

BKD spurns alliance

By Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, January 4.

WHILE the leaders of the Old Congress, the Jan Sangh and the Swamyukta Socialist Party today were confident of getting the Swatantra Party into their joint front for the coming elections, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal national executive finally decided not to have "any electoral alliance or arrangement with any political party."

In a brief resolution released tonight, the BKD said the party would fight the election on its own. "The State units however will be free to make such adjustments, if any, as they may, in consultation with the national Chairman, consider necessary."

In reply to a reporter's question, BKD leader Charan Singh ruled out any such adjustment in the case of Uttar Pradesh.

It was only in States where the BKD was not strong that such adjustment would be considered. In the case of UP the party would fight about 70 out of 85 Lok Sabha seats. He was confident of winning over 50 of them.

Earlier in the day, three SSP leaders—Mr. Raj Narain, Mr. George Fernandes and Mr. Ram Sevak Yadav—met Mr. Charan Singh to persuade him to join their three-party front.

Later, at a press conference SSP leader Madhu Limaye said that while Mr. Charan Singh did not commit himself to joining the front, he gave them to understand that his party would work to ensure the defeat of Mrs. Gandhi's party.

Mr. Limaye interpreted it to mean that Mr. Singh would set up candidates in a limited number of seats where he was confident of winning.

Formula

Explaining his party's decision to have electoral adjustments with the Old Congress and the Jan Sangh without any understanding on a minimum programme, Mr. Madhu Limaye said, "for the present we have only a single-point programme—to defeat Mrs. Gandhi and her supporters."

He said the triple alliance leaders would meet on January 15 to discuss the adjustment of seats.

The three-party front, he said, would try to put up common candidates on the basis of a three-point formula:

1. Each party would retain the seats held by it in the dissolved Lok Sabha; 2. The seats held by the New Congress and its allies would go to the party which polled the second largest votes in the last election; and 3. Since the Old Congress was not a separate party during the last elections its share of these seats would be determined on the basis of the mid-term poll results in some States and on the basis of its candidates and the present strength in others.

Asked if the SSP still stood for

a new constituent assembly, Mr. Limaye said: "We shall stick to what we have said in our Sonapur resolution which called for a new constituent assembly."

While each party would fight the election on its own manifesto, the primary aim of the poll pact was to reduce the strength of Mrs. Gandhi's party. Their effort would be concentrated particularly in States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu where she had a personal following of her own.

In this context, Mr. Limaye indicated that his party would continue its discussions for some similar adjustments with Communist Marxists in West Bengal and elsewhere.

Asked if they would also seek support of the princes and the Shiv Sena, he said the alliance they were seeking was with organised political parties. His party hoped to contest about 100 seats.

Of the other partners in the front, the Old Congress would contest about 100 to 120, the Sangh the same number, and if the Swatantra too joins it might contest 50 seats. The BKD's quota, if it had joined the electoral alliance, would not have been more than 40.

PTI reports: Old Congress general secretary S. D. Misra tonight expressed the hope that the BKD would even now realise "the grave threat to democracy" and join the triple alliance to fight the New Congress.

SSP appeal

Express News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 4.

SSP General Secretary George Fernandes today sent a telegram to Mr. C. Rajagopalachari asking him to persuade Swatantra Chairman M. R. Masani to agree to adjustment of seats.

"The first task is to defeat Indira Congress and its allies at the polls," the telegram said.

Madras: Mr. Rajagopalachari is confident about the emergence of "a combined opposition to Mrs. Indira Gandhi" despite Mr. Masani's withdrawal from the talks.

He said it was "natural" that Mr. Masani had not signed the agreement reached by the Old Congress, Jan Sangh and the SSP. The matter would be settled at the Swatantra National Executive meeting on January 12 and 13.

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