

Swatantra

Newsletter

Issued by the National Headquarters of the Swatantra Party, 113 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay. Telephone No: 251424

No. 77

August, 1973

14th Anniversary

We resume the Newsletter in the month of August - the month which saw the birth of the Swatantra Party 14 years ago. Inaugurating the Preparatory Convention of the Party on August 1, 1959, Rajaji asked :

"The only question we should put to ourselves is this : Is a new party, a party standing up for Swatantra necessary ? If it is necessary, we must work for it steadily and bