

THE RAJKOT TRIUMPH

Coming in the wake of Farrukhabad and Amroha our Party's victory in Rajkot was a grim warning to the Congress Party that their days were numbered and that the people could not be fooled all the time. But this by itself cannot explain the Congress debacle in Rajkot. What led them to defeat and how did the Swatantra candidate emerge victorious? There is a story behind it—a story that has confounded the pet theories of many politicians in our country, the story of the anger of a disillusioned and disenchanted people, a story of a stupendous organisational effort by our Party on the one hand and of the supreme self-confidence and smugness of the Congress on the other.

The Swatantra Party had little or no organisation in Saurashtra, least of all in Rajkot district. Its policies were not known. Its flag and symbol were unknown. On the other hand, the Congress claimed Rajkot as their citadel in Saurashtra. In every General Election since independence, the candidates of the ruling party had swept the polls. Mr. U. N. Dhebar had only last year been elected by a majority of 41,000 votes. They had an organisational machine which had spread into the villages. They had the advantage of unlimited resources and the power of patronage.

When the Swatantra Party first announced its decision to nominate its General Secretary, Mr. M. R. Masani, as its candidate in the Rajkot by-election, the Congress treated it as a big joke. In fact a leading Union Minister is reported to have said that in so many words to one of our Members of Parliament. But there was one person in our Party who never had any doubts about the ultimate outcome—Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel. He had correctly gauged the extent of the people's dissatisfaction. The Party's recent achievement in successfully defending our parliamentary seat from Dohad and actually getting our candidate, Mr. Purshottam Bhil, elected by a tripled majority convinced him that with the proper effort, victory could be ours.

Mr. Masani was not from Rajkot. He did not belong to any of the dominant communities. In fact his candidature was an acid test of the cosmopolitanism of the Rajkot electorate.

The Rajkot Parliamentary Constituency comprises of seven component Assembly constituencies. There are about 900 villages and for purposes of polling there were 444 polling stations. The Constituency itself is over 200 square miles in area.

In the absence of an established Party unit, it became necessary to rally together the genuine democratic opposition forces in the Constituency. Moreover numerous electoral successes had been

achieved by the Congress over the body of a divided opposition. It is a tribute to the wisdom of the democratic opposition elements in Rajkot that realising this they banded themselves together in presenting a united front. In fact, Mr. Masani was always described as the "Swatantra Party candidate supported by all the national democratic opposition parties".

What were the forces involved in the Rajkot by-election on the side of the Opposition? There were individuals like Mr. Narottam Shah, Editor of the influential Saurashtra Daily, *Jai Hind*, Mr. Babubhai Vaidya, the independent M.L.A. from Rajkot city, Yuvraj Manoharsinh of Rajkot, M.L.A., the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Praja Socialist Party, the Saurashtra Khedut Samaj, the numerous Goldsmiths' associations, and numerous others. The only allies the Congress had, were, naturally enough, the Communists.

When the campaign was inaugurated, Mr. Masani made it clear that he would campaign on issues of policies and keep personalities out of the contest. In fact at the inaugural meeting in Rajkot city on 5th May, he invited the Congress candidate, Mr. Jethalal Joshi to a public debate on the same platform. The offer was totally ignored. What were the issues on which the campaign was based.

1. Excessive burden of taxation.
2. The inflationary policies of the Congress leading to spiralling prices and economic hardships of the people.
3. The Government's criminal unpreparedness in defending the country from Chinese Communist aggression.
4. Opposition to collective farming masquerading as joint cooperative farming.
5. The Gold Control order.
6. Increasing corruption in public life.

Mr. Masani put forth the Party's alternative programme based on our Election Manifesto. The slogan of Freedom, Farm and family found a ready echo in the hearts of a harassed people. But, a question may be asked and quite legitimately, "how is it that with the very same Manifesto the Swatantra Party's candidates were unable to do equally well in the General Elections of 1962?" And therein lies the crucial answer: A first-rate organisational apparatus. In the short span of a month, the Swatantra campaign was a model of organisation—a good fighting machine which made the maximum use of available resources and was able to put across to the people the issues

of the election and the imperative need to put a brake on the runaway policies pursued by the Congress. If anything, our campaign proved that whatever the odds may be, a sound organisation run on businesslike lines was bound to deliver the goods. Every component Assembly constituency had an office and a telephone. Constant two-way communication was maintained between the headquarters in Rajkot and the offices in the Constituency. Requirements were speedily met well in advance of polling day. Voting slips, polling agent forms, even papers and pencils were on time where they were needed. Dummy booths were set up on time and care was taken to ensure polling agents in every one of the 444 polling stations. There was a judicious mixture of local initiative and central control. The central headquarters was generally well-informed of what went on in the different areas of the constituency. By discouraging the "general leadership" complex—an unfortunate malaise among Indian politicians—those in charge of the seven constituencies were able to concentrate on a smaller area with much greater effect. Consequently the Swatantra message generally succeeded in reaching the masses.

On the other hand, the Congress machine, supremely self-confident and smugly looking on at the Swatantra Party campaign, waited for the opposition to wear itself out and to move into the fray in the last few days preceding polling. They have generally been able to get away with this tactics because their opponents have worn themselves out and are incapable of retaining their enthusiasm till polling day. When the Congress finally started working, they found themselves a little too late. They frantically tried to retrieve the situation. Even the Union Home and Defence Ministers and Mrs. Indira Gandhi were summoned.

Mr. U. N. Dhebar, unmindful of the fact that he was now the Chairman of the Khadi Board went about campaigning for the Congress thus establishing an unhealthy precedent. The Home Minister of Gujarat Mr. Rasikhlal Parekh went about brandishing threats to people to vote for the Congress or else. These activities did not particularly endear the Congress to the people.

Rajaji, Prof. Ranga, Mr. & Mrs. K. M. Munshi, Maharani Gayatri Devi, Maharawal Laxman Singh of Dungarpur and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke were on hand to help in the campaign with their speeches from the public platform. Acharya Kripalani fresh from his Amroha victory, and Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the Jan Sangh also spared time to campaign for our candidate.

And when in the early hours of the morning of May 28, Mr. Masani was declared elected with a majority of 14,151 votes, the tumultuous scenes witnessed in Rajkot reminded one of the scenes on 15th August, 1947. Over 25,000 people paraded the streets, placing Mr. Masani on the roof of an automobile and rending the air with slogans and exploding crackers. So great was the joy that one would have thought they had just been delivered from tyranny. The fact was that the myth of Congress invincibility had been broken. The ballot-box war for a cleaner and more efficient government was on.

PRESS COMMENTS ON RAJKOT BY-ELECTION

The Swatantra victory in Rajkot hit the headlines in almost all newspapers throughout the country. There were a spate of comments, both editorial and otherwise, on the subject. Reproduced below are extracts from some of them.

Hindustan Standard, Calcutta, May 29, 1963

"NOW RAJKOT"

"If Amroha and Farrukhabad were two slaps on the face of the Congress, Rajkot had been a rapier thrust into its heart. This Gujarat constituency had been a traditional Congress stronghold. It was thus no mean performance on the part of Mr. Minoo Masani, a former Congressman himself, to have wrested the seat from the ruling party which had left no stone unturned to inflict a crushing defeat on the Swatantra Party General Secretary..."

Indian Express, Bombay, May 29, 1963

"THREE IN A ROW"

"Mr. Minoo Masani's victory at Rajkot drives yet another nail into the Congress coffin. Howsoever the Congress apologists might explain that Party's recent reverses—and there have been some curious and contradictory explanations—it is clear that Amroha was no fluke and Farrukhabad no flash in the pan. The cumulative effect of the Rajkot election should jolt the most self-satisfied Congressman out of his complacency.

"... Mr. Masani's victory will greatly strengthen the Opposition in the Lok Sabha now no longer mesmerised by Congress personalities, however exalted, or by Congress policies, however disguised or garbled".

Times of India, Bombay, May 29, 1963

"RAJKOT"

"Though the margin of Mr. Masani's victory in the Rajkot parliamentary by-election is very much smaller than Mr. Kripalani's in Amroha and Dr. Lohia's in Farrukhabad, the General Secretary of the Swatantra Party has in fact scored a more impressive success than either the Acharya or the Socialist leader. Three General elections had shown that Rajkot, unlike Amroha or Farrukhabad, was a formidable Congress stronghold. In the first General Election the Congress captured Rajkot, getting 61 per cent of the votes, it increased its share of the poll to 71 per cent. in 1957, though its hold on Rajkot weakened by 1962, Mr. Dhebar nevertheless won the constituency by a margin of 41,000 votes and with more than 55 per cent. of the votes cast..."

"... on the basis of the previous voting record the Congress could have reasonably expected to defeat in Rajkot even a candidate supported by all the opposition parties. But in the event, more than 53 per cent of the electorate voted for Mr. Masani in a contest which for all practical purposes was a

straight fight between the Congress and the Swatantra Party. This is a remarkable achievement for a candidate who geographically is an "outsider" and who moreover belongs to a minority community.

The Hindu, Madras, May 30, 1963

"CONGRESS DEFEAT AT RAJKOT"

"The Congress has sustained a clear defeat at Rajkot...

"The Rajkot election was a well-fought contest in which the issues dividing the Congress and the Swatantra parties were posed in a straightforward manner and there were hardly any external irrelevant considerations like caste or community to influence the voters. It is a tribute to the growing political maturity of the Indian electorate that irrational appeals are no longer carrying the same weight... Even if one swallow does not make a summer, the fact that a constituency, which elected a Congress candidate by a majority of 40,000 votes barely a year ago, has chosen to elect a candidate opposed to the Congress by a majority of 14,000 votes in a straight contest, is sufficient evidence of a shift in electoral opinion of which the Congress must take note...."

Thought (Delhi Weekly), June 1, 1963

"THE LESSON OF DEFEATS"

"Judging from the reactions already noticed it would seem that when a sober self-analysis and an objective assessment of the situation in the country are called for the Congress leaders have angrily begun searching for scapegoats. If at Amroha it was a combination of reactionary forces that brought about the defeat of their nominee, in Rajkot, where the Swatantra Party General Secretary, Mr. Minoo Masani, has humbled a veteran Congressman, the Congress leaders have been found prone to ascribe their misfortune to local causes such as inefficient electioneering, factionalism and apathy in the ranks of their organisation. They do not seem to realise that while true in parts or fully these were but symptoms of the disease cultivated partly by them and partly given to them by circumstances including reaction and resentment among the voters against their bookish policies...."

Statesman, Calcutta, June 3, 1963

LESSONS OF THE BY-ELECTION AT RAJKOT —BY MR. INDER MALHOTRA

"The first and the foremost lesson, in my opinion is that the Congress leaders should stop trading on Mr. Nehru's name on the least provocation and in every little by-election. The magic no longer works. So many people have hung on to the Prime Minister's coat-tails for so long that they are becoming rather shiny.

"...They (the Congress) merrily went on with the slogan that the people should vote for the Congress candidate and strengthen Mr. Nehru's hands,

an appeal they tried to buttress with the blithe declaration that Mr. Masani was a confirmed Nehru-hater. But these tactics failed miserably. The Swatantra Party had little difficulty in convincing the electorate that the best way to strengthen the country, and therefore its Prime Minister, was to send to the Lok Sabha an able and outstanding critic rather than one more supporter, even if he the latter were the locally respected Mr. Jethalal Joshi...."

MASANI ON RAJKOT VICTORY

Fresh from his victory Mr. M. R. Masani answering questions from press representative said that his victory at the Parliamentary by-election was a vote of 'no-confidence' expressed by the public in the Government's policies. In fact, his victory was the victory of the united, patriotic opposition forces. He hoped it would foster the growth of a "national democratic front of all patriotic parties".

Speaking at a public meeting on June 4 at Bombay, Mr. Masani said the decisive shift from a 41,000 Congress majority last year to a 14,000 Swatantra majority this year denoted a well-marked trend in public opinion which the results in Dohad, Amroha and Farrukhabad also underlined. On the early hours of May 28, after the result of the election had been declared at Rajkot, nearly a quarter of a lakh of people joined in a procession and demonstrated in such a tumultuous manner that one would have thought that they were celebrating their liberation from a hated regime.

In so far as Gujarat was concerned, the Dohad and Rajkot by-elections meant that the door was now wide open to the Gujarat Swatantra Party, one of the best units in the country, to move on to take power in 1967. In this context, Mr. Masani paid a tribute to Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel, leader of the Swatantra Party in Gujarat, at whose insistent invitation he had stood in Rajkot and whose optimism and faith had thus been vindicated.

Addressing a meeting at Ahmedabad on June 14 Mr. Masani said: "Those who had hoped that after the defeats sustained in the Amroha, Farrukhabad and Rajkot by-elections to the Lok Sabha, the Congress leadership would have learnt a lesson and would revise its policies will be disappointed by the speech made by the Prime Minister in Madras on June 12 which shows that, like the Bourbons, Mr. Nehru has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing."

Mr. Masani added: "The man who has brought the country to the frightful mess that it is today blames others for being intoxicated with success, but that fault is at least more excusable than to allow failure and defeat to go to one's head as appears to be the case with Mr. Nehru."

The Swatantra party leader said he had no doubt that in the coming months and years the wish of the people for a change of Government would be brought home to Mr. Nehru in an unmistakable fashion.

Referring to Mr. Nehru's criticism of the electoral alliance of the opposition parties to defeat the Congress, Mr. Masani said that there was no motley crowd in the country comparable to that in the Congress Party itself. The only thing that held to keep the Congress Party together was the desire to

continue to enjoy the fruits of office. It was this that made the emergence of a clear-cut party system in India so difficult.

Refuting the Prime Minister's charge that the Swatantra Party showed weakness in wanting to cast the burden of defending the country on others, Mr. Masani said, in that event, Sir Winston Churchill, the great British war leader, could also be accused of weakness for having told the United States during World War II "Give us the tools and we shall finish the job". Mr. Masani said that was precisely the position of the Swatantra Party, and added that, on the other hand, by saying that defence potential could only come from a strong industrial base, Mr. Nehru was seeking to postpone the war against the Communist invaders for several decades.

SWATANTRA PARTY AND THE PEASANTRY

Professor Ranga, President of the Swatantra Party and of the Bharat Kisan Sammelan, in a statement from Rajkot on May 11 said that the Swatantra Party stands for the abolition of land revenue *in toto* and for the absolute ownership rights of peasants over their lands and is thus opposed to the Congress policy of eroding the *ryotwari* system in Gujarat and elsewhere.

The Swatantra Party will not allow the interests of the peasantry to be sacrificed for the interest of the urban classes. The Swatantra Party does not want "either the agriculturist or the industrialist to exploit each other, it actually wants the two to be co-related."

The Gold Control Order passed by the Government has put five million self-employed craftsmen out of employment.

During the Budget session the Swatantra Party opposed most vehemently both the Super Profits Tax,

which discourages large and small industrialists, and the Compulsory Savings Scheme, the Gold Control Order and the steep increase in the Central Excise duties, especially on kerosene oil, diesel oil and non-edible oils, all of which hurt the agriculturists, the labourers and the middle classes.

RAJAJI'S TRIBUTE TO POPE JOHN XXIII

Pope John XXIII, 'The Pope of Goodness' and the 'Pope of the people,' as he was fondly known passed away into eternal peace on June 3. Rajaji, writing on this great servant of God and the human race, said:

"Pope John initiated remarkable policy changes in the Catholic Church, which holds great promise for world welfare and harmony. He gave a new image to the papacy and projected his warm personality upon the global stage. The Catholic Church emerged from relative isolationism into an open conciliatory relationship with the rest of the world. Non-Catholic clergymen were for the first time in history invited as observers at the Ecumenical Council of Catholic bishops which met in Rome last autumn. Pope John dropped the traditional derogatory phrases for other denominations and called them 'departed brothers'.

"Since the Vatican lost most of its temporal powers, Popes rarely ventured to go out of Vatican territory. But this Supreme Pontiff made more than a hundred visits outside, by foot, train and car. He appointed the first Negro and Japanese cardinals in Church history and called 2,500 bishops together in a Council in order to achieve 'modernization'. He suggested the dropping of Latin from religious services in Asia and Africa.

"His successor, whoever it may be, takes over the leadership of a Church which bears the strong personal imprint of a great and much-loved predecessor."

CONTROLS

"Controls give rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of the black-market and to artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of initiative; it undoes the teaching of self-help they have been learning for a generation. It makes them spoonfed."

— MAHATMA GANDHI

"The authority directing all economic activity would control not merely the part of our lives which is concerned with inferior things; it would control the allocation of the limited means for all our ends. And whoever controls all economic activity controls the means for all our ends, and must therefore decide which are to be satisfied and which not. Economic control is not merely control of a sector of human life which can be separated from the rest; it is the control of the means for all our ends. And whoever has sole control of the means must also determine which ends are to be served, which values are to be rated higher and which lower, in short, what men should believe and strive for."

— F. A. HAYEK in 'Road to Serfdom'

NEWS FROM THE STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

To celebrate the victory of Mr. M. R. Masani, to Parliament from the Rajkot constituency the Andhra Pradesh Swatantra party and the Legislature Swatantra party held an At Home.

Mr. G. Latchanna welcomed the guests.

At another meeting held to felicitate the victory of the Opposition at Amroha, Farrukhabad and Rajkot, Mr. N. Ranga Reddy, President, Cuddapah District Swatantra party said that, in returning Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Mr. Acharya Kripalani and Mr. M. R. Masani people had voted for and recognised the need for a higher quality of personnel to represent them.

Mr. K. V. Narayana Reddi, M.L.A., leader of the United Democratic Front in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, addressed a meeting and expressed his profound joy at the re-awakening amongst the electorate. Shri Chowdhary Parasuram Naidu, M.L.C., leader of the Swatantra party in the Legislature Council, stated that the trend of the by-elections had quite starkly rejected the present general policies of the ruling party.

Mr. G. Latchanna breathed new life into the the workers and sympathisers when he said that the opposition was gaining ground. Professor Ranga led the way at Chittoor and Mr. Masani at Rajkot was another luminous example for the Swatantra party.

After the close of the Budget session Shri G. Latchanna, M.L.A., toured Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari, Vishakapatnam and Srikakulam Districts.

DELHI

The Delhi Swatantra Unit has launched a programme to train workers in political and election campaign work in their respective spheres. Workers meetings are organised every week.

The Unit has also published and distributed a new series of pamphlets: a resume of a paper on the last Budget by Dr. R. C. Cooper and another on 'Non-alignment' by Lt. Colonel H. R. Pasricha.

Despite the rather trying weather, the membership campaign is in full swing and still more new units are expected to be opened.

To felicitate Acharya Kripalani and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia on their success in the by-election, all democratic Opposition parties combined and held a public meeting.

BOMBAY

The Bombay Unit's Executive Committee invited the active workers of the Party and some of its distinguished members and sympathisers to a reception held to felicitate Mr. Shivraj Kumar, the Yuvraj of Jashan.

Mr. Madhu N. Mehta Hon. Secretary of the Bombay Unit and Mr. M. R. Masani welcomed the guest

and Mr. Masani paid a tribute to the courage and humility with which the Yuvraj had worked in the by-election at Rajkot. He said that this young Yuvraj had liberated the peasantry from the spell of fear cast by the Congress.

Mr. Shivraj Kumar thanking the gathering stated that he was confident that in the next General Elections, if Gujarat was properly cultivated the Swatantra Party would certainly gain a commanding position. He paid a tribute to Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel, who he said had aroused in him a sense of duty to his fellow country-men.

Another reception was held for the Yuvraj of Wankaner, an Independent M.L.A. Wankaner had campaigned vigorously for the Swatantra Party's candidate in the Rajkot by-election.

A public meeting was called by the goldsmiths of Dadar-Parel and addressed by Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, M.P. and Mr. Madhu Mehta.

MYSORE

The Bangalore Swatantra Unit held discussions on various subjects in their study circle meetings.

Mr. K. G. Abdul Sammad Khan spoke on 'Congress Raj', Mr. M. S. Shankar Rao on 'Slogans and Shibboleths', Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan on 'Our Civic Affairs', Mr. P. H. Krishna Rao on 'Impact of the Public Sector on the Economic Life of Society,' Professor M. Sreenivasaya on 'Some Scientific and Technological Aspects of Prohibition, Mr. C. Bheemasena Rao on 'Justice and the Common Man', Mr. V. Srinivasan on 'Sugar Problem' and Mr. B. V. Narayana Reddy on 'Recent Election Trends'.

These study circles are attracting more and more people and help in developing contact between the people and the Swatantra Party.

Mr. N. M. Balakrishna, President, Sullia Taluka Unit, and Mr. K. M. Subraya, Secretary, organised a publicity week to popularise the Swatantra Party manifesto.

Mr. M. R. Janardhana, Mr. M. G. Narasimha Swamy, Mr. D. L. Somashekar were amongst those who addressed the meetings which were held at Sullia, Iverand, Kotemaundugaru, Chokkadi, Guthigar, Panja and Palyathadka.

ORISSA

Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, Leader of the Opposition, wrote to the Chief Minister of Orissa requesting him to call an early session of the Legislative Assembly "in view of the fast deteriorating supply position and the gravity of the scarcity situation". He feared that if food grains were not moved to the interior before the onset of the monsoon the situation was likely to become 'uncontrollable'.

Mr. Deo also stated that those people who were suspected of not having voted for the Congress in the Assembly by-elections were being victimised. "You will agree with me that discrimination against persons and refusal of supply of food grains from fair

price retail food grains shops during such times of distress on party basis is an unpardonable criminal action....." the leader affirmed.

PUNJAB

The State Secretary, Sardar Basant Singh, in addition to being a Member of the District Cooperation Committee, is also a Member of the State Citizens' Council as well as its District Council and as such has been attending meetings of both at Chandigarh and at Patiala. He has availed of these opportunities to explain the Party's Manifesto and its policies.

An all-opposition party meeting was held in Patiala to voice public resentment towards the present oppressive policies of the State Government. Sardar Basant Singh's speech was heard with rapt attention on the occasion.

The District Unit of Jullundur has been reorganised and younger elements has been brought in who it is expected will work as 'live wires'.

RAJASTHAN

A special meeting of Party M.L.A.s' was convened to elect the office bearers of the Assembly Party and the Maharawal was re-elected as the Leader of the Assembly Party.

The District office of the Party organised a public meeting at Dungarpur town. The Maharawal of Dungarpur addressed the mammoth gathering.

During his visit to the Bhomat area of Udaipur district, the President was moved as he listened to tales of woe and vicissitudes of the backward and ignorant tribals who are compelled to suffer at the hands of the Government.

A Public meeting was held at Swaroopganj, Sirchi District—the first meeting ever organised and addressed by any opposition party—it was well attended and gave promise of the party gaining impetus in this area if sincere efforts are made.

Shri K. N. Sharma visited Sagwara and Galiakot and Antri village where Naya Panchayat by-election was to take place. Two Panchas and a Chairman of the Naya Panchayat were returned in a straight contest against the Congress.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

"I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which is at the root of all progress."

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"The State represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."

★

"Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of the society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom."

★

"Self-Government means a continuous effort to be independent of government whether it is foreign government or it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail in life."

★

"To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner and he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realised in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least."

MAHATMA GANDHI

(For Private Circulation)