

Swatantra Newsletter

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In the course of his report to the National Convention at Patna the General Secretary had observed:

"In countries with a long record of democratic functioning it has been recognised that a political party's success like that of a business concern depends on an observance of sound principles of organisation and management. In our political life...not enough attention is paid to the establishment of a sound organisational structure, the division of functions between different limbs and office-bearers and the establishment of clear lines of responsibility."

The Himachal Pradesh Swatantra Party is to be congratulated on having acted with commendable initiative in tackling this deficiency. For howsoever popular the Swatantra ideals might be with the people, the only effective manner by which this popularity can be canalised is through the setting up of a sound organisational machine. The Himachal Pradesh Party has, in circular to its district constituents, aptly emphasised this aspect of our Party's activity. The circular enumerates the tasks that have to be performed by the district units and suggests methods of implementation.

The circular in question deals with a number of items like the membership drive, the growth of district units in various parts of the State and the need for maintaining a proper filing system and a membership register. Proper methods of enrolment of members are emphasised. A pro forma showing how the membership register is to be maintained is sent to each district unit as well as a list of files that ought to be maintained by every district office.

It is highly essential that our units elsewhere should also give emphasis to these details. Many a big organisation has petered out for the simple reason that those at the helm of its affairs considered details as mere routine and needless distractions for which they had little time. The office of any unit is its nerve centre and unless it is kept in trim the result would be the breakdown of the party structure.

The Punjabi Suba Agitation:

The Punjab Government's attempts to smother the movement for the Punjabi Suba through ruthless and repressive measures has aroused the indignation of democratic minded people. Almost all Opposition parties

have condemned the strong arm tactics of the Kairon Ministry. Our Party has also denounced in no uncertain terms the arrest and detention of Master Tara Singh and thousands of other agitators whose only "crime" was the democratic desire to lead a peaceful morcha to Delhi. Shri Rajagopalachari, Mr. Masani and Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke have issued statements condemning the repression and the arrests.

Rajaji said that the arrests were unnecessary and that the morcha of Master Tara Singh would not have killed democracy for Delhi. He characterised the arrests as "provocative" and said that "from the point of view of justice and morality this repression must stand severely condemned. From the point of view of moral expedience, the arrest of Master Tara Singh must stand equally disapproved by all those who have experience of political movements and peaceful administrations and repression connected with them."

Mr. M. R. Masani, the Party's General Secretary, while addressing a public meeting in Bombay City, referred to the Punjabi Suba agitation and denounced the measures taken by the Punjab Government to suppress the movement. While refusing to go into the merits of the agitation, Mr. Masani said that repression was no answer to a popular demand. He characterised Master Tara Singh's right to lead a procession to Delhi as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution to every Indian citizen. He charged the Congress Government in the Punjab with having encroached upon that right and as having surpassed the British in repression.

The President of the Punjab Swatantra Party, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, also issued a press statement where he endorsed the stand taken by Rajaji. He said that "a reign of terror as let loose by the Punjab Government, by ordering indiscriminate arrests of Akali leaders, Councillors, legal advisers and workers had endangered the political situation in this border State. He added that there was absolutely no justification for the ruthless repression and for the total disregard of the rule of law. "Without involving myself or my Party in any controversy in any wise or manner, I strongly appeal to all opposition parties, irrespective of their creed or ideologies, in the name of civil liberty and fundamental constitutional rights of the citizens to condemn this outrageous conduct of the Punjab Government in unambiguous terms since the conduct of Governments in Democratic States is largely shaped by the vigilance displayed by the Opposition," concluded Jathedar Nagoke.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave on Land Ceilings:

Our Party is fundamentally opposed to ceilings on landed property. Rajaji has on more than one occasion lucidly analysed the implications that would follow the imposition of ceilings on land holdings.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, addressing a meeting at Agra on May 5, severely criticised the government's policy of imposing ceiling on land holdings. He said that by this method the Planning Commission hoped to get only about 1 million acres of land. For this the government has to fight bitter legal battles and pay compensation. Through the Bhodan movement on the other hand, over 9 lakhs more, which had been collected, would be distributed in due course. And all this was to be done without any bitterness, said Acharya Bhave.

