

RAJAJI'S TOUR OF GUJARAT, MAHARASHTRA AND BELGAUM

In November Rajaji undertook a tour of certain areas of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Belgaum. He was accompanied by Professor N. G. Ranga, President of the Party.

Primarily he went to Gujarat to inaugurate the First State Convention of the Party at Nadiad and also the Surat District Peasants' Conference at Bardoli. There is intense resentment in Bardoli against the State's Land Ceiling Bill which is now before the State Assembly. The peasants of Bardoli were in such a rough mood that they were contemplating civil disobedience. Addressing the peasants at this conference, Rajaji called upon the agriculturists all over the State of Gujarat to resist the Bill and said that they should vote in the next Elections for those Parties and for those candidates who declared themselves against the Bill. He said that at the present moment the Congress Governments were going slow on the Land Ceilings Bill because of the coming Elections but the preliminaries were being laid and, if elected, they would pass it into law. The Congress, he said was doing what the Communists wanted. He added, 'I would even say that in internal administration the Communists were ruling the country through Mr. Nehru. The difference arose when the question of China came in but even there the Government was not doing all that it should.'

Rajaji was of the opinion that a Civil Disobedience Movement would not bring about the desired objective. He described the issue of land ownership by agriculturists as a question of life and death and expressed his happiness that at least in Gujarat land-owners, tenants and labourers were all united on this issue under the banner of the Khedut Sangh. The gathering, which was over 30,000 strong, repeatedly cheered Rajaji during his address.

Bardoli is twenty miles away from Surat and all along the way he was given enthusiastic wayside receptions.

From Bardoli he went on to Surat where he addressed a very largely-attended public meeting. It is estimated that over 40,000 people attended this meeting. He asked the people not to confuse the Government with the Congress Party. 'The Congress is just a ruling party and can be replaced by democratic means while the Government remains intact,' he said. Adverting to socialism, Rajaji said that it could not be brought about without compulsion. 'It is compulsion that we do not want. We want to live as people with

individual freedom and progress in the manner of countries like West Germany and Japan.' While at Surat, Rajaji addressed a meeting of Party workers.

On his arrival at Nadiad, he was given an enthusiastic civic reception at the Town Hall. He then participated in the Gujarat State Convention, already reported in detail in our last Newsletter.

Earlier that evening he had tea with the Nadiad Bar Association. That night he addressed a mammoth public meeting at Nadiad.

The next day he left for Baroda. En route he halted at Vallabh Vidyanagar to receive a rousing reception from students. Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel, who was Vice-Chancellor of Vallabh Vidyapeeth, was received like a hero returning home. After participating in a Party workers meeting at Baroda, Rajaji addressed a largely attended public meeting that night at the Azad Maidan. Once again he reiterated his challenge to Mr. Nehru to accept the amendment in the Companies Law barring donations to political parties. He said that if the people voted the Congress into power again they would only deceive themselves. 'The present Government is so rotten that it is hanging on the slender thread of Mr. Nehru. I pity their position,' said Rajaji.

A feature of Rajaji's visit to Gujarat was the tremendous enthusiasm very much in evidence especially in the countryside. It is reported that hours before Rajaji's car passed by a particular village, the entire route was lined with people, sometimes silent, sometimes vociferous, but most of the time reverent. The attendance at public meetings obviously gave the Congress Party the jitters. For soon after Rajaji's Surat public meeting, eight Congress Ministers descended on that town and to their intense disappointment were unable to muster even 4000 people.

The next lap of his tour was Maharashtra and he arrived in Bombay City, its capital on November 22. On his arrival he was given a reception by the Swatantra Dal at the Station. In the afternoon the Bombay Committee had arranged a subscription lunch to collect funds for the Party where Rajaji was the guest of honour. Later that evening he addressed a 10,000 strong public meeting at Chowpatty. He told the audience that during his tour of the country he had found that people welcomed the Swatantra Party because of the deep resentment and discontent with the policies of the ruling Congress Party. The Congress policies of cooperative farming and State-trading would lead the country to ruin and disaster if they were not checked in time, he predicted. He charged the Congress Government with having taken

advantage of India's neutral foreign policy to exploit foreign countries for requirements of foreign exchange. 'Are we taking all these loans with any intention of repaying them?' asked Rajaji. He said that the only way of repaying these loans would be by supplying goods to the foreign country. 'But I can tell you,' said Rajaji, 'foreign countries would not like to purchase any goods from us. The only goods that India can export to foreign countries were curios and products of handicraft and cottage industries.' Professor Ranga also addressed the meeting for a short while.

The next day he left for Poona to begin his tour of Maharashtra. At Poona, Rajaji and Professor Ranga were received in the traditional way by Mrs. Koshti. The Mayor of Poona was the first to garland Rajaji and Professor Ranga, followed by the office-bearers of the Maharashtra unit and others.

Among the many items in his programme was a visit to the Seva-Sadan Society a women's organisation. Rajaji was greatly impressed with the work of this society and wished them every success.

He then visited the *Kesari* and *Maratha* offices started by the Late Lokmanya Tilak, he addressed a small gathering of invited guests there. Later that evening he addressed a mammoth public meeting of nearly 20,000 people at the famous Shanwarwada grounds. After an introductory speech by Shri Koshti, Professor Ranga, who presided over the meeting, criticised the Congress Government's legislation on land reforms particularly those fixing ceilings on land holdings. Rajaji in his address called upon the people all over the country to support the Swatantra Party at the next General Elections if they wanted to preserve their individual freedom and initiative. He warned that if the people voted the Congress back to power in 1961, the country would be turned into a huge machine of controls, regulations, licences and corruption. All regulations, he said, were evil and should be reduced to a minimum, if not abolished altogether. The Swatantra Party, if it is voted into power, would do away with this evil. In addition, if the policies of the Swatantra Party are followed, 'the moral standards of the people will rise again,' asserted Rajaji.

At night the same day, Rajaji spoke to a gathering at Tulshibag Ram Mandir on Ram Rajya in the presence of Shri Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sankeshwar.

The next day he visited the Samadhi of the late Kasturba Gandhi and Mahadeobhai Desai where Professor Ranga offered flowers on behalf of Rajaji and himself. He then visited the district and State Party offices where he was received by Mrs. Bhandare and other ladies in the traditional way.

Addressing the active workers of the Party at the State Office, both Rajaji and Professor Ranga advised them to work harder and faster if any tangible results were to be achieved.

They then visited the Poona Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society Ltd., where they were received by Shri D. R. Bogam.

After visiting the office of one of the oldest Marathi weeklies *Deenbandhu* started by the late Mahatma Fuley, Rajaji met children and their parents at the

Sarasvati Vidyalyaya and talked to them in Tamil. That afternoon he and Professor Ranga were guests of honour at a luncheon given by Shri Walvekar, the Treasurer of the State Party. Over 150 invited guests were present.

The next item on Rajaji's programme was an address at the Poona Bar Association where he criticised the ruling Party for the hurried manner in which legislation was being put on the statute book of the country since freedom. Later that day he addressed a meeting of the Society for Foreign Affairs.

Rajaji also paid a visit to the Maharashtra Mandal where he was received by Shri Chaphekar. This Mandal imparts physical training to young boys and girls. Congratulating Mr. Chaphekar, Rajaji said, "If the girls take physical exercise now, they will become beautiful women when they grow up."

The concluding engagement in Poona was a reception by the Socio literary and Cultural Union, where he was presented with an Address of Welcome.

On the morning of November 25, Rajaji & Prof. Ranga left on the last lap of their tour of Maharashtra. At Shirwal over 200 farmers and villagers led by Mr. Deshmukh welcomed Rajaji and Prof. Ranga and garlanded them on behalf of the Satara district unit of the Party. At Satara he addressed a mammoth meeting in broad daylight. It is reported that, despite the scorching heat of the sun, thousands of people had been waiting for Rajaji's arrival. With his usual penchant for similies which always have a relevance to the place and occasion, Rajaji told the audience "Neera is a pure and healthy drink, but if it is allowed to be kept for a long time, it loses its purity and becomes toddy by fermentation. Similarly power is good and necessary, but if it is allowed to be enjoyed for a long time by the same Party, the Party becomes power drunk and acts like a person under the influence of drink and loses all senses of thinking."

Rajaji was at Karad the home town of Maharashtra Chief Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, for lunch. He addressed the Bar association, paid a visit to the Municipality and was given a reception by over 40 institutions many of whom belonged to other political Parties. He also declared open our Party office in Karad.

That evening he addressed one of the largest public meetings ever held at Karad. It was attended by over 15,000 people from Karad and nearby villages. Rajaji praised Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan as an able, efficient and popular administrator. He said "Shri Chavan belongs to Karad and if he (Rajaji) criticised the Congress Government headed by him, it would be like going to a person's house and beating and insulting him in the presence of his family and he did not intend doing that." He, however, pointed out that State Governments had been reduced to the status of Local Boards and deprived of their legitimate powers and authority. The State Governments were carrying on within the four walls of the policies laid down by the Central Government. If they required any money for any project, the State Minister had to fly to Delhi with a begging bowl in his hands."

From Karad he went on to Sangli where he was given a reception by the Sangli Urban Bank as also

by the Bar Association. Later that night he addressed a public meeting of over 6000 persons who had assembled despite the cold weather.

That completed his tour of Maharashtra and he was off to Belgaum in time to inaugurate the Belgaum District Convention. Arriving in Belgaum on the morning of the 26th, he was given a reception by party workers. That afternoon he had lunch at the Rotary Club where he delivered a short talk, followed by an address to the students of the Law College and the Local Mine-Owners' Association. The next day morning after hoisting the Party flag at the site of the



The public meeting at Karad

Convention, Rajaji was given a reception by the Municipal Borough. He then proceeded to inaugurate the Belgaum District Convention. He asked the people not to be content with the attainment of Swaraj but help in the formation of good Government which would guarantee happiness for the nation. Professor Ranga speaking at the Convention warned the country against cooperative farming and said that finally farmers would be ousted as a result of the coercion which was certain to be used. Mr. T. P. Daver, Chairman of the Reception Committee delivered the welcome address.

Later that night Rajaji and Professor Ranga addressed a public meeting at the Union Gymkhana grounds.

FLAG AND FOUNDER'S DAY

While complete reports of the observance of this Day by our Party from many parts of the country have yet to come in, information available indicates the enthusiasm with which the Day was observed in important centres of the country.

Bombay, for example, held a prayer meeting in the Party office where hymns and prayers from different religions were recited with one common theme viz.,

wishing Rajaji a long life. Mr. K. M. Munishi who recited Shlokas on the occasion also addressed the gathering during which he referred to Rajaji's role in Indian politics and said that Rajaji had founded the Swatantra Party to restore the spiritual content to our Democracy which had disappeared as a result of the policies of the ruling Party. He affirmed that democracy without spiritualism was an empty one.

Earlier in the day Party volunteers went round selling small Party flags. The various Bombay newspapers, especially the vernacular ones, while giving considerable publicity to the Flag and Founder's Day, devoted space to giving biographical sketches of one of India's greatest statesman. Shri Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Maharashtra, Sir Homi Mody, Shri K. M. Munshi, and Acharya Kripalani paid their tributes to the Founder of the Party.

Shri Sri Prakasa in the course of his message offered Rajaji his "most respectful felicitations" and recalled the first meeting he had with him at the Gaya Congress on December 1922 when Rajaji had "stood against the new tendencies that were coming in the Congress and successfully pleaded for the retention of the earlier Idealisms." Praising Rajaji's intellectual acumen and his fearlessness Shri Sri Prakasa, stated that whenever Rajaji "could not agree with any particular point of view, he never hesitated to express his own opinion regardless of the position and the personality of the other side."

Acharya Kripalani said that Rajaji's political courage has been of the highest order throughout a career that has been marked by a combination of intellectual brilliance with practical capacity that has passed test in a succession of top ranking political offices." In a reference to the Swatantra Party and Rajaji's role in its founding, Acharya Kripalani said, "Whether or not we accept all that he stands for today, we can deny a respectable hearing to such a courageous and experienced servant of the Nation only at our peril."

Mr. K. M. Munshi said, "On the threshold of 83, Rajaji is just as I have known him for several decades — astute, subtle and vastly intellectual, wise, discerning and considerate. More than once I have called him our Bhishma Pitamaha; and rightly so, for his has been a life dedicated to dharma in all its aspects, and it is difficult to imagine a nobler aim in life."

Sir Homi Mody paying his tributes to Rajaji felt, "the closing phase of his long career will, I am sure, be looked upon by posterity as Rajaji's most notable contribution to the development of political thought and action in the country. With rare courage, he has broken with his closest associates in the national struggle, because he feels that the present leadership was driving the country to an extreme form of doctrinaire socialism, and pursuing courses which were destructive of democratic processes and individual liberty." Concluding, he remarked, "We who have enrolled ourselves under Rajaji's banner, feel it a privilege to associate ourselves with the tributes which friend and foe alike will be paying him on the occasion of his birthday. We pray he may long continue to serve the cause of democracy and good government."

The Bombay unit also announced on the occasion the holding of an Essay Competition for young men and women below 35 years of age in the State of Maharashtra. The subject of the Essay is, "The role of Shri Rajagopalachari in Indian Politics." Young men and women of Maharashtra State who wish to compete in this Competition should send in their entries so as to reach the Bombay Office at 143 Mahatma Gandhi Road, on or before March 8, 1961. Five cash prizes will be awarded to the winners of the competition. The first prize will be of Rs 250, the second of Rs 125, the third Rs 75 and the fourth and the fifth prizes will be of Rs 50 each. Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Sir Rustom Masani and Shri G. L. Mehta will act as judges.

The Delhi unit of the Party observed Flag and Founder's Day with a meeting at the Town Hall in Chandni Chowk. Sardar Lal Singh presided over the meeting, which was addressed by Mr. M. R. Masani, M. P., Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, M. P. and Mr. V. Oak.

The President of the Bihar Party, Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh, addressed a public meeting at Nawadah in Bihar. Similarly from Bhagalpur we have a report that the District Swatantra Party held a meeting under the Presidentship of Shri Shiva Narayan Ram, President of the unit where speeches eulogising the services of Rajaji to the country were delivered.

In Ujjain a public meeting was held in Chhatra Chowk. Held under the Presidentship of Shri Shanti Swaroop Sharma, the District Convenor of the Party, the meeting was addressed by many prominent citizens.

From Jodhpur we have a report that the day was observed with great enthusiasm in the Party office. After the flag hoisting ceremony, a Party meeting was held where members of the Party in Jodhpur, including Mr. R. C. Bhandari, Mr. Dhariwal and others addressed the gathering.

Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh also reports the successful observance of the day. Beginning with the hoisting of Flags at the district and city offices of the Party, a public meeting was held in the evening which was presided over by the President of the Sitapur Party, Shri Suraj Narain Sinha. Prayers from the Hindu Scriptures, the Holy Koran, the Granth Sahib and the Dhammapada were recited. Later in the night a Kavi Sammelan and a Mushaira were held.

In Orissa the Party Flag was hoisted at the State Office by the General Secretary of the State Party, Shri Jena. Similar functions were reported to have been held in various districts, sub-divisions and constituency committees of the State.

The day was observed in Hyderabad with a meeting at the Party Office at Ranga Bhavan under the Presidentship of the President of the Party, Shri N. G. Ranga.

Party barriers were transcended at a public meeting held in the city of Madras to celebrate Rajaji's 83rd birthday. Mr. M. P. Sivagnana Gramani, leader of the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam, addressing the meeting spoke of the strict discipline that Rajaji enforced as an administrator and how he had never allowed loyalty to friends to influence his official decisions. He felt that if Rajaji who had participated in building up the Congress organisation along with Gandhiji should

come out of his retirement and stage a historic return to the political field and undertake strenuous tours to explain his views to the people about the way the country was administered, it was because Rajaji was convinced that the country was being led in the wrong direction. Mr. S. Narayanaswamy said that Rajaji was one of the greatest Indians. Miss S. Vijayalakshmi, of the Praja Socialist Party, who also addressed the meeting, said that Rajaji was well known for his fearless expression of views. Dr. M. Santhosham, who presided over the meeting said that Rajaji's gospel in life was to preserve and foster the unity of India. Among others who addressed the gathering were State General Secretary, Shri S. S. Mariswamy and Mr. K. M. Subramanian.

In Bangalore, a public meeting was held in the Town Hall under the presidentship of Mr. V. P. Menon. The principal speakers were Sri D. V. Gundappa who spoke in English and Dr. B. K. Nagur who addressed the gathering in Kannada. The meeting passed with acclaim a resolution felicitating Rajaji on his 83rd birthday and wishing him long life.

