

National Executive Resolutions

The National Executive of the Party met in New Delhi on November 1 and 2, 1965. What was scheduled to be a one-day meeting was extended by a day in view of the full and thorough discussions that took place on the resolutions dealing with the economic situation and the conflict with Pakistan.

The resolution on "Foreign Policy in the context of the recent Hostilities with Pakistan" evoked favourable comment for its "refreshing departure" as someone put it from the rut into which the whole debate has fallen since Pakistan's aggression.

We reproduce in full the text of the two resolutions mentioned above as also two others adopted by the Executive. All resolutions were unanimous.

Economic Situation

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party takes note of the fact that the recent hostilities between India and Pakistan and the needs of Defence have greatly aggravated the already parlous economic situation of the country. As a result of the disastrous economic policies of Government over the past decade involving, in particular, inflation, a false order of priorities in planning, the neglect of agriculture, excessive taxation, needless controls and over-regulation along with the attendant corruption and waste, the national economy had already been brought to a perilous state involving an excessive dependence on foreign aid. If the Home Front is to be strengthened in support of the country's defence, the need for abandoning these discredited policies becomes all the more urgent. It is only if the present stagnant conditions are ended that the needs of Defence can be met without altogether abandoning the goals of economic development. The Swatantra Party, while fully supporting the defence effort, considers it a national duty to continue to oppose all such policies as are against the national interest. The war psychology provoked by Pakistan's aggression ought not to be allowed to bring about a cessation of this opposition. In this connection, the National Executive notes with approval the stand taken by the U.P. and Andhra Units of the Party on the subject of a surcharge on land revenue.

2. The Party's National Executive emphasizes the need for:

(i) Measures to put Agriculture on its feet so as

to end the present over-dependence on imported foodgrains, including:—

- a) the highest priority in all Plans and allocations for water, credit, roads and providing incentives and facilities to farmers like the availability of fertilizer, good seed, electric power, implements, diesel oil and kerosene at reasonable prices;
 - b) an end to compulsory procurement, and the acceptance of the right of the farmer to sell his grain in the free market without any maximum price being imposed;
 - c) the abolition of all zonal and local restrictions on the sale and movement of foodgrains, gur, groundnut and all edible oils and the re-establishment of a common market throughout India;
 - d) a price support policy, whereunder the Government will be an unlimited buyer of foodgrains from producers at remunerative prices, determined according to clearly stated principles to be enunciated by an Agricultural Prices Commission, functioning not as a departmental organisation but as an independent statutory commission; and
 - e) as a temporary measure, until production catches up with the demand, the supply of foodgrains to the poorer sections of the population to be subsidized by Government, and for this purpose the purchase of grain by Government from the larger farmers at remunerative prices.
- (ii) The repeal of the Seventeenth Amendment which hangs like the Sword of Damocles over every farmer in respect of his lawfully owned land.
 - (iii) A substantial reduction in non-productive Civil Expenditure.
 - (iv) A substantial reduction in all taxation, both direct and indirect so as to relieve distress and provide an incentive to savings, productive investment and employment and thereby strengthen both the internal economy and the home front.
 - (v) Progressive de-control and the dismantling of the bureaucratic apparatus of Permit-Licence Raj and its attendant corruption and the freeing

of the enterprise and energies of the people from their present shackles.

- (vi) The repeal of the Gold Control Act.
- (vii) The creation of a climate and conditions to attract in a big way foreign equity capital which, unlike foreign loans, comes to India at its own risk and without any political implications.

Foreign Policy in the Context of the Recent Hostilities Between India and Pakistan

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party congratulates the Armed Forces on the valour with which they have defended the country. It rejoices in the fact that the unfortunate memory of the reverses suffered by our arms at the time of the Chinese Communist attack in 1962, which were due to the bad political leadership given to our Armed Forces at that time, has been wiped out and respect for India's soldiers has been restored both in India and outside.

2. The Executive congratulates the people of India on rallying in defence of the country and on the unity in action shown by them. Pakistan had greatly depended on the breaking out of communal conflicts and therefore the communal harmony maintained during the recent hostilities between India and Pakistan is a matter of particular gratification.

3. The Executive expresses its satisfaction at the way in which members of the Swatantra Party throughout the country have cooperated in Defence measures.

4. The Executive notes with regret that by reason of Pakistan's non-cooperation, the ceasefire called for by the United Nations' Security Council and accepted by both Governments has not properly come into effect. The Committee expresses the hope that the U. N. may still find it possible to make the ceasefire effective.

5. The Executive takes note of the fact that during the recent hostilities, with the solitary exception of Malaysia and Singapore, India found itself isolated as a result of the deplorable foreign policies pursued by the Congress Government. This isolation of India, particularly in the face of the continuing menace of Communist China, needs to be ended by a radical revision of the country's foreign policy, the discarding of dogma and the adoption of realistic diplomacy.

6. The Executive wholly disapproves of the proposal that India should cut adrift from the Commonwealth.

7. The Executive is of the view that Communist China holds out the major threat to the security and independence of India. In the face of this continuing menace, the Executive reiterates its plea made last June that the Indian Government should take the initiative in organising the defence of democracy in Asia.

8. The Executive calls upon the Government to desist from supporting Communist China's admission to the United Nations and urges the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Republic of China in Taiwan. It urges that all possible steps should be taken towards the liberation of Tibet, and that the Dalai Lama should be recognised as the head of a free Tibetan Government in exile. The Committee is gratified at the considerable improvement in the situation over the defence of South Vietnam as well as the defence of Malaysia and calls for a more clear and courageous stand by India in favour of South Vietnam and Malaysia which is not only called for by considerations of justice but is also demanded by India's own vital interests.

9. Every step should be taken to combat aggression and to guard against further infiltration in Kashmir. At the same time, the door should be kept open for the day when normal and friendly relations may be restored between the two countries as soon as the Government of Pakistan makes amends and manifests a desire to cooperate in that endeavour and when this would not be misconstrued as having been brought about by Pakistan's military adventures.

10. In conditions of infiltration, the goodwill of the people of Kashmir will, in the long run, be of decisive importance. While the armed aggression by the Government of Pakistan has disqualified it from any further *locus standi* in the Kashmir problem, it cannot reduce the obligations undertaken by India towards the people of Kashmir. A solution of the problem should therefore be worked out, on our own initiative and at the proper time, such as would be mutually acceptable to India and the people of Kashmir and which would be in the interest of both. In this context, the Committee regrets the arrest and detention of Kashmiri leaders who, whatever their views concerning Kashmir, have been opposed to its accession to Pakistan. The Committee therefore calls for a policy of conciliation in Kashmir.

Review of Detention Cases

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party, while recognising the need for security measures in the present situation, calls for a careful review of the cases of all those detained in that connection and the release or placing on trial of all such detenus so as to eliminate cases of injustice.

Exploitation of Present Crisis

The National Executive deplores the Congress Party's efforts to exploit the present situation in order to strengthen itself and perpetuate its rule. The Congress Government should abstain from following such partisan exploitation at all levels and avoid controversial measures being pushed through while asking for national support and unity during this emergency.

Board and Executive Meet in Delhi

The Central Parliamentary Board and National Executive of the Party met in New Delhi on October 31 and November 1 and 2, respectively.

CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD:

Meeting on October 31, the C.P.B. was attended by 11 of its 13 members. It discussed the invitation extended to the Party's General Secretary to join a Parliamentary delegation to visit North Africa and agreed with his disinclination to accept the invitation. Among the reasons outlined by the Board against the Party's members joining such Government-sponsored delegations were:

- a. Not much purpose would be served by such delegations by way of explaining the country's position, which was the job of the publicity wing in the External Affairs Ministry and of our Missions abroad,
- b. Such delegations sometimes interfered with the work of our diplomatic missions abroad and placed the Heads of our Missions abroad in a difficult position, and
- c. It involved a needless drain on an already critical foreign exchange position which faced the country.

This decision evoked favourable editorial comment in the *Times of India* of November 16, 1965. Writing under the caption "Commendable", the editorial observed:

"No one with any sense of proportion can refrain from applauding the Swatantra Party's decision to advise its members in Parliament not to join government delegations proceeding abroad to "explain" India's case over the Kashmir dispute. This is justified on the grounds that these delegations organised for such a purpose will tend to depreciate India's diplomats abroad whose responsibility is precisely to explain and implement various aspects of the country's foreign policy. ... The process of persuading foreign governments and leaders into attitudes more favourable to India is necessarily a prolonged one to be patiently and intelligently conducted by a trained force of diplomatic representatives. It cannot be accomplished overnight by envoys and delegations however well briefed and persuasive they might be...

"...New Delhi's rather liberal dependence on such envoys and delegations, particularly in a crisis, not only tends to detract from the status of the country's diplomats abroad but misuses an instrument of diplomacy that can be justified only in very specialised conditions. There is consequently an inclination to overexplain the Indian viewpoint in too many voices none of which seems to speak with the necessary degree of authority. A

more active implementation of policy and fewer explanations would surely be more effective while at the same time helping to conserve valuable foreign exchange and utilising the services of the country's foreign representatives who are abroad precisely for the purpose."

The Central Parliamentary Board reviewed the progress made in Constituencies where prospective Parliamentary candidates have been nominated.

Five more prospective candidates were approved at this meeting, thus bringing the total so far nominated to 34. Of the five, two are from Gujarat, two from Orissa and one from Maharashtra.

The Board gave the following guidance to the Party's members in Parliament in regard to issues that were likely to come up at the current session of Parliament:

1. They should speak and vote against a non-official Bill before the Lok Sabha seeking India's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.
2. They should be vigilant and carefully scrutinise the provisions of the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill and the Unlawful Associations Bill from the point of view of safeguarding the civil liberties and fundamental rights of the citizen.
3. To oppose strenuously any legislation that might be introduced seeking the postponement of Assembly elections in Orissa scheduled next year.
4. To oppose any move for extending President's Rule in Kerala for a further period of six months.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The following attended the meeting which was held on November 1 and 2:

Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. K. M. Munshi, Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, Smt. Gayatri Devi, Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, Mr. B. P. Singh, Mr. Jaideepsingh, Mr. G. Latchanna, Mr. P. K. Deo, Dr. R. C. Cooper, Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu, Sardar Ram Singh, Mr. Mandhata Singh, Sardar Basant Singh, Mr. Harihar Das, Mr. N. Dandekar and Mr. M. R. Masani.

The Executive observed a Minute's silence in memory of those in the Armed Forces who had laid down their life for the country.

It recorded its deep sense of shock on the passing away of Mr. A. D. Shroff, a member of the Party's General Council and observed a minute's silence in his memory. The Central Office, has, in this connection, been the recipient of a number of messages of condolence.

The four resolutions adopted by the Executive and which was the major business before it has already been reported earlier in this issue.

Two other decisions in regard to the manufacture of nuclear weapons and truncation of States Rights, were taken.

On the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the National Executive approved of the stand taken by the spokesman of the Party in both Houses of Parliament in opposing the manufacture of nuclear weapons in India.

On States Rights the Executive giving guidance to

the Party's members of Parliament asked them to oppose a Private Member's Bill seeking a drastic truncation of States' Rights and the Federal structure.

Certain organisational matters were discussed, the decisions in regard to which have already been circulated to State Units.

Decisions of the National Executive have been noticed by the Press and a few comments are to be found in Annexure "A" to this Newsletter.

Cooperation in the Defence effort

MYSORE

Mr. J. Mohammed Imam, a former M.P. and a member of the Party from Mysore spoke at a public meeting on 18th September organised by the Mayor of the Bangalore City Corporation. The meeting was also attended by Messrs. K. H. Srinivasan, P. H. Krishna Rao, P. H. Seshagiri Rao and V. T. Sreenivasan on behalf of the Mysore unit of the Party.

The Mysore unit printed leaflets in English and Kannada which were distributed at the meeting. The leaflets while affirming the Party's full and "unequivocal" support to the Government in defending the country and commending the statements made by Rajaji, Dr. Munshi, Prof. Ranga, Mr. Masani and others in this connection, had the following suggestion to offer to the Government:

"All political parties have repeatedly declared their full support to the Government during the emergency. Government should, in its turn, take all parties into its confidence and evolve a *National* policy, not only for the defence of the country against its external foes, but also in the internal economic and fiscal policies so that the energies of the nation are not frittered away in futile controversies. The present grave situation can be met on a *National* basis only if ideological controversial legislation is given a holiday. In the present emergency *Defence should receive the topmost priority.*"

GUJARAT

The State Committee has at a meeting adopted a resolution pledging full support to the Government in the conflict with Pakistan.

The President of the State Unit, Mr. Bhailalbhai

Patel called on the people to make any sacrifice necessary for the defence of the country.

A pamphlet issued in the name of the President of the Rajkot District Committee, Mr. Shivraj Kumar of Jasdan called upon the public to give whole-hearted support to the Government in the conflict with Pakistan. The pamphlet also quotes various statements made by Rajaji and Mr. Masani.

The Jetpur Taluka committee in Rajkot District also adopted a resolution calling for unity and condoling the death of the Gujarat Chief Minister Mr. Balwantrai Mehta.

PUNJAB

The Party's Unit in the State went all out in helping the defence effort. The State President, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke spent most of his time touring various parts of the State which bore the brunt of the fighting, from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur to Taran Taran in Amritsar trying to be of whatever help or assistance he could be to the local authorities and the people in the affected areas. The State Secretary, Sardar Basant Singh has also been associating himself with the authorities in the matter of organising Civil Defence measures both at the State and Districts levels.

The Party's district units were also asked by the State Office to extend maximum cooperation in the Defence effort.

The Secretary also associated himself with various Committees formed for the purpose of raising funds for Defence and other amenities for the armed personnel in the district, as also visiting the bereaved families to offer condolences.

The Role of the Opposition in an Emergency

The Party's Vice-President, Smt. Gayatri Devi of Jaipur made a brave speech in Bombay on October 26. She was addressing the Bombay Rotary Club on "The Role of the Opposition in the Emergency." The

speech won her many plaudits and, predictably, criticism from the Leftist press. The speech has been reproduced in full in annexure "B" to this Newsletter.

Demonstrations against Rajaji

Three members of the Party in Parliament, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. C. L. Narsimha Reddy and Mr. Sundarmani Patel described as "unfortunate and unworthy" recent demonstrations by some persons and groups protesting against Rajaji's articles on Kashmir in *Swarajya*.

In a joint statement published in the *Hindustan Times* of 21st October, they said: "It is not worthy of freedom-lovers or well-wishers of India's all-round progress in realms of spirit, thought and action to impinge upon freedom of thought, speech and expression of such famous thinkers and patriots as Rajaji and prevent them from feeling free to offer their advice, whether it is pleasing or unpalatable at the moment to some of us.

"Let us not forget within any responsible political party, be it Congress, Swatantra or Communist, there are always differences of opinion on many crucial issues and because of the interaction of differences, there is scope for their constructive approach to national problems. Naturally, there ought to be so much more scope on the national plane for such differences of views and thoughts and we should be willing to respect and admire such great leaders as Rajaji who feel impelled to offer for the benefit of our country, their thoughts, even at the risk of being misunderstood or resented by such impatient demonstrations."

The "Madras Newsletter" in the *Hitavada* (Nagpur) of November 1, reported as follows: "An unusual demonstration took place in Madras last week. It was meant by its organisers as a protest against views being expressed by Shri C. Rajagopalachari on Kashmir. The 'progressive front' took out a small procession to Kalki gardens, the working headquarters of the Swatantra Party's founder-leader and staged a noisy demonstration. Placards demanding the detention of Rajaji were prominently displayed all through.

"It could have happened that the demand for the detention of Rajaji for his alleged anti-national views on Kashmir had been more properly addressed to the Government, at its will and discretion. In this case

the Government seems to have decided to allow maximum freedom to the elder statesman. And even as the demonstrators were calling for the detention of Rajaji, the Swatantra Platform was giving full publicity to a letter written by the Prime Minister to Rajaji containing the former's high appreciation of Rajaji's guidance on issues facing the country in general and in terms that cannot in the least be considered qualified. In the context of the Prime Minister's high appreciation of Rajaji's 'guidance', the demonstration seemed wholly artificial.

"The Jan Sangh too took out a procession by way of letting people know that it has at least a nominal existence in this part of the country. Its 'volunteers' demanded of Rajaji a retreat on his support to Sheikh Abdullah and even submitted a memorandum personally to him on the subject."

The Communist-oriented Delhi weekly *Link* in its issue of 31st October not unnaturally highlighted this demonstration. We quote below certain extracts from its columns: "Last weekend, an unusual demonstration took place in Madras. It was unusual because it appeared to be directed personally against Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, the founder-leader of the Swatantra Party. Of course, the organisers claimed that it was meant to be a protest against Rajaji's "anti-national" views on Kashmir, but the emphasis, as revealed by the dominant slogan, "Detain Rajaji" was clear.

".....The demonstrators were small in number but their slogans were full-throated, even wild. They carried placards demanding the detention of Rajaji and a ban on the two weeklies mostly used by Rajaji for expressing his views....."

"The demonstration was organised by the forum styled as the 'Progressive Front.' Big posters announcing the campaign against Rajaji said that Congressmen, Communists and progressive leftists, represented on the Front, would join the demonstration. Eventually, it turned out that neither Congressmen of any importance nor the horseriding film star with a progressive bent, M. R. Radha had actually taken part in it...."

Prof. Ranga's Press Conference

A Press Conference addressed by Prof. Ranga in Hyderabad on October 25 received wide publicity in the Press throughout the country. He dealt with a number of topics. We give below his comments on some of the topics as reported in various Dailies:

DEFENCE PACT IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Prof. Ranga advocated the establishment of a South-East Asia defence concord to meet the Peking-Pakistan axis and their aggressive postures against their neighbours.

MANUFACTURE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS:

The Swatantra Party was against the manufacture of atom bombs by India because it would be a suicidal economic adventure. India would have to seek help from other nations.

CONFLICT WITH PAKISTAN

Asked about his views on the resolution passed by the SSP National Executive with regard to India's conflict with Pakistan and China, Prof. Ranga said that the Swatantra Party's views about China were quite clear. As far as Pakistan was concerned, in the existing hostile atmosphere it was not wise for India or Pakistan to entertain the idea of giving up separate Statehoods.

He said that Kashmir was India's concern like Nagaland or Punjab. No one, including Sheikh Abdullah should be kept in jail. Even the left Communists should be freed and tried. It would be better to ban the Communist Party.

FOOD

Criticising the proposed rationing, Prof. Ranga said that it would only add to the worries of the people and increase corruption.

Prof. Ranga who had toured the Rayalaseema and Chittoor Districts last month appealed to the Government to stop the collection of taxes, taccavi loans and other loans from the ryots because of the failure of rains. Similar drought affected areas existed in Madras, Mysore and Orissa. The Government should take active steps to help the cultivators in those areas.

Later, in an interview to the U.N.I. in New Delhi on October 30, Prof. Ranga likened the Government's food procurement drive to the "visitation of Plague".

He said that mere slogans like "Jai Kisan" coined by the Prime Minister would not increase food production.

He added that the Prime Minister's call had come

20 years too late. Thousands of minor irrigation works, including tanks, wells, and pumps, continue to be neglected in every State. If only a few lakhs of rupees were supplemented to the efforts of peasants through honest public spirited agencies and not through the so-called Panchayat Samithis, food production could be stepped up appreciably.

Cheap, ready and adequate credit, fertilisers, pesticides and seeds should also be supplied to the farmer before wishing him "Jai".

Referring to the reported wish of the Prime Minister for the abolition of irrigation dues, Prof. Ranga hoped his "wish" would not go the way the other wishes of the late Prime Minister went. "The Swatantra Party stands for the abolition of not only irrigation dues but land revenue as such", he said.

Prof. Ranga attacked the food procurement policy of the Government as leading to more suffering to the workers in town and villages. The differences between the ruling market prices and the procurement prices were too wide. In Andhra, while the market price for two maunds of paddy was Rs. 36/- the procurement price was fixed at Rs. 28.

He said in the name of informal rationing, restrictions in the movement of foodgrains were being imposed as between taluks and the districts within the State besides the inter-State restrictions. "The restrictions placed on agricultural and other workers carrying head-loads of foodgrains obtained either as wages or purchased in local weekly markets are causing great hardship", he said.

Referring to the additional Land Revenue Act by the Andhra Government which was struck down by the State High Court, Prof. Ranga said he learnt that already the State had collected about Rs. 7 Crores under this Act. The Swatantra Party has demanded that this money be returned to the peasants by setting it off against land revenue collection during the next two years.

17th Amendment Before Supreme Court

A Writ Petition has been admitted questioning the 1st, 4th and 17th Amendments to the Constitution. A Note circulated to the National Executive by Mr. B. Ramchandra Reddy, himself a member of the Executive states among other things:

"This has provided an opportunity to the Supreme Court for a thorough examination of the amendability of Part III of the Constitution. The inviolability of fundamental rights and the power regarding amendability are directly in issue."

The Note pleads:

"For a comprehensive and complete consideration of the questions so involved in the present Writ

petitions, the full court would be more competent, the matter from all the relevant aspects have to be probed into. In any case, a Bench of Seven or more Judges will enable the consideration of all the questions without the fetters of legal and technical impediments. The right to property guaranteed by the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution in its pristine purity as at the time of commencement of the Constitution is the prime point, and it also concerns the stabilisation of the status of ryots even in the comity of a welfare State."

Oppose Peking's Entry in the United Nations

Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, M. P. Leader of the Party's Group in the Rajya Sabha has in a statement issued jointly with some others on October 16 called upon the Government of India to desist from support Communist China's admission into the United Nations.

The following is the text of the Joint Statement:

The question of admission of Red China to the United Nations will again come up soon. India, as an original sponsor of her admission and one who sought ardently to pilot her way into this international body set up for the peace and welfare of the world, will have to take a realistic stand in this regard in keeping with her dignity and morals.

In the context of the present position of India, she should take stock dispassionately and come up with a pragmatic approach to the question. Good statesmanship demands, in the national interest, that we should not stubbornly hold on to an earlier position which time and events have exposed as fallacious and which is today definitely harmful to our interests.

From the time of her aggression against India, Communist Chinese belligerence has shown no signs of abating. She has manoeuvred with political cunning to subvert our nation by the underhand support given to subversive elements inside India; she has succeeded to ignite imperial ambitions in the mind of Pakistan's ruler which is evidenced in the naked aggression against our country and she has continued her menacing attitude at strategic points on our borders even after the cease-fire.

The primary purpose of the United Nations was to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of

war." But a nation which is itself the cause of war and which instigates others to cause war does not qualify to sit in the august assembly of peace loving nations, or for the support of a peace loving nation like India.

Above all, the very fact that Red China has refused to sit at a conference table and solve the border problem proves beyond doubt that she defies the basic tenets of the United Nations. The Peking regime has shown no deference to the norms of international behaviour and her attitude has increasingly become arrogant and inflexible, especially after her exploding a crude atom bomb.

In the interests of peace, self-respect and the dignity of India, we appeal that no step be taken to support the Peking Regime's entry into the United Nations. As representatives of the people of India we genuinely feel that whatever might have been the past reasons for supporting her admission to the U.N., today it will be suicidal and unethical to bolster a country that is overtly and covertly attacking us. Self interest, justice and political good sense demand that India stands aloof from taking action in support of Red China's entry into the international forum.

Contrary to this, we rather sincerely hope from our government that sympathetic consideration will be given to the increasing demand in our country i.e. for establishing normal diplomatic relations with the government of the Republic of China (Formosa). We also believe that only by this way, we would be earnestly contributing to the cause of peace, freedom and democracy in Asia.

Between Madrid and Delhi

The Maharaja of Jaipur's appointment as India's Ambassador in Spain has set off rumours that the Maharani of Jaipur is resigning from the Swatantra Party and giving up her seat in Parliament.

In response to Rajaji's request to her "to write a

brief article to explain her position" and to set such ill-founded rumours at rest the Maharani promptly responded with an article published in the *Swarajya* of November 13 in the course of which she refuted any such suggestions.

Arrivals and Departures

We have a departure to report this time. It is the resignation of Mr. Narendrasinh Mahida, a member of Parliament from Anand in Gujarat.

The letter of resignation from Mr. Mahida gave no reasons for the step he had taken.

However *Swatantra Sarjan*, a Baroda Daily in its issue of 29th October reported a press conference addressed by Mr. Mahida at the residence of a local Congressman. He is reported to have stated that he had not only resigned from the Swatantra Party but had also tendered his resignation from the Lok Sabha to Mr. Morarji Desai.

Mr. Mahida reportedly confessed that even when he joined the Swatantra Party he thought he was making a mistake and that by resigning he has corrected that mistake.

He added that he had decided to join the Congress Party not because of any political or economic pressure. He declared that he was a "Centrist".

He denied that he had resigned from the Swatantra Party because of personal financial problems and said that he had almost discharged all his debts. He went on to declare, according to the report that the Swatantra Party had not spent any money

on him and that no money was paid by the Party for him to fight the appeal (right upto the Supreme Court) against his election, which he finally won.

The Treasurer of the Gujarat Unit of the Party, Mr. Chimanbhai Desai issued a press statement to correct the inaccurate statements made by Mr. Mahida. The statement was published in the *Jai Hind* of November 2.

The statement, among other things said:

- a. Mr. Mahida has resigned from the Swatantra Party because the Anand Parliamentary Constituency from which he is a member may have

Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel as the Party's candidate next time.

- b. Mr. Mahida's election expenses in 1962 were fully borne by the Swatantra Party.
- c. The Treasurer holds receipts from Mr. Mahida's lawyers which prove that the cost of contesting the election petition against him was borne by the Swatantra Party.
- d. It was not proper on Mr. Mahida's part to hand over his resignation from the Lok Sabha to Mr. Morarji Desai. Mr. Mahida should have handed over his letter of resignation from the Lok Sabha to the Swatantra Party on whose ticket he was elected.

Around the State Assemblies

MADRAS

Members of the Swatantra Party in the Madras Assembly walked out along with the DMK, and Forward Bloc members on November 4 after the Speaker had disallowed an adjournment which sought to discuss an order under Section 144 by the R.D.O., Ramnad, prohibiting the holding of the "guru puja" celebration in honour of the late Mr. Muthuramalinga Thevar, Forward Bloc leader and associate member of the Swatantra Group in the Lok Sabha.

The motion which was jointly tabled by Mr. Cheemaichamy (Swatantra) and Mr. T. L. Sasivarna Thevar said they had obtained the permission of the sub-court at Sivaganga for holding the ceremony scheduled for October 30. The R.D.O. had subsequently issued the order prohibiting it.

The Speaker's ruling was that the aggrieved party could go to the court in appeal against the order. The legislature could not sit as an appellate authority. It was not a matter for adjournment, he said.

The Opposition in the State Assembly made an all-out attack when the Madras Land Revenue and Water-Cess (Surcharge) Bill 1965, was introduced on November 8. Even a lone Congress member mustered sufficient courage to express some "doubts" about the measure. The Opposition demanded the Bill's withdrawal.

Leader of the Swatantra Group Mr. Saw Ganesan said the measure was "sinful" and cruel to poor ryots.

Another member, Mr. Cheemaichami said that if the purpose was to have additional revenue, then an additional 30 to 40 crores could be obtained by scrapping prohibition.

UTTAR PRADESH

A report submitted by the Swatantra Group in the U.P. Legislature to the Central Parliamentary Board makes interesting reading.

The report covers the session of the State Assembly for the period August 2 to September 28, 1965.

Among the more important subjects in which the members of the Party's Group participated were:

- Food Scarcity in the State
- U.P. Cattle Preservation Bill
- U.P. Cooperative Societies Bill
- No Confidence Resolution against the Ministry
- U.P. Entertainment Tax (Amendment) Bill
- U.P. Urban Land and House Tax (Amendment) Bill
- U.P. Profession Tax Bill
- U.P. Land Revenue Emergency Surcharge Bill

Analysing the causes of food scarcity, the Leader of the Swatantra Group said "Short fall in food production is due to past and present wrong policies of the Government, and not due to adverse weather conditions. State Trading in food grains is no solution, it can, at best, only distribute hunger. Increase in food production is the only solution."

The U.P. Cattle Preservation Bill, amongst other provisions, also empowers the U.P. Government to stop export of cattle from U.P. to the neighbouring States. The Leader of the Swatantra Group said this provision would invite similar restrictions by other States, and India would be divided in cattle zones, as it has already been divided in food zones. This would hit the cattle trade hard and the net result of the enactment would be just the opposite of what is desired.

The U.P. Cooperative Societies Bill is a comprehensive measure, intended to replace the old Co-operative Act of 1912. This bill gives wide powers to the Government to control and interfere in the working of cooperative societies. Speaking on the bill, Mr. B. P. Singh said, "This bill is not to deofficialise the cooperative movement but to make it a close preserve for the rejected leaders of the ruling party." The only gain during the consideration of the Bill was, that under great pressure from the Swatantra Group, which was later on supported by other groups also, the Government had to include the "Principles of Cooperation" in the opening clauses of the bill. The principles were formulated by the leader of the

Swatantra Group. But the Government has blatantly violated these principles in the later clauses of the bill. It is quite possible that the enactment may be struck down by a court of law, because it contains many provisions which are in direct contradiction of the principles, defined in the enactment itself.

A motion of No-Confidence in the Ministry was moved by the combined Opposition, including the Swatantra Group. Unfortunately while the debate was hardly two days old hostilities erupted between India and Pakistan and as a gesture of support for the Government in the critical situation, the motion was withdrawn.

As soon as the no confidence resolution was withdrawn, and an atmosphere of unity and good will was

created, the Government sprang a surprise on the Opposition by introducing four taxation measures. On the protest by the Opposition, there was some inconclusive talk between the Chief Minister, Finance Minister and Leaders of the Opposition. But the Government was in the words of the Chief Minister "racing against time" and the four taxation measures were passed within five days, inspite of vehement Opposition by the Opposition Groups.

Besides the leader, other members of the Swatantra Group, amongst whom the names of Sarvshri Vijai Singh, Prem Singh, Ch. Abdul Haseeb Khan and Ram Adhar Kanauija deserve special mention, took part in the debates of the House.

The Central Office regrets that despite requests our Groups in the various assemblies do not submit reports of the work done by the Party in the Assembly. We do hope that beginning with the report from U.P. published above, the Party's Legislature groups in the State Assemblies will send us concise but informative accounts of the contribution made by the Party's members in the deliberations from time to time.

NEWS FROM STATE UNITS

ANDHRA

A 3-day Political School for 52 Workers from the Guntur (1 & 2) Assembly Constituencies was conducted at Perecherla on 17th and 18th of September. Mr. G. Latchanna, Mr. G. Hanumantha Rao, Mr. P. Rajagopala Naidu, the Deputy leader of the Legislative Group of the Party, Mr. N. Vijayarajkumar, Mr. B. V. Siviah, Secretary of the Guntur District Unit and Mr. K. B. Siddiah spoke on Party principles, Planning, 17th Amendment, Democratic Socialism etc.

On Writ Petitions filed by the Ryots of Srikakulam, Chittoor, Krishna, West Godavari and Hyderabad districts, challenging the validity of the Additional Land Revenue Assessment Act (1962) of the Andhra Assembly, the Division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court has struck down the Writ as *ultra vires* of the Constitution and held it null and void. The High Court expressed grave doubts even in regard to the validity of the Regional Land Revenue assessment which is not supported by any Statutes. The case was pleaded by Mr. P. A. Choudhary, a member of the State Council of the Party in Andhra.

The Krishna District Committee held a condolence meeting at Indupalli to mourn the death of Mr. Y. Venkateshwara Rao, a staunch worker of the Party. The State President and General Secretary, attended the meeting.

The State President, Mr. G. Latchanna, who is also the President of the Andhra Pradesh Backward Classes Association, waited in deputation on the Chief Minister of Andhra and presented to him copies of two Resolutions passed at the meeting of the

Office Bearers and leaders of the Association on 22nd September. The memorandum questioned the decision of the Cabinet Sub-Committee in searching for a new criteria for defining other "backward classes". It stated that such a search was *ultra vires* of the Constitution since Article 15, Clause 4, clearly provided the criteria by stating "socially" and "educationally" backward classes of citizens. The memorandum requested the restoration of the lists of other backward classes abrogated from 1st April, 1964. The Chief Minister said he would refer the matter to the Cabinet Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose.

The State President and the five other members of the Andhra Pradesh Kisan Samelan presented a memorandum to the Chief Minister and to the Minister for Revenue of the Andhra Government, requesting the State Government not to go in appeal to the Supreme Court in regard to the Additional Land Revenue Assessment Act (1962). The Memorandum asked the Andhra Government to respect the feelings and sentiments of millions of peasants by accepting the verdict of the Andhra High Court.

After going through the Memorandum, the Chief Minister said that the State Government was not in a position to forgo the Additional Land Revenue and that Government would not concede the request of the peasants and had decided to make an appeal before the Supreme Court against the State High Court's judgement.

In a Press Statement on October 22, Mr. G. Latchanna, said "If the Government of Andhra Pradesh is so adamant and demands its pound of flesh from the ryots, I call upon them to rise as one man and defend their constitutional and fundamental

rights as declared by the High Court. I call upon them particularly to stand firm in demanding the refund of the land revenue collected illegally from 1962 onwards from any officer who may approach them for collection of any land revenue."

The Nellore District Committee met under the Presidentship of Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddy, a member of the National Executive. Six resolutions were adopted. Among them was one condemning the Pakistani aggression and expressing solidarity with the people in defending the country. Another expressed relief and joy over the judgement delivered by the Divisional Bench of the Andhra High Court, reported earlier. Yet another pointed out that while the Government had been exhorting peasants to grow more food, it had not taken any steps to ensure the adequate supply of chemical manures at reasonable prices without which it was not possible to raise output.

Targets for strengthening the Party's organisation in the districts was spelt out in the course of another resolution.

The State General Secretary, in a Press Statement on 16th October announced a programme of "Peasant protest Marches" in the various Taluq headquarters between October 26 and November 25 to apprise the Government of the difficulties and needs of the people and represent to the authorities the need to take necessary action. The Statement deplored the tightening up of various controls and the distribution of foodgrains to the people by a resort to the creation of belt areas for each taluq and district and limiting the quantity of individual head-load. Without proper and effective mechanism of distribution, the Press Statement affirmed, these controls will result in untold sufferings to the people, particularly in broad affected areas.

We have since received a report from the State Office that, as scheduled, on 4th November, a demonstration of over 2,000 peasants was launched before the deputy Tahsildar, Bangarupalam, Sub-Taluq in Chittoor District under the presidentship of Mr. Venkata Krishnayya Naidu. In the evening, a well-attended public meeting was held addressed by Mr. C. V. Siddaiah Murthy, General Secretary of the Chittoor District Unit, Mr. K. B. Siddaiah, Joint Secretary, Mr. T. C. Rajan and others.

The State General Secretary and the Deputy leader of the Andhra Legislative Group have jointly submitted a Memorandum to the Minister for Revenue on Famine Conditions in Chittoor District calling for a remission of Land Revenue and for grants for supporting relief work. The Memorandum stated "concern over conditions prevailing in the district" as was evident from the tour of the district by Prof. Ranga and a number of Party leaders. The Memorandum said: "The monsoon failed, the tanks dried up and the water in the irrigation wells is inadequate.

Groundnut, Jawar and Ragi and other dry crops withered away due to lack of rain and there is no possibility of their recovering even if the monsoon sets in the near future. Even the wet crops are withering away due to inadequate water facilities.

ASSAM

Organisational work in Assam is proceeding apace. A well equipped office with whole-time and part-time Workers has started functioning in Shillong. A part of the office is used as reading-room where Party literature is lent to interested persons who visit the office. At the same time, information centres in various parts of the State are kept regularly supplied with literature and information. Enrolment is going ahead in ten Assembly Constituencies. The new members enrolled have been showing considerable interest in the Party and many have offered their services for distributing literature and enrolling Workers.

Prof. Martin Narayan, representative of the Central Office in Assam, offered the Chief Minister of the State, the Party's full support on the outbreak of the conflict with Pakistan. The Party, according to a Report received from Shillong was the first political party in Assam to officially declare its support and offer cooperation to the Government in civil defence measures.

For the first time, efforts are being made to organise the people of Manipur in the Swatantra Party. A number of influential persons of this union territory are showing interest thanks to the efforts of Prof. Martin Narayan. In a report to the Central Office, he stated that he has accepted an invitation from certain influential people in Manipur to visit Imphal, the capital, in order to "infuse the people of Manipur with the spirit of the Party."

BOMBAY

The Bombay Regional Unit has in a statement opposed the State Government's decision to postpone Municipal elections till the end of 1967. Characterising the decision as "most unwise and unfortunate", the statement affirms "it is too flimsy an excuse to maintain that the present Unity among the people will be shaken by holding civic elections.

In another statement issued on 8th November, the City Unit drew the attention of the Municipal Corporation to the criminal wastage of water in certain areas of the city when there is shortage of water. The statement was based on a visit to certain areas of the city by Party members, who had witnessed excessive over-flow of water beginning at 2.30 a.m. and continuing till 6 a.m.

A number of meetings were held. Among the more important was the observance of Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October at the Party Office, addressed by Shri Piloo Mody, Prof. P. J. Shroff, Mr. Madhu Mehta, and Mr. N. Jagtap.

Group meetings at Pantnagar, National Park and Vazira in Borivli and Shantinagar in Kurla were addressed by Mr. Girish Munshi and Mr. Koppikar the Unit's Joint Secretary. A Group meeting was also held at Arya Nagar, Tardeo, addressed by Mr. Piloo Mody, Mr. M. Mehta, Mr. Pendse and Mr. Jagtap.

Trade Unionists who had gathered in Bombay for a Seminar organised by the Coordinating Committee for Independent Trade Unions were hosted to Tea by Trade Union functionaries who are members of the Swatantra Party, at the Party office.

An Ad-Hoc Committee for the Parel Assembly Constituency, a predominantly labour area was formed at a meeting on 31st October with Mr. P. B. Mekoni in the Chair.

As reported on the last occasion, the Party office was again placed at the disposal of the St. George's Hospital Blood Bank Unit, when over 60 persons donated blood on 14th October.

MADRAS

A Report received from Shencottah, states that the Vice-President of the Tamilnad Unit, Mr. S. Hameed, toured West Ramnad district on 30th and 31st October in the course of which Office Bearers for the Virudhnagar constituency and Town committees were elected at meetings presided over by him. At the meeting of the West Ramnad District Committee, Mr. K. Perumal Naiker was elected president.

A new Tamil fortnightly, *Chanakyan*, devoted to the propagation of the Swatantra Party's ideals and programmes and inspired by the Party's active workers in Madras city was inaugurated, on 5th October. Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy presided over the inaugural function and Mr. S. S. Mariswamy released the journal. Mr. Saw Ganesan, MLA, the State President and Mr. Chitra S. Narayanswamy, the Treasurer spoke on the occasion.

MYSORE

A Training Camp held between 10th and 14th September in Bangalore was a great success, writes the General Secretary of the Unit, Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan. The subjects covered included agrarian policy, constitutional rights, taxation and finance, election strategy, principles and policies of the Swatantra Party compared with those of other political parties the preparation and distribution of Party literature, trade unionism, etc. The Speakers included Mr. K. H. Srinivasan, who inaugurated the Training Course, the State President, Mr. K. B. Jinaraja Hegde, Mr. N. K. Ganapath, Mr. G. S. Ullal Dr. H. V. Hande, MLC, Mr. B. V. Narayana Reddy, Mr. V. S. Natarajan, Mr. P. H. Seshagiri Rao, Mr. M. S. Shankar Rao, Mr. R. Narsimaiah, Mr. V. N. Raghavan, Mr. P. H. Krishna Rao, and Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan.

In the course of his inaugural address, Mr. K. H. Srinivasan, outlined the trend towards statism that

had developed in post-Independence India. He said: "The State is invading the province of the trader, the businessmen and the agriculturists. By calling the businessman and traders cheats and humbugs, the State is giving them bad names in order to hang them. It seems to me that there is no place for any individual to follow any business of his choice, for the Government intends to start Tourist Hotels, Cinemas, Rice and Flour Mills, bakeries, Liquor shops for Tourists and Cooperative Farms etc. The Government wants to buttress and prop up decadent cooperative societies by granting them all sorts of concessions and monetary assistance so that their own party men manning these societies may feather their own nests.

"By following such a policy, the Government is out to destroy the initiative of the private individual and usurp his place in life."

Stressing the need to develop the Party's organisation in the furtherance of which objective, the training camp was being held, he gave a few words of advice to the Trainees. He said: "This Training Camp has been organised to train both the Executives and the Workers. The Executives are the fountain head from which will flow directives and they constitute the main body to organise the work of the Party, in a given constituency. These are the persons who have to guide the workers and the organisers. They have to be posted fully with the principles and policies of our party. Apart from this, they have to exhibit patience, commonsense and tact and approach people with humility. We have to attract people like a magnet and not repel them by exhibiting indifference and lack of sympathy"

"The workers who are the direct link with the people and the Party have a heavy burden on them. They have to preach the party principles with the zeal and enthusiasm of a missionary and try to convert men to come into the Swatantra fold by conviction than by compulsion.

UTTAR PRADESH

The UP Unit of the Party submitted a report of its work to members of the Central Parliamentary Board which met in New Delhi. The Report makes encouraging reading.

The Party in October 1964 had organised itself in 19 of the 54 districts. In October, 1965, the total number of districts which have been organised numbers 27. Workers enrolled has increased from 2,070 to 3314, during the last twelve months.

We give below extracts from the report of the State President:

"A State Convention was held in April 1965 and was attended by 357 delegates from 22 districts of the State. The Chief guests, who attended the Convention were Maharani Gayatri Devi and Shri Dahyabhai Patel M.P. The Convention was followed by a public meeting, which was attended by nearly a lakh of

people and was addressed by the State President, Maharani Gayatri Devi and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel.

"A Workers Training camp was held in August 1965 and attended by 134 party workers from 16 districts. Mr. M. R. Masani M.P. General Secretary, Mr. N. Dandeker, M.P. Joint Secretary, Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, M.P., Mr. G. B. Sukhee, Labour Organiser were among those who delivered talks and guided discussion groups. For the extension of the party organisation in those districts of the State in which the party is at present not functioning, the workers raised, on the spot, subscriptions in cash and kind of a total value of Rs. 1615/-. The workers camp was followed by a public meeting, which was attended by about 20,000 persons and addressed by the State President, Sri N. Dandeker, M.P. and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, M.P.

"The camp was so successful that it was decided to hold similar camps in the various districts of the State. A camp of 200 party workers of Basti District alone is scheduled to be held from 12th to 14th November, 1965.

"The Congress organisation in Uttar Pradesh was on the point of breaking up due to group rivalries when hostilities between India and Pakistan began. . .

"In spite of basic ideological differences between the various opposition parties, they were pressing hard on the government. The Indo-Pak hostilities came as a godsend for the U.P. Government. In the face of attack from an external enemy, all political differences were for the time being, patched up and full support was offered to the Government by all the political elements in the State. But unfortunately, instead of taking advantage of this unity for the defence build-up of the country, the Government appears to think that the present situation is the most appropriate one for raising old and imposing new taxes and implementing all those controversial measures, which it could not do, during normal times on account of fear of opposition. Within less than a week Government passed four Taxation Bills, one of which imposed a 25% surcharge on land revenue. This surcharge has been levied in the name of the Defence Effort. All the taxation measures, except one, raising

entertainment tax, were opposed by all the opposition parties. The bill imposing surcharge on land revenue was so vehemently opposed, that all the opposition members had to be thrown out one by one, by the Marshall of the house. With all opposition out, the bill was passed within five hours, with only one dissenting vote by a conscientious Congress member. Though the opposition within the house was vehement, it has hardly been voiced outside the House by any of the opposition parties, other than our own.

I think that if the opposition parties remain silent during the emergency period, in face of increasing taxation, under cover of defence efforts, though actually meant for the Fourth Five Year Plan, they will weaken themselves and lose all influence by the time the emergency is over. I believe that the emergency will last, till the Congress Government lasts. So if we decide not to oppose any measures, which the Government decides to take, even if these measures are against our fundamental beliefs, then I think, there is no need for our party. . . As I am anxious to create an image of the Swatantra Party in U.P., as a peasants party, I think we should not keep silent in the face of anti-Kisan measures, being taken by the Government. Therefore, I have taken a strong stand against the Surcharge bill. I have issued a press statement, and the State Executive which met on 17th Oct. passed a resolution demanding the withdrawal of the Bill and resolving to launch an agitation, if the Government fails to withdraw the Bill. The agitation envisaged, will be in two parts. The first, starting from the date of assent to the Bill by the Governor, and ending on 31st December, 1965, will be educational. During this phase, it is proposed to despatch 80,000 copies of our leaflets explaining the party stand to all the village Pradhans in the State, and to advice them through meetings and personal contacts to send protest notes to the Speaker of the U. P. Vidhan Sabha, against the passage of the Bill. During the second phase, starting from 1st January 1966, it is proposed to launch, individual Satyagraha on a limited scale.

ON COURAGE

"To be courageous requires no exceptional qualifications, no magic formula, no special combination of time, place and circumstance. It is an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to us all. Politics merely furnishes one arena which imposes special tests of courage. In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience—the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow men—each man must decide for himself the course he will follow. The stories of past courage can define that ingredient—they can teach, they can offer hope, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this each man must look into his own soul."

