and the Communist Party. I do not like the tiger, because the tiger attacks me. But suppose my dog also attacks, I do not like the dog. A mad dog is more dangerous than the tiger in the forest," he added.

Prof. N.G.Ranga and Shri N.C.Chatterjee also addressed this gathering.

Earlier in the day, Rajaji addressed the Institute of Political and Social Studies on the subject of "The Individual and the State." Justifying the formation of the Swatantra Party, Rajaji said: "The whole quarrel between the political party which I am organising and the party which is now ruling the country is centred round the relationship between the individual and State - whether the State should be

"the all important agent in the affairs of the country or whether the individual should be the all important agent for the activities in the country. "

"Currently", added Rajaji, "the State is all important and dominant and the individual is permitted an existence and scope for activities. The whole of life is full of licences and permissions from the State to which condition we have been reduced. The individual lives by sufference...The combined activities of the majority of the individuals rules the minority against their will and lays down rules, in order to govern the minority. It is out of date and the worst form of tyranny runs on the line of permanent majority for all time."

From Calcutta, Rajaji went to Patna and the National Convention. After the deliberations concluded, Rajaji addressed a mammoth public meeting on the 21st at the Gandhi Maidan in Patna. Here too he was repeatedly cheered as he criticised the Congress Party and emphasised the role of the Swatantra Party in providing an alternate government.

He next visited Bhagalpur on 22nd. Returning to Patna on the 23rd, Rajaji left on a tour of the Punjab via Delhi. He arrived at Chandigarh, the Punjab capital, on the 24th to begin his four day tour of the Punjab. He addressed the High Court Bar Association there. To the audience of lawyers he said: "Join my party now if you have a spirit of adventure left in you. Don't wait until the battle is over." Saying that he was sorry for using the "language of the recruiting sergeant," he added, "the time has come to overthrow the Congress Party. It can be done. The astonishing growth of the Swatantra Party within six months shows that the Congress Party has begun to rot. Its representatives in legislatures are people whom any First Class Magistrate should round up. They are men without ostensible means of subsistence." He urged his audience not to be upset by those who described the Swatantra Party as conservative. "Our success shows that this is the latest fashion." Describing the economic programme of the Congress as "socialist insanity", Rajaji said that the Congress Government was trying to run the whole country as a well-ordered convict ward. Socialism could not raise its head so long as Sardar Patel was alive, but since it was adopted 'unabashedly' in 1954 and the Congress started putting it on its forehead as its caste mark, it had killed the production incentive.

From Chandigarh Rajaji proceeded to Patiala. Here he addressed a largely-attended public meeting.

Rajaji's tour of northern India will continue until 10th April. His itinerary given below will give the reader an idea of the extensive and strenuous tour undertaken by him:

26th March	--	Ludhiana and Jullunder
27th March	--	Amritsar,
28th March	--	Delhi
29th March	--	Darbhanga,
30th March	--	Chapra,
31st March	--	Betia,
1st April	--	Muzzafarpur
2nd April	--	Hazaribagh
3rd April	--	Patna and Banaras
4th April	--	Allahabad
5th April	--	Kanpur,
6th April	--	Lucknow
7th April	--	Agra,
8th April	--	Delhi,
9th April	--	Delhi
10th April	--	Return to Madras.

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PARTY LITERATURE:

The following Party Literature is available at the Central Office.

1. "TOWARDS DOOM" - by Rajaji - 20 nP per copy - available in English, Hindi, Gujarati. (Swatantra Series - 1)
2. "WHY SWATANTRA ? " - by Rajaji,) - available at present
(Swatantra Series Prof. N.G.Ranga,) in English. Hindi
- 2) Mr. K.M.Munshi,) and Gujarati versions
Mr. M.R.Masani.) expected shortly.

Price - 20 nP per copy.

The above two if ordered in bulk of more than 100 will be sold at the concessional price of 15 nP per copy.

3. "Who is Outdated ? " - A comparison of Swatantra Party principles with those of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany. (English)

Price - 5 nP. per copy.

4. "Social & Religious Decay " - by Rajaji - in English.

Price - 5 nP per copy.

5. Preparatory Convention brochure - containing the proceedings of the Preparatory Convention held in Bombay in August, with photographs and names of delegates and important Party leaders.

Price - Rs.2.00 per copy.

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