The South Kanara District Party also held a meeting that day. Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu, President of the District Party presided. The late Shri Navaratna Rama Rao who addressed the meeting extolled Rajaji's courage of conviction and clarity of thought. Shri K. B. Jinaraja Hedge and Mr. Lobo Prabhu also addressed the gathering. Among others who spoke at the meeting were Mr. Salenna and Dr. M. S. A. Sharma. A vote of thanks was proposed by District Party Secretary Mr. K. Uggappa Shetty.

The Maharashtra unit of the Party went one better than the other States. Instead of observing 9th as Founder's Day, they observed the period from December 3 to 9 as Rajaji's Birthday Celebrations Week. Throughout that week they held many meetings in various localities of Poona City. On the morning of the 9th itself the Party Flag was hoisted at the State Office when several prominent citizens of Poona addressed the meeting.

Greetings wishing Rajaji long life were sent to him on behalf of the Poona Party and that evening at a public meeting Shri Koshti, Shri Walvekar, Prof. Gharpure and Shri Bhandare spoke on the life of Rajaji and his gift to India of the new Party. A resolution was passed on the occasion wishing him long life in the service of the nation. Similar celebrations were reported to have been held at Pandharpur and Baramati.

In Calcutta a public meeting was held at the Party Office at 6 p.m., with Shri Sushil Bannerjee in the Chair. Several Party leaders of the West Bengal unit spoke on the occasion. Another public meeting was held in the premises of the North Calcutta Swatantra Party under the Presidentship of Mr. B. Chatterjee, to observe the Day.

Meanwhile hardly pausing for some rest after his strenuous tour of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Belgaum, Rajaji on his birthday was busily touring the district of Tirunelveli. He addressed a public meeting on December 9 where once again he outlined to the audience the reasons which had led to the formation of the Swatantra Party. Tirunelveli observed the Day with

flag hoisting ceremony by Shri Sa Ganesan, President of the Tamil Nad Party. The Raja of Ettayapuram and other local leaders called on Rajaji and paid their respects to him.

Rajaji has sent the following message to all those who have sent him greetings and good wishes on his birthday:

I have been deeply moved by the messages received from the numerous colleagues who have thrown their lot with me in the arduous work I have undertaken under a compelling sense of duty.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

OUR MEMBERS IN PARLIAMENT

The winter session of the Lok Sabha proved an illustration of the effective opposition that our Party can offer in a responsible but at the same time telling manner. Three important issues came up before this session of Parliament. Beginning with the Companies Bill and the much debated question of contribution of Corporate Funds to Political Parties, the session discussed the continuance of the Preventive Detention Act and Foreign Policy.

Commenting on the performance of the Swatantra Party in so far as the debate on the Companies Bill was concerned, the *Hindustan Times* commented, "Perhaps the only Parliamentary group that gave some attention to its primary object (Companies (amendment) Bill) was the Swatantra Party which in the articulate person of Mr. Masani kept up a steady fire on the measure." No other opposition group provided such an objective rebuttal of the various measures that Government proposed. Of particular interest and one which led to an intense debate was the provision relating to contribution of Corporate Funds for political Parties.

In his speech in the Lok Sabha criticising the Bill and suggesting amendments, Mr. Masani said, "The Prime Minister has, more than once, taken the liberty to suggest that the Party to which I belong happens to be a projection of this or that business group. If it were so, I would not be making this point. Now, I see nothing wrong in having good industrialists and good businessmen among my associates. I am proud of such people and think it is no slur on our Party if people say that we have good industrialists or good businessmen in our ranks. I think everybody should be proud of that, because they are serving the country in their own way. But since the Prime Minister seems to think that this is a useful way of smearing political opponents, let me say this that if, unfortunately — and I do hope that he will still consider our plea — if, unfortunately, the Bill stands as at present and the Government defeat in this House the amendments that we seek to move to stop this mischief, then who will be able to blame any man in the street who, by the same logic, says that the capitalist stooge No. 1 is nobody but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the only Party that wants Corporate funds to be used for political purposes?"

The notorious Act, the Preventive Detention Act, came in for heavy criticism in the Lok Sabha when

Government sought to move a bill to extend the life of the Act by three years. There was complete unanimity among the members of the democratic opposition in condemning this Act. Both Mr. Masani and Mr. Ashok Mehta described the measure as an "ugly blot" on the statute book. Mr. Masani quoted the debates of 1950 to argue that the Act first came into being on account of the subversive activities of the Communist Party. Yet he said, the Minister, Mr. B. M. Datar had ignored the effect of Chinese aggression which alone might long have been legitimately urged any support of the measure. On the contrary, Mr. Masani said that the Act was being used for every purpose save that of dealing with subversive activities of the Communists or against those seeking to disrupt the unity of the country.

During the Foreign Policy debate, the Swatantra point of view was ably put forward in the Lok Sabha by Mr. J. Mohammed Imam, who provided a balanced argument to prove that India's foreign policy left much to be desired.

Mr. Imam felt that the United Nations was the only organisation which could prevent war and that in spite of its present weaknesses every support should be given to it.

Referring to Mr. Khrushchev's role at the United Nations, Mr. Imam stated that Mr. Khrushchev "attended the meeting of the United Nations not with the genuine object of achieving peace but to disrupt it."

The Prime Minister had referred to Colonialism, said Mr. Imam. It was true that it was bad but it was also a fact that over thirty countries had been released from colonialism and they were now independent nations with many of them as members of the United Nations. He wished that Mr. Nehru had shown some appreciation of this attitude of the Western Powers. He, however, criticised the Prime Minister for having nothing to say about the Communist form of imperialism.