John F. Kennedy — "Profiles in Courage"

from the General Secretary's desk

Dear Friend:

Elsewhere in this issue of the *Newsletter* you have read all about the proceedings and the Resolutions of the National Executive.

I wish to dwell a little on the Resolutions. They are four in all. Two are major policy resolutions and the remaining two are what may be called corollaries to the resolution on Foreign Policy.

The resolution on the Economic Situation is, in many ways, a re-statement of the Party's position on economic matters. If anything, the current economic crisis, which is truly grave, vindicates the Party's criticism of the ruling party's economic policies and the repeated warnings by the Party's spokesmen in and outside Parliament that a "command economy" was doomed to disaster. The day of reckoning has no doubt been accelerated by the need to divert huge resources towards the Defence effort.

As early as March 1960, the Party's Statement of Policy adopted by the First National Convention had declared:

"In India, where the ruling party has forsworn on the one hand a free market economy and on the other hand is not qualified for a totalitarian dictatorship, there is the danger of falling between two stools....."

And this is what has happened now. The Government led by the Congress Party has "fallen between two stools" dragging the country down with it.

You should therefore, wherever you may live, explain the resolution to your friends and neighbours and impress upon them, when they complain about having to stand in long queues for foodgrains or even water, or have to pay more for the basic necessities of life, that the blame should rest squarely on the criminally dogmatic policies of the ruling party and that the steps outlined in the resolution of the Swatantra Party's National Executive, based as they are on commonsense and an awareness of realities, can alone extricate us from the economic mess in which we find ourselves.

The second major resolution which is on Foreign Policy in the context of the recent hostilities with Pakistan, is yet again a vindication of Swatantra criticism of the foreign policy pursued by the Congress Party. Not only are we faced with a two-front war, but are literally friendless barring perhaps Singapore and Malaysia. Most countries are "neutral", a concept popularised by the late Prime Minister.

For this resolution to be adopted by a political party in the present emotional climate requires political courage. We should be proud of the fact that we alone among all democratic opposition parties in the country have had the courage to say publicly what many, even within the Congress Party, feel privately. In fact, quite a few people have

personally expressed their admiration of this resolution and congratulated the Party on it.

As in the case of the other resolution, it is your duty to explain to the people around you the purport of the resolutions. It is not good trying to evade the issue or shy away from criticism. You should meet it head on with facts as against emotion.

I would like, in this context, to mention something said by one of the members of our National Executive when this matter was being discussed. He was upset that while most members agreed on the truth of a certain proposition, they felt it should not be stated openly, and said that he had always wondered how Fascism could come to power in Germany, despite the fact that there were many people in that country who knew it to be wrong and fatal to democracy. He now realised it was because right thinking people were afraid to speak up openly, thus leaving the field free to rabble-rousers and demagogues. He was afraid that if people in our country did not muster enough courage to speak the truth, fascism might rear its ugly head here also.

The other day, our Vice-President, Smt. Gayatri Devi delivered a courageous speech to the Rotary Club of Bombay. We have with pleasure reproduced the full text for your benefit elsewhere in this issue. She spoke on the "Role of an Opposition in an Emergency." As you will notice from a perusal of her speech, far from saying the goody, goody things in the prevalent fashion, she aggressively defended the right of the Opposition to play its rightful role even in conditions of emergency.

The President of the U.P. Unit of the Party, Mr. B. P. Singh, in the course of a report on the Party in his State states categorically:

"I think that if the Opposition parties remain silent during the emergency period, in face of increasing taxation, under the cover of defence efforts, though actually meant for the Fourth Five-Year Plan, they will weaken themselves and lose all influence by the time the Emergency is over. I believe that the emergency will last, till the Congress Government lasts. So if we decide not to oppose any measures, which the Government decides to take, even if these measures are against our fundamental beliefs, then I think, there is no need for our Party...."

I could not agree more with our colleague. Therefore, even while offering whole-hearted support to the authorities in civil defence measures and other aspects of the defence effort, we should make it clear that this does not in any way amount to abandoning our role as a democratic opposition party pledged to defend individual freedom and lead our people to prosperity through freedom.

Jai Swatantra

PRESS COMMENTS ON NATIONAL EXECUTIVE RESOLUTIONS

Two major National Dailies viz. the *Hindustan Times* and *Times of India* commented editorially on the Party's Resolutions.

Writing under the heading "Swatantra Policies," the *Hindustan Times* of November 4 while commenting on the foreign policy resolution said:

"In an omnibus resolution the National Executive of the Swatantra Party has defined the Party's attitude to an assortment of questions as varied as the establishment of diplomatic relations with Formosa and the liberation of Tibet. The Party's views might perhaps have made a more effective impact if the resolution had dealt with problems within a realistic range. To say that India should take the initiative in organising the defence of democracy in Asia is easy enough. But at a time when, as the resolution itself points out, this country is in a position of isolation in the face of the continuing Chinese menace, any move in that direction will only be regarded as a quixotic adventure..... It is obvious that in the context of the continuing Pakistani infiltrations into the State, it is necessary to mobilise popular support in Kashmir to the fullest extent behind the defence effort. It is not enough merely to keep the situation under control by means of the law and order machinery. The last few weeks have seen intermittent outbursts of violence and disorder, particularly around Srinagar. It is not easy to form a comprehensive picture of what is happening. Undoubtedly, pro-Pakistani elements, which have always been an endemic source of subversion in the State, have been reactivated following the lull in the fighting. To what extent the students' agitation has been sparked by their activities can only be conjectured. But even after taking that aspect into account, the situation, as Mr. Nanda has said, is distressing. If, as seems almost certain, it provides evidence of a deeper malaise, no lasting cure can be effected by treating merely the symptoms. The Swatantra Party's suggestion that a new attempt should be made to get down to the root of the trouble deserves serious consideration."

Rajaji was quick to reply to the editorial's comment that the Party's suggestion that India should take the initiative in organising the defence of Democracy in Asia was "a quixotic adventure". In a letter to the Editor, published in the *Hindustan Times* of 5th November, he said that the suggestion was not a quixotic adventure.

"It is an urgent as well as a practical suggestion. Unless India and Japan arrive at a joint and public plan, the continuing Chinese menace of expansion of Communist hegemony cannot be effectively opposed. Dependence on American assistance may

for the time being appear sufficient but the defence of Asian democracy cannot be considered effectively organised unless a major Asian defence is also put up."

Earlier, on 3rd November *The Hindustan Times* in an editorial entitled "Main Task" refers to the National Executive's resolution on the Economic Situation. The Editorial affirmed:

"Though the Opposition may be expected to continue its unqualified support to Government on all aspects of the confrontation with Pakistan....." this did not "automatically warrant a suspension of the normal Parliamentary processes...." especially "in certain areas of economic and administrative activity where the connection between the Government's policies and defence needs seems indirect and contingent, an opposition Party may feel that its duty is to oppose. The Swatantra Party has already published its views on such issues as compulsory procurement of food grains, Gold control which run counter to the Government's decisions and known intentions...."

In regard to the critical food situation, the Editorial observed:

".....The Swatantra Party has spoken of the importance of maintaining free market conditions in matters relating to food grain procurement and distribution. Other parties may have other views on this and similar questions..... There is no doubt that the Government has made many mistakes in its handling of food problems and it is possible that the measures suggested by the Swatantra Party offer the only practicable solution. But the question now is not one of restoring the health of the food economy but of warding off imminent starvation."

The Editorial concludes: "...The suggestions offered by the Swatantra Party may work but, by their nature, they are like a leap in the dark."

In their column "Behind the News" the *Indian Express* of November 3, 1965 stated:

"Political observers will follow the discussions of the National Executive of the Swatantra Party with interest for a number of reasons, but mostly because this party has always been of the opinion that India should lean heavily on the West in its foreign policy. The Swatantra Party's analysis of the West's diplomatic role during the Indo-Pakistani hostilities should therefore be of particular interest."