Professor N. G. Ranga on the Congress Party:

Prof. N. G. Ranga, President of the Swatantra Party addressed a Press conference at Hyderabad on 6th May. He called upon Congress men who are opposed to joint farming to make up their minds whether they would accept dictatorship of the Prime minister and the Planning Commission or leave the Congress and work in co-operation with those who are opposed to Joint-farming. He said that he knew of a large number of Congress men including ministers in various states who opposed Joint-farming.

"They should now make up their minds," he said, "Whether to remain with the Congress or to leave it."

The Karnal Murder Case:

Mr. K. M. Munshi, Vice-president of the Swatantra Party and Chairman of the Public Advice Committee, successfully fought an appeal by the Punjab government against the acquittal of 11 Police Officers by an earlier court. The 11 Police Officers, including a Superintendent of Police, Mr. Greval, were charged with the murder of 3 persons. Mr. Munshi defended these officers and secured their acquittal. He thus vindicated the principle that the government has no business to interfere with the administration of Justice. The acquittal of the officers is one more nail in the coffin of the corrupt Kairon Ministry.

Mr. Murarji Vaidya on Mr. Hutheesing's resignation:

Mr. Raja Hutheesing who has resigned from the Swatantra Party, issued a long statement in which he criticised the ideology of the Swatantra Party. Mr. Murarji Vaidya, Chairman of the Bombay Party, in the course of his reply, which was released in the Press, said that Mr. Hutheesing seemed to be "in two minds about his own ideology. He could not forget his loyalty to Socialism and while he was apparently in favour of organising a Democratic opposition, he did not seem to realise what it meant or how it should be done." Mr. Vaidya characterised Mr. Hutheesing's fear that "the programme of the Swatantra Party, if put in practice, would subject the Indian people to economic chaos and ruthless exploitation and put off all hopes of peaceful economic development," as being the expression of Mr. Hutheesing's plan of socialism which had no relation whatsoever to our Party's policy. Mr. Murarji Vaidya went on to quote Chapter Four of the Party's Statement of Policy which clearly mentions that the Party did not stand for Laissez-faire but stood for free endeavour regulated by such state action as may be necessary for preventing and punishing anti-social activities and for the protection of the weaker but useful elements of society. Mr. Murarji Vaidya added that the Swatantra Movement is a revolt from the total Stateism which the Congress is implementing. He clarified that the Party held the view that planning must be carried on within the limits of the Constitution and that the proper organisation for planning the affairs of the nation was the Cabinet responsible to Parliament. Mr. Vaidya concluded by saying that Mr. Hutheesing was free to leave the Party which he voluntarily and freely joined at its very inception without making unfounded statements to confuse the general public.

Students and Politics:

Mr. M. R. Masani, General Secretary, has issued the following statement:

"The report of the Committee appointed by the University Grants Commission to investigate into the causes of student indiscipline has, among other things, suggested the desirability of all recognized political parties in the country coming to an agreement among themselves that they would not carry their politics and their rivalries into the universities and colleges. The findings of the Committee are to be placed before the Vice-Chancellors of Universities who will meet later this month.

In this context, it is of interest to recall that the Swatantra Party has in the Statement of Policy adopted at the National Convention at Patna on March 19 and 20 decided on a line of action which is precisely what is now suggested by the Committee.

"Whatever other parties may be doing," the Statement reads, "the Swatantra Party is of the view that there should be no encouragement given to the division of students into groups related to the political parties of the country although they may be free to express and discuss their views in their own College Unions. Students above the prescribed age are no doubt eligible for membership of the Party and are welcome if they seek it. Students may form study circles for the appreciation of political and economic problems, but, in the interest of discipline, the Party is of the view that it should not encourage the formation of political groups inside universities and colleges."

The Swatantra Party hopes that, in response to the suggestion that is now made by the Committee appointed by the University Grants Commission, other political parties will fall in line and agree to a similar self-denying ordinance in furtherance of student welfare and discipline.

I am writing to Sir C. D. Deshmukh, Chairman of the University Grants Commission reiterating the Swatantra Party's assurance to abstain from political activity among students.

P.T.O.

NEWS FROM STATE PARTIES:Andhra:

Mr. M. R. Masani, General Secretary, visited Hyderabad on 4th and 5th June. He attended two meetings, one of the members of the Organising Committee and workers of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad held on 4th of June, and another meeting of the District workers and organisers of Telangana held on 5th June.

At the June 4th meeting, a full and frank discussions took place on the organisational problems faced by the Party in the twin cities. A number of decisions were taken. Among them were:

- (a) The organising committee should immediately establish constituency committees in the twin cities concentrating more of their work upon selected constituencies.
- (b) It should evolve ways and means to start such constructive work as would be within the framework of the parties principles.
- (c) There should be at least one public meeting in the twin cities every month.
- (d) The chapter on Labour in the Party's statement of Policy would be translated and printed into Telugu and Urdu immediately and given the widest possible publicity.

The meeting of the district organisers on the 5th dealt with the difficulties faced by the district organisers in the various areas. A number of points on the recruitment of members were discussed.

The Party has a jeep. In order to secure maximum and fruitful utilisation of the jeep for purposes of Party propaganda, it was decided that districts should submit their requisition for the use of the jeep with full particulars as to the use it would be put to during the period it was made available to them. Another decision was that members of the Telangana Sub-Committee of the Party should visit local party men and organisers in the district in order to maintain an effective contact at the lowest levels.

Mr. Masani addressed a public meeting at Secunderabad on the 4th June. At this meeting he referred to the events leading to Mr. Subha Reddi's exit from the Andhra Cabinet and said that it was reminiscent of events in a Communist country. He said that nowhere in the history of the Cabinet system of government was a minister compelled to resign because he had differed with the Chief Minister over a Party election. Addressing a news conference on June 5, Mr. Masani said that he expected the Swatantra Party to form the biggest bloc sitting in opposition at the Centre after the 1962 General Elections and that the Party would be in a position to offer the formation of an alternative government by 1967.

Assam:

At Nongpoh, half way station between Gauhati and Shillong, a Constituency Committee of 9 members was established on 11th May. While this might be considered as a minor development, in the context of the Assam situation this represents a step forward by our Party.

From 20th to 22nd May, the President of the Shillong branch and the Joint-secretary toured Gauhati and Nalbari in connection with building up the Party's organisation in these areas. An important development has been the friendly reception accorded to our Party by an English Weekly and a Khasi weekly. The Khasi weekly has been publishing articles on the Convention and the Policy of the Party, contributed by our members of the Shillong branch.

Bihar:

To canalise the tremendous enthusiasm of the people of Bihar for the Swatantra Party generated by the Patna Convention, the Bihar Party has launched a vigorous propaganda campaign throughout the state. A contingent of a sincere band of workers is touring the State and establishing direct contact with the people and enlisting their support for the Party.

The State Headquarters has allocated jeeps to the various district units. Transportation is a major problem faced by party workers in Bihar, and it is hoped that the jeeps would greatly facilitate the task of carrying the Party's message to the rural areas.

Five more members of the Swatantra Party are now members of the Bihar Legislative Council. They stood as Independents in the recent elections to the Legislative Council.

Mr. Janki Nandan Singh, M.L.C., General Secretary of the Bihar Party completed an exhaustive tour of the State in April. Starting from his home district of Darbhanga, he visited Sanastipur, Madhubani, Jainagar, Muzaffarpur, Motihari, Bettia, Deohara, Dunka, Monghyr, Begusarai, Jamui Bhagalpur, Saharsa, Madhepura, Supaul, Murliganj, Purnea and Katihar. Mr. Janki Nandan Singh inspected Party Offices in the various districts he visited and discussed with district officials the problems of party organisation in their areas and also addressed public meetings.

The State Committee met on the 10th and 21st April. One of the decisions taken at the meeting on the 10th April was, that wherever units failed to achieve membership targets set out for them, they would be dissolved.

The Party also decided to publish literature in simple Hindi and Urdu that could be understood by the common man.

The meeting on the 21st made the interesting decision that all Legislators and M.P.s of the Party should contribute 10% and 20% of their salary to the Party Fund from May 1960.

Bombay:

In the midst of acute shortage of accomodation, the Party was able to open offices at Kurla, Bandra and Sion, thanks to some of our Party members in these areas who volunteered to permit the use of their own premises. At Kurla, it is reported well over 400 members have already been enrolled.

A meeting of Party workers held in Bandra and attended by Mr. Murarji Vaidya and Mr. M. R. Masani resulted in the formation of a Bandra unit.

A public meeting was sponsored by the Party in a predominantly Muslim area of the City. Convened with the intention of explaining the Party's programme and Policy the meeting was addressed by Mr. Murarji Vaidya, Chairman of the Bombay Party, and Mr. M. R. Masani.

Problems as different as the grievances of Cotton Traders and the civic complaints of the denizens of Versova have been taken up by the Party. The latter case involves the safety of hundreds of citizens inhabiting the Versova Shoreline. Soil erosion is gradually endangering the lives of the inhabitants but the Municipal authorities appear to be oblivious of the situation inspite of repeated representations^s by the people residing in that area.

An idea of the useful work being done by the Swatantra Service Centre can be guaged from the following tabulation.

Number of Cases on the Files:

Youth Service	56
Civic Grievances	22

Number of Cases Closed:

Youth Service	12
Civic Grievances	7

Number of Cases Pending:

Civic Grievances	13
Youth Service	44

Delhi:

The Delhi Party has set up a study Circle. It was found that Party workers were not quite conversant with Party policy and its attitudes on various questions.

The first meeting of the Study Circle was held on May 8, 1960. Mr. K. M. Munshi, who attended the meeting, spoke in detail on the Party's Statement of Policy. Another meeting held on 29th May was addressed by Sardar Lal Singh who spoke on Co-operative Farming.

A meeting of rural workers was held at Bawana on May 28. It was decided at this meeting to setup 3 more Constituency Committees in addition to four already functioning.

Kerala:

On 23rd April at a public meeting held in Trivandrum was born the Kerala branch of the Swatantra Party. This was a spontaneous development where local people had taken the initiative in ushering in the Party's activities in the State which many considered was overdue. A Provisional Organising Committee was set up with Mr. Ramkrishna Iyer a former Judge of the High Court as President and Messrs A. P. Tampi and Mr. K. Sankaran Nair as Secretaries.

Mr. Masani, General Secretary, toured the State from 13th to 16th May. On the 15th May a meeting of the Provisional Organising Committee was held in Trivandrum at which Mr. M. R. Masani was present. At this meeting Mr. Masani explained why the Swatantra Party had kept away from Kerala till after the mid-term elections. He welcomed the initiative taken by the sponsors of the meeting of 23rd April. The meeting co-opted 6 members to the committee. Mr. K. J. Jacob who was among those co-opted was also nominated as Secretary in addition to Mr. Sankaran Nair and Mr. Tampi. The meeting also appointed Convenors for Mattanchery, Cochin, Ernakulam Town and North Parur. Before leaving Trivandrum, Mr. M. R. Masani issued a press statement expressing his satisfaction at the interest he had found in the Party in Kerala. He said that while the Swatantra Party wished the present government in Kerala well, it believed it would be serving the cause of Democracy by ideological education against Communism and providing in the coming years a channel for discontent other than that offered by the Communist Party. Mr. M. R. Masani also addressed a public meeting on 15th May at Trivandrum. Earlier he addressed pressmen at Cochin and answered a number of questions on the Party's programme in Kerala.

Madhya Pradesh:

More district Committees were constituted in Madhya Pradesh during May, 1960. Ad hoc Committees have been set up in the Sehore, Raisen Hoshangabad and Jabalpur districts.

At Drug and Balaghat vigorous membership drives have been launched

Active party work is similarly reported from the Jabalpur, Raipur and Bilaspur Divisions.

Mr. Parulekar a former Minister in the erstwhile Madhya Bharat State has joined the Party. His entry is a source of additional strength to the Party in the Indore Division.

Mr. R. Agnibhoj, Convenor, toured Hoshangabad, Jabalpur, Sahdol, Sarguja, Bilaspur, Raipur, Drug, Balaghat, Seoni and Ujjain districts.

An Associate Public Aid Committee has been constituted for Madhya Pradesh with Mr. Rege, a former Judge of the Madhya Bharat High Court as Convenor.

An All India Kshatriya Mahasabha Conference was held at Ujjain on 29th May which was presided over by H. H. Maharawal Laxman Singh of Dungarpur, a prominent member of our Party in Rajasthan. The Conference urged the Kshatriyas of the country to join the Swatantra Party.

That evening a public meeting was held under the Presidentship of Mr. H. S. Dwivedi who is the Gwalior Division Organiser. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Agnihhoj and Mr. Ranjilal Sharma the Morena District Organiser. A Party workers' meeting was held earlier under the presidentship of the Maharawal of Dungarpur.

A novel outcome of this meeting was the formation of a "Contact Committee" to propagate the Party's policy in the Region.

Maharashtra:

On the occasion of the celebrations of the new State of Maharashtra, our Party held a flag hoisting ceremony at Poona. In the evening a largely attended public meeting was held under the auspices of our Party. Popular film-star and active Party worker, Mr. Prem Nath, addressed the meeting.

A meeting of district representatives was held at Poona on May 23 to discuss the programme and organisation of the Party in Maharashtra. Mr. M. R. Masani presided over this meeting.

28 representatives from various districts were present and discussed at length problems concerning the Party's organisation in the State.

The meeting decided to invite Rajaji and other Party leaders to tour Maharashtra next November. It was also decided to hold a training camp for Party workers at about this time.

An Ad hoc State Committee consisting of 20 influential social workers has been formed under the leadership of Mr. K. R. Koshti and Mr. B. B. Walvekar.

Addressing a meeting of Party workers at Nasik on May 30, Mr. Koshti reported on the proceedings of the above meeting. Nasik has launched membership enrolment drive.

Mr. M. R. Masani addressed a meeting held under the auspices of the Vasant Vyakya Mala's Spring Lecture Series on May 23. The subject of his talk was "To Prosperity Through Freedom."

Mysore:

On his way back from Kerala, Mr. Masani visited Bangalore where he attended a meeting of the Mysore State Party as an observer. 17 of the 26 members were present.

Addressing the members, Mr. Masani clarified the Party's stand vis-a-vis contesting Panchayat elections. He said that the decision not to contest any elections before 1962 should be adhered to. The Mysore Party therefore should not contest the forthcoming Taluk Boards and Panchayat elections. At the same time, Mr. Masani clarified, individual members of the Party would be free to stand as independent candidates in such elections or to lend their support to others who might stand as independent candidates.

The meeting decided to appoint half-a-dozen paid organisers for intensive work in the State.

A jeep has been donated to the Party and a member of the Committee, Mr. G. S. Subbratnam, volunteered to donate Rs.50.00 per month towards the upkeep of the vehicle. On Mr. Masani's suggestion it was resolved to draw up a monthly programme for the maximum utilisation of the jeep.

The Committee approved the suggestion of Mr. D. N. Hosali that the Chapter on Labour in the Statement of Policy be translated into Kannada and Tamil and that 50,000 copies be printed for free distribution. Mr. Hasali also offered to print these at his press free of cost.

Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu and Mr. M. S. Sugandhi, M.P., have been co-opted to the State Committee.

Punjab:

The Punjabi Suba agitation has thrown into sharp focus the dictatorial nature of the Kairon regime. Elsewhere in this Newsletter Party's attitude as enunciated by Rajaji, Mr. Masani and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke has been reported.

On the 29th of May a meeting of the Ad hoc Committee was held at the State office at Patiala under the Presidentship of Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke. 20 members representing the various districts were present at this meeting.

Among other things the meeting decided to open up district offices in all districts where they do not function at present by the end of June 1960 and that by the end of August 1960, Constituency Committees should start functioning effectively in all districts.

An interesting decision was to hold monthly meetings of the State Ad Hoc Committee in each district in rotation to review the progress of Party work in the district concerned and to collect funds for the Party.

The meeting decided that district offices should be asked to send to the State office a monthly report of their activities by the 2nd of every month so that the report of the activities in the State could be sent to the Central Office by the 5th of each month.

The district Committees will be asked to collect data of public complaints in their districts for scrutiny by the State Public Advice Committee.

A Seminar is proposed to be held at an early date to explain the philosophy, programme and policy of the Swatantra Party.

It was also decided to translate the Swatantra Party Statement of Policy "To Prosperity through Freedom" into Punjabi and Urdu.

The meeting unanimously denounced the repressive measures taken by the Punjab government to suppress the Punjabi Suba agitation.

A resolution was passed demanding the resignation of the Punjab Cabinet in deference to public demand after the judgment of the Special Bench of the Punjab High Court in the Karnal Murder case and suitable disciplinary action against the officers involved in it, against whom strictures have been confirmed by the said judgment.

Another resolution demanding a thorough probe by a senior Judge of the Punjab High Court to bring to light the peculiar circumstances in which Shri J. S. Claire, Superintending Engineer, Nangal, was driven to end his life in the prime of his career by committing suicide was also adopted.

Uttar Pradesh:

The Joint Convenor of the Swatantra Party in Kanpur, Mr. H. K. Srivastava, has emphasized an important point in the course of his communication to Ward Convenors in Kanpur. While exhorting Ward Convenors to enrol at least 250 members each, he has cautioned them not to fill up their quota by enrolling bogus members. He has added that disciplinary action would be taken against any Convenor where bogus membership was detected.

West Bengal:

The West Bengal Committee of the Party met on May 15 and 16 at Calcutta under the presidency of Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, the State President. Adverting to the defeat in the recent by-election of Congress and P.S.P. Candidates by a Communist, the Committee in the course of a resolution stated:

"The deplorable defeat of the Congress and the P.S.P. candidates at the recent Calcutta by-election portends a double danger to this State. The call of the Congress President to eliminate the C.P.I. from the City of Calcutta and the State of West Bengal would have been better appreciated if it had been coupled with a call to eliminate corruption and maladministration from the Congress Government. This Committee refuses to believe that this election result is the considered verdict of an intelligent electorate in a progressive city."

"The problems of today can be solved by building up an alternative democratic party not wedded to fantastic Socialism which has proved to be a delusion and a snare and is a money-making machine to terrify big capitalists into convenient stooges."

"The Party has come into existence in response to a deeply felt need on the part of large numbers of people in different parts of India. In many quarters both in India and abroad the emergence of the Swatantra Party has been hailed as the most significant event in this country since the achievement of Independence."

"The Party is pledged to the principles of Individual Freedom and the upholding of Dharma and is against regimentation of life and it takes a pragmatic view of our national problems in which both Conservatives and Radicals can work together. We are appealing to the common man in this State to appreciate that the Statement of Principles adopted at the Patna Convention of the Party is the essence of true democracy and economic liberalism."

10 District Organisers were appointed to organise the party in the different districts of West Bengal.

3 Branch offices were opened in the city. An important decision was to launch a membership campaign with a target of enrolling 10,000 members by year's end.

Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, who presided over the meeting, announced that Mr. K. M. Munshi had agreed to inaugurate the West Bengal Conference in October next which will be held in one of the district towns in West Bengal.

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