Mr. Imam referred to Chinese aggression against India. He felt that negotiations with China were futile when it appeared that they were in no mood for such negotiations. He regretted that the Prime Minister never made any reference to Chinese aggression against India in the United Nations or to Tibet.

Before concluding Mr. Imam said that the policy of non-alignment in the context of the present situation was no longer valid. He said, "It has been suggested that India has been running with the hares and hunting with the hounds. This policy must be changed. I feel that the country's future will not be safe unless we revise our present foreign policy and adopt a sounder policy so that the safety and integrity of the country may be ensured."

MASTER TARA SINGH'S DETENTION

The General Secretary of the Party had a busy day in Ambala on December 4, when he addressed several meetings. Addressing a Press Conference, Mr. Masani pleaded for the immediate release of the Akali leader, Master Tara Singh.

Mr. Masani said, "Faced with the threat of further Chinese aggression, India cannot afford the luxury of locking up without trial patriotic Indians like Master Tara Singh and creating resulting bitterness among a large section of the people. Statesmanship dictates the immediate release of Master Tara Singh so that he may reassume responsibility for the leadership of the Punjabi Suba agitation before other events like Sant Fateh Singh's proposed fast aggravate the situation further."

Asserting that the Party's position with regard to Civil Liberties was very definite, Mr. Masani referred to the report of the Punjab Enquiry Committee appointed by the Party to enquire into repression in the Punjab and said, "As the Munshi Committee has pointed out, there has been excessive and arbitrary use of police power and unprecedented repression in dealing with what is, after all, a political issue which must be solved by political means; repression of a popular movement by Police action is neither justifiable nor effective in the long run."

Mr. Masani said that, as found by the Enquiry Committee, there was no evidence whatsoever available to justify the charge of planned violence made by the Chief Minister of Punjab against the Akali Dal or for the "attempt made by Mr. Darbara Singh, President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, to smear Master Tara Singh by allegations of conspiracy with Pakistan."

He added, "My fear is that an agitation which is thus suppressed by a reign of terror will sooner or later break out with renewed vitality. The fact that an extraordinary concentration of police from all over Punjab had to be amassed in Ambala and the surrounding areas during the past few days and several people had to be arrested without any justifiable cause in order to facilitate the visit of our Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, to Rajpura today, shows how vain are the hopes of those who profess to believe that the Akali agitation has fizzled out."

One gathered, said Mr. Masani, that there was widespread desire among the people in the Punjab for a change of Government and it appeared that Punjab suffered from worse "misgovernment" than any other State. There was a widespread complaint of a peculiar mixture of corruption and oppression in the Punjab. In such a situation, he continued, the General Election, coming off in March, 1962, provided an opportunity for the people of Punjab to put in office a new Government to provide a clean and efficient administration and restore the rule of law in the State. Unfortunately, he remarked, the attention of the people at present seemed to be diverted from this essential task by the issue of the division of Punjab into Punjabi Suba and Haryana Pranth."

When pressmen asked Mr. Masani on the Party's attitude to the Punjabi Suba, demand of the Akalis, he replied, that according to the Statement of Policy adopted by the Party at its Convention at Patna in March, 1960, members of the Party are free to give expression to their individual views on all questions not falling within the scope of the Party's principles and Statement of Policy. Since the territorial boundaries of States and their reorganisation do not fall

within this ambit, the Swatantra Party takes no position on such issues. This was the Party's attitude in regard to the reorganisation of Bombay State and the same attitude applies to the issue of Punjabi Suba and Haryana Pranth. While, however, the Party is not committed to any particular attitude on this issue, individual members of the Party are free to define their own attitude as long as they do not do so from the Party's platform or in its name. I made this clear in a Press interview at Delhi last May and their clarification was subsequently endorsed by Mr. Rajagopalachari. The Swatantra Party would be happy to see the people of the Punjab solve the problem by arriving at an agreed solution between the different points of view."

THE BASTAR INCIDENT

The former princely State of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh has suddenly burst into prominence over the last few weeks. It began when the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. K. N. Katju got the District Magistrate to serve a "message" on the former Ruler of Bastar, Maharaja Pravinchandra Bhan Dev which was a "request" that the Maharaja get out of Bastar for "some time." The message allegedly a request was drafted in humiliating terms casting aspersions on the Maharaja's character and living.

In the words of an editorial in the *Northern India Patrika* (Dec. 8) what however transpired was that "instead of the Bastar Naresh proceeding to Bhopal in sackcloth and ashes, the Governor of M.P. himself is reported to have left by air for a one-day visit to Jagdalpur, headquarters of the tribal district of Bastar to meet the erstwhile Ruler."

The Maharaja is very popular with the Adivasis of Bastar. They have a powerful organisation known as the Adivasi Sewa Mandal which has been doing yeoman service among the tribal people in the area.

Congressmen in that area are hopelessly unpopular and badly organised. As long as the Maharaja was on good terms with the Congress (he was elected to the State Vidhan Sabha in the Congress platform), they considered him to be a dependable man. But later, when disgusted with Congress politics he resigned, the Ruling Party soon got the Maharaja's competence questioned and Bastar was placed under a Court of Wards.

With the General Elections fast approaching, the Congress fears that it will not win a single seat in the district of Bastar where there are two Parliamentary and 10 Assembly Seats. They realised that they could ensure success only by having the popular Maharaja out of the way. Therefore, using the power of their office they are attempting to exile Bastar albeit for "some time". Obviously, the "some time" may stretch till after the next General Elections.