The Party is also noted as a cogent and forceful exponent of free enterprise in our market economy. Its previous stand that the private sector should be given a share of defence production is of special significance at this juncture. It is apparent that to achieve self-reliance the Government will

have to seek all the help it can get. But the Party needs to make its demand more specific. It must spell out the exact lines of manufacture in which it feels that the private sector can be useful."

In its editorial of 4th November, the *Times of India* writing under the title "No Picnic" observed:

"Few will disagree, as a matter of principle, with the Swatantra Party's National Executive when it suggests that the sense of crisis created by the Indo-Pakistani conflict should not be allowed to silence voices of dissent. However it would surely be unjust to imply that the Government has attempted in any way to impose its views on the opposition... "This is illustrated by the National Executive's economic resolution and any useful reaction to it must ask, not in what degree it conforms to Congress thinking, but whether it is an adequate

answer to the nation's current needs. Many outside the Swatantra Party will share its view that a rapidly expanding bureaucracy, with officials armed with wide discretionary powers, has tended to curb individual initiative and enterprise and encourage corruption. Nevertheless the indisputable fact is that since certain essential commodities are in short supply nothing is to be gained either by dismantling or deploring bureaucracy as such when the imperative need is to ensure that unavoidable controls are rationalised and efficiently administered. The Party's Executive is on firmer ground in calling for a drastic reduction in non-productive civil expenditure although any such economies can meet only a modest part of the total defence outlay."

Annexure B

THE ROLE OF THE OPPOSITION IN AN EMERGENCY

SMT. GAYATRI DEVI, M.P.

One of the most exhilarating and reassuring factors in the recent conflict with Pakistan was the way the country stood together in the face of danger. This image of national solidarity is one of which we can truly be proud. Another factor which cannot be emphasised too often is the gallant manner in which, under good leadership, our armed forces were able to recover their lost prestige. Thinking of the dead, the wounded and those who will be permanently mutilated, one recalls Winston Churchill's words "Never have so many owed so much to so few."

Here I feel, one must also pay a tribute to the people, the Prime Minister, the Government of India and all political parties for keeping internal peace and harmony and a sense of oneness in the Nation.

It is this picture of India which makes people ask—what then is the role of the Opposition?

Democracy is not merely a form of Government but a way of life that grants dignity and freedom to the individual — and this sort of Government is essentially a Government by discussion and debate and by checks and balances; a democratic constitution prevents the concentration of power in the hands of a few people. And therefore, an Opposition is essential in this form of Government. The Opposition *must* safeguard the rights of the people they represent and also voice their opinions, whether it be in time of peace or time of crisis. Unfortunately, in our country there is not one single political party large enough to take over the Government, should the electorate so wish it.

Another disadvantage that we have in this country is that the Opposition is divided into so many different parties, all with different ideologies. One could, I suppose, divide the Opposition into three or four groups — the Communists, the Communal Parties; the

third group consists of those who have different ideologies but are all united on the issues of secularism and freedom and they are loyal to the Nation and its Constitution. We are often asked why we cannot sink our differences and combine to form a more effective Opposition but that is really impossible because though we have much in common, our approach to economic and international issues, which are so vital to the country's welfare, are too distinctive to make it possible to come to any working compromise.

Then we have the ruling party which is in itself divided into factions. And which, strangely enough, despite its contention that it believes in democracy, has resorted to all kinds of methods to keep itself in power — even to the extent of undermining the integrity of the administrative machinery. It seems bent on establishing a one-party rule which, you will appreciate will result in sheer autocracy and kill any form of democracy that is left in this country. The Opposition *must* oppose and expose this monolithic tendency of the Government, much more so in times of stress than in times of peace.

During the last session in Parliament when the Opposition brought a motion of no-confidence against the Government, Mr. Masani was asked whether this was the right time to do such a thing when the country was surrounded by enemies and when we were suffering from shortage of food and other essentials. To this question Mr. Masani replied that we could hardly have moved a vote of no-confidence in the Government had we been surrounded by friendly neighbours and if our rivers were flowing with milk and honey: I quote this because it is very relevant as it exposes a certain way of thinking that the ruling party has inculcated into the minds of a vast majority

of our people — that to oppose the Government in critical times is almost an act of treason.

In a crisis the responsible Opposition has a very unenviable task. Ideologically, it does not like to support the Government, headed by a different political party and at the same time, it can ill afford to oppose it for fear of being branded unpatriotic and anti-national. There is also the fear of losing one's popularity by spouting opinions that do not conform to those with which some of our national leaders and leading papers have indoctrinated the public. And then the task becomes even more difficult when we realise that the Government is using the emergency and the crisis for its own party's ends. Why, after the withdrawal of the Chinese troops, did a state of emergency remain in this country? The emergency is used as an instrument to quell the opposition and to win popular acclaim for the success of our army and air force.

What then is the opposition to do? If it toes the line laid down by the Government, it would be untrue to its principal function of providing a healthy opposition through constructive and creative criticism. My view is that it must stick to its role without fear of the Government or of public censure.

While it should give unstinted support for the Government's war efforts, it should at the same time keep the torch of reason burning. For obvious reasons the Opposition in this country cannot play the same part as the Opposition did in England during the last World War — but at the same time with some mutual trust and understanding on both sides, the Opposition could help the ruling party in many ways. All that is needed is their willingness to take the democratic Opposition into confidence. For instance, after the recent conflict the Government has awakened to the fact that we shall have to change some of our outmoded policies — both in internal affairs and foreign affairs, but it does not have the courage to say so.

If the Government wishes to change some of its policies and does not say so openly owing to fear of the Opposition's flaying it alive in Parliament, through the press and on the platform, it could ask the co-operation of the Opposition in creating a climate in which the Government could more easily transfer her out-dated policies so none could say that she had gone back on those fundamentals which she had so earnestly advocated and to which she had stood committed for far too long. As for instance, it

is a fact that despite the exterior posture of belligerence on both sides of the ceasefire line, there is a willingness to come to terms with each other, but the lack of trust between the ruling party and the opposition in both these countries is preventing this, for both fear the trouble that the Opposition might create in their respective countries.

Today there are many in India, both inside the ruling party and in the Opposition, who are bent only on humiliating Pakistan, but while the responsible Opposition, condemns Pakistan's use of force against our territory and favours the strengthening of our defence potentials it realises the need for resuming the dialogue between India and Pakistan in a more co-operative tone. This is because both countries have nothing to fear from each other and will eventually have to remain constantly on guard against a common enemy — China! For permanent security we will therefore, have to seek permanent peace in the sub-continent and must keep working in this direction. In the heat of the moment let us not forget who is our real enemy. This is not the most popular view but it is the opinion of a few and it must be voiced.

Whether it be in a household, whether it be in a business firm or whether it be in a Government. One-party rule in each of these spheres defeats itself, because as the old saying goes, absolute power corrupts. Therefore, in everything that we seek to do, there must be some healthy opposition. On the home front, I presume, it is the husband who provides this by not allowing the housewife to over-spend. In business you have board meetings in which important and vital problems are thrashed out before you adopt a new policy and in a democratic Government, this comes in the form of debates. The strength of a person or of a country lies in understanding one's strength and one's weaknesses. I am fully in agreement with those who say that we must be self-reliant, but I think it is very wrong that some of the leaders in India have been stressing this point and at the same time insisting that we do not need any foreign help. Until such time as we are self-reliant, it would be suicidal, to say the least, if we spurned friendly assistance in whatever form it might come. The role of the Opposition is to expose these facts, regardless of whether it brings them unpopularity. The Opposition has a great part to play in India and it must do so faithfully to ensure that the free institutions in which we believe are allowed to survive.

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