It was when the efforts of Mr. R. Agnibhoj, Counsel to the Maharaja and Convenor of the Swatantra Party in Madhya Pradesh to persuade the Chief Minister to be reasonable failed, that the President and the General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, Professor

N. G. Ranga and Mr. M. R. Masani, issued a Press Statement on December 1, warning the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh that any action against the Maharaja of Bastar "whether under the Preventive Detention Act or otherwise will be strongly resented by public opinion." If the Maharaja had been guilty of any breach of law he can certainly be prosecuted, "but to arrogate to himself the arbitrary powers worthy of a dictator under the guise of making a "request" is

an unworthy procedure for the head of a Government in a democracy," said the statement.

The statement described the communication from Mr. Katju to the Maharaja asking him to quit his normal place for some time as a serious breach of civil liberties. "Under what law or authority does Dr. Katju think he is acting in thus interfering with the fundamental right of an Indian citizen to reside where he wants and to move about the country freely?" the statement asked.

NEWS FROM STATE PARTIES

ANDHRA

From October 4 to 6, a political training school was organised at Chilakalurpet in Guntur District by Messrs. J. Chandramowli and B. V. Sivaiah, President and Secretary of the District Committee respectively. The School was inaugurated by Shri B. Ramachandra Reddi, Party's President in the State, and presided over by Shri T. Krishnamma. Professor N. G. Ranga was present on the occasion. Nearly 300 Party workers attended the school and received training in the principles and policy of the Party.

The next day a meeting was addressed by Rangaji and Mr. Venkata Krishna Reddi, the President of the Nellore District Party.

On the 7th at Ananthavaram, a village near Chilakalurpet, a public meeting was the occasion for the presentation of a purse of Rs. 500 to the Party.

On the 9th Professor Ranga and Shri Ramachandra Reddi addressed a workers meeting at Cuddapah. The President of the District Committee, Shri Ranga Reddi, also addressed the meeting.

On the 21st a huge public meeting was held at Gudivada in the Krishna District. A notable feature of this meeting was a colourful procession in which the leaders of the State Party, viz., Shri B. Ramachandra Reddi, Shri T. Krishnamma, Shri P. V. Krishnareddi, Shri Sunkara Satyanarayana and Shri P. Rajagopal Naidu and others were taken from the Travellers' Bungalow to the site of the meeting.

At Khammamett, Professor Ranga addressed a public meeting as well as the local Bar Association on the 22nd.

A Constituency Committee and a Town Committee were formed for the Gajewel Constituency.

District Committees of Mahaboobnagar and Karimnagar in Telengana were also constituted in October.

ASSAM

We have encouraging news from Assam. Many members of the Bar in areas like Barpetta, Gauhati, Nowgong, Jorhat, Sibsagar, and Golaghat are evincing keen interest and are enrolling themselves as members of the Party. Our organiser for the Plains district Mr. Bhattacharya has been visiting these areas and reports

that he received encouragement wherever he went. In fact he found plenty of moral support for the Party.

An open air meeting was held at the Khasi township of Nongkrem on market day last month. The people in the bazar got so interested in the meeting that they were reported to have stopped their marketing and started listening to the leaders who addressed the meeting.

Party leaders in the State are building up contacts. Many tribal people are reported to have given up local Parties to join us. They express much admiration for our Party and its national leadership.

BIHAR

A perusal of our Newsletters through these months will have indicated the pattern of Party activity in Bihar. It can be summed up in short as meetings, more meetings and still more meetings followed by concrete organisational activity to canalise support that was generated at such meetings. Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh, the President of the Bihar Party, continued his tours of the Southern and Northern regions of the State. Wherever he went he received a warm welcome. With the Party workers whom he met, he discussed problems of Party organisation. Crowded gatherings and largely attended public meetings in many areas like Chandwara, Gomo, Jainagar, Kodarma, Deori, Mirgaunj, Giridih, Gandey, Beungabad, Chani-pur and Nagri in Hazaribagh district, Katihar, Kishungunj, Purnea, Araria and Forbesgunj in Purnea district, and Khagaria and Begusarai in Monghyr district, were taken by him in his stride through his tours. He inaugurated Sub-divisional offices of the Party at Giridih, Katihar, Kishungunj, Purnea, Araria, Madhepura, Saharsa and Khagaria. In some of the areas where he visited, he initiated the formation of thana and town committees.

While the President of the State Party was touring the Northern and Southern parts of the State, the State Vice-Presidents Shri Ram Binod Singh and Shri Jaleswar Prasad addressed public meetings at a number of other places. Shri Ram Binod Singh toured Mirgunj, Chapra, Marhowrah, Sonbarsa, Phulbaria and the interior of the Supaul sub-division

in the district of Saharsa. Shri Janki Nandan Singh, General Secretary of the State Party, made a whirlwind tour of the Sitamarhi Sub-division of Muzaffarpur district. Both these State leaders addressed well attended public meetings at various places like Sitamarhi, Sursand, Belsand, Sonbarsa, Bhutahi Bazar, Meergunj, Dheng and Pupri. The other General Secretary of the Party, Shri Jagat Kishore Narayan Singh of Makshudpur, toured the districts of Patna and Gaya where he addressed numerous meetings.

Once again the Bihar Party reports the entry of another erstwhile P. S. P. leader into our Party, Shri Ram Sewak Sharm, who discontent with the P. S. P. policies, has joined us.

The Party Hindi Weekly *Swatantrata* is now being published in Urdu as well and is reported to be gaining in popularity. The State Party reports that it is planning to double its print order.

With the appointment of an experienced journalist to take charge of publicity, our Party reports that a detailed publicity scheme has been chalked out for implementation.

BOMBAY

Elsewhere we have reported the manner in which the Bombay City Party observed Flag and Founder's Day. In connection with their decision to hold the Essay Competition, they wish to appeal through the columns of this Newsletter to all readers of this Newsletter and members of the Party in Maharashtra to inform people about this competition and try and get as much publicity as possible in the leading dailies throughout the State, in order to ensure the maximum number of participants.

Organisationally the Bombay City Party is continuing with its efforts at building up Ward organisations. It reports that the Bandra and Matunga units of the Party are doing good work.

MADHYA PRADESH

At Mandleshwar in the district of Nimar, the Indore Division of the Swatantra Party held its first Convention on December 3 and 4. A modest pandal on the banks of the Narmada river was the venue. Delegates from seven districts were present.

The Convention was presided over by Mr M. B. Rege, a former high court judge. On the morning of the 3rd, the Party flag was hoisted at the pandal by Shri Thakur Nahar Singh. The Indore Office reports that the success of the Mandleshwar Convention was in large measure due to the hard work put in by Shri Kale and Shri Kakasaheb Parulekar, a former Minister of Madhya Bharat. Mr. Kale who introduced former Justice Rege praised him as a brilliant lawyer, statesman and a religious man. Janab Kaishagi Sahib, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates and the Session was inaugurated by Shri Hirwe Sahib. In his inaugural address Mr. Hirwe Sahib explained the dangers of one party rule. Mr. Rege in

his Presidential address paid his tribute to the leaders and saints of Ancient India. He said that he had never entered politics, that he had been once interested in the Congress but had left it as he felt it had betrayed the traditions of Gandhiji. The Congress, he said, has become power-mad and instead of freedom, we have licence and corruption. Sixteen resolutions were discussed and adopted.

In the evening that day at the Open Session Thakur Nahar Singh explained the policy of the Swatantra Party to the delegates and others who had assembled there. The meeting ended with a speech by Mr. Kale.

MADRAS

For Madras it was the month of the Cyclone. Floods following on the wake of the cyclone, brought misery to thousands of hut dwellers in the City. Hence members of our Party engaged themselves in flood relief activity to render as much help as they could to the hut-dwellers. The Treasurer of the State Party, Shri K. M. Subramanian, is one of the members of the Mayor's Flood Relief Committee which collected over a lakh of rupees for the unfortunate victims of nature's fury. Organisationally therefore the State has not much to report except the holding of meetings and the organisation of relief work.

On November 2 Rajaji addressed the students of the Thyagarajar College on the theme "Democracy in India." That same day he addressed a public meeting on the occasion of the 53rd birthday of Shri U. Muthuramalinga Thevar, M.P. The meeting was presided over by Shri T. L. Sasivarna Thevar, M.L.A. Our Madras Party reports that despite heavy rains there was a large gathering at Tilak Square.

Rajaji again addressed students of the A. M. Jain College, Meenambakkam, in the City of Madras. He said that education did not merely mean acquisition of knowledge or learning of information, but that they must develop good character also, the essentials of which are "learn to behave well, be honest, be helpful and compassionate to others."

Between the 26th and the 28th, the State President, Shri Sa Ganesan toured the district of Coimbatore and addressed meetings at the Town Hall, Kurichi, Podanur and Avanashi and a worker's meeting at Gopichettipalayam.

A public meeting was held at Jawahar Maidan in Palayamcottah in the district of Tirunelveli on November 27. Shri Raja E. J. Thomas, B.A., B.L. President of the Town Swatantra Party presided. Messrs A. Doraiswamy Nadar of Rajapalayam and M. Chockalingam who is a member of the Panchayat Board of Alwartirunagari and others spoke on the occasion.

That same day the Party office at Madura was formally opened by Shri S. Devasagayam, Chairman of the Madura Municipality. Rajaji's photograph was unveiled by Shri P. K. Mookiah Thevar, M.L.A. A public meeting held on the occasion under the Presidentship of Mr. K. Iyer was addressed by all these Party leaders as well as Mr. K. C. Veera

Raghavan, Secretary of the Madura District Swatantra Party.

MAHARASHTRA

On the occasion of Anti Inflation Day, the Party had launched a signature campaign to collect signatures from all over the State to submit a memorandum to the President of India on the high prices of essential commodities that are prevalent. On December 12, President Rajendra Prasad himself was in Poona and the Maharashtra unit took the opportunity of waiting on the President. The deputation consisted of Mr. and Mrs. K. R. Koshti and Mr. Walvekar, the Treasurer of the Party. They presented the President with the memorandum signed by thousands of citizens all over Maharashtra. The Memorandum drew the President's attention to inflation and the high prices of essential commodities. Samples of rotten wheat and rice supplied from Government approved grain shops were also shown to him. It was pointed out to the President that the price of rice which was 67 nP. one week has been increased to 71 nP. per Kilo next week without any reason when prices of other grains are supposed to be falling.

The memorandum requested the President to use his good offices in influencing the Government to check the present inflationary trends and bring down the price of essential commodities. The Party also gave the President leaflets published by the Swatantra Party on Inflation.

Dr. Prasad gave a patient hearing and asked several questions about prices of food grains prevailing in Maharashtra.

MYSORE

Some members of the State Organising Committee visited Tumkur on November 5 with a view to organise a strong and representative Committee of the Party in that district. In the presence of a number of sympathisers of the Party who welcomed the Organising Committee members, an *ad hoc* Committee was formed on the spot.

Seshadripuram Circle in the Bangalore City Corporation Area was the venue of a Party meeting on December 8. This meeting, which was presided over by Mr. K. H. Srinivasan, one of the Vice-Presidents of the State Party, was addressed among others by Dr. B. K. Nagpur, an independent member of the Mysore Legislative Assembly who recently joined our Party. Dr. Nagur who spoke in Kannada on the duties of the Electorate in the coming General Elections impressed on the large audience the need to defeat the Ruling Party in the General Elections if Mysore and the rest of India were to be saved for democracy.

Mr. V. P. Menon, member of the Central Organising Committee accompanied by Mr. K. H. Srinivasan, Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan, Secretary and Treasurer of the State Party, Mr. P. H. Seshagiri Rao, Convenor for the Bangalore City Corporation Area, Mr. G. S. Subba-

rathnam, Mr. C. Basaviah and Dr. B. K. Nagur M.L.A. visited Hassan on December 11 to participate in a few public functions organised by the District Party. The new premises of the District Committee was declared open by Mr. V. P. Menon while a portrait of Rajaji was unveiled by Dr. B. K. Nagur. A Party Workers meeting was then addressed by them. Later that evening a public meeting was addressed by Mr. Menon and Dr. Nagur.

The next day Shri N. K. Ganapaiah, Organiser of the Swatantra Party for Hassan District had organised meetings in the two taluks of Sakleshpur and Belur which were addressed by the two leaders. At Hassan, Mr. V. P. Menon addressed the Bar Association.

On their way back to Bangalore, the State Organising Committee members met a number of sympathisers of the Party at Kunigal, a Taluk in the Tumkur district. Readers will be interested to know that a majority of seats in the local Municipal Council and Taluk Board here has been captured by Independents whose sympathies are reported to be with the Swatantra Party.

ORISSA

At a meeting held on November 20, addressed by Shri G. Jena, the State General Secretary, a sub-divisional Committee was set up at Jaipur. The Committee was formed with Shri Kunjabehari Misra, as President, Shri Puranachandra Misra as Secretary and Shri Banshidhar Kar, Mahant Ramachandra Das and Banchhanidhi Misra as members.

In the constituency of Binjharpur a Constituency Committee has been formed with Mr. Nabakishore Das, a member of the State Committee as President and Mr. Bhupatichandra Das as Secretary.

On the 18th a thana conference was held at Balasore in the Balasore district. Similarly the Cuttack district conference is also scheduled to be held on the 24th December.

PUNJAB

The Punjab Party reports that in the last few weeks two Conferences were held at Nagoke in the Amritsar district and at Malerkotla in Sangrur district respectively. Nagoke which is the home-town of State President Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke had a well attended gathering of Party workers and public from all over the neighbouring areas. The Malerkotla Conference held on the 27th was presided over by Raja Maheshindra Singh, M.L.A. Among those who addressed the conference were Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, Sardar Basant Singh, Choudury Dharam Singh Rathi, General Secretary of the State Party, Pandit Bansi Lal, Advocate, Convenor, of the Patiala district unit and Shri S. N. Khosla, former M.L.A. The attendance was representative of the different communities.

The Malerkotla Conference took the occasion to denounce two bills that had been recently enacted by the State Government, viz., the Compulsory Service Bill and the Land Revenue Surcharge Bill. The Com-

pulsory Service Bill seeks to conscript able-bodied cultivators for the purpose of combating water-logging in affected areas. There is no dearth of free labour for water-logging operations and therefore this resort to compulsion is unjustified and arbitrary. The other Bill relates to Land Revenue which has been levied to meet the anticipated expenditure involved in the setting up of the Kurukshetra and Punjabi Universities. Both these Bills are extremely unpopular with the people of the Punjab, especially the peasantry.

Taking the occasion of the Flag & Founder's Day celebration, the State Party in a circular asked its units to educate the people on the adverse consequences of the two bills in question.

UTTAR PRADESH

On the occasion of the Garhmukteshwar Fair the Party held a camp to explain the principles of Swatantra to the thousands of pilgrims who converged on the place. By means of a plane they arranged the dropping of 200,000 Party leaflets at Garhmukteshwar, Bateshwar, Kakora and Soron and several other fairs held on the banks of the Ganges during the festival of the Kartiki Ashnan. The General Secretary of the State Party, Choudhury Layag Singh visited all these places and personally supervised the working of the training camp. The result has been that people from the remote rural areas were made aware of the existence and functioning of our Party.

Party organisers continued to tour the various districts gearing up organisation. For instance Sardar Sant Singh visited the district of Rae Bareilly where he addressed public meetings at Lal Gunj and a few other places explaining the principles of the party.

Shri Prayag Narain Srivastava similarly visited Sitapur and Jhansi districts to attend to organisational matters and expedite formation of new constituency units. A Swatantra member of the Legislative Assembly, Shri Tika Ram Pujari toured the Sadabad Tehsil of Mathura district. He held numerous meetings and it is reported that many thousands of villagers attended these meetings. It has further been reported that some members of the Socialist Party have joined us as a result of Mr. Pujari's tour.

Shri Baldeo Singh, another Swatantra member in the Legislative Assembly, who supervises our Party's organisation in the Faizabad Division, toured the

Sultanpur and Pratapgarh districts and addressed meetings at Amethi, Bihta, Katawan, Tala and other villages. He was also successful in enrolling into our Party some influential citizens in the area.

WEST BENGAL

The people of West Bengal are very much agitated over the proposed transfer of Berubari to East Pakistan. Constitutional points have been raised and the President himself sought the opinion of the Supreme Court.

Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, President of the West Bengal Swatantra Party, presided over an All Party Conference that was convened at Jalpaiguri to discuss Berubari. Mr. Chatterjee in the course of a statement said that he had presided over the People's Convention of Berubari and that he had appeared on behalf of the Berubari residents before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, said Mr. Chatterjee, had vindicated the stand taken by the Berubari Convention that "it was *ultra vires* for the Prime Minister and Parliament to make any gift of Indian territory."

Swatantra Series

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(Towards Doom is available in English, Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi. The others are available in English only). Copies can be had from the Central office of the Swatantra Party 143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1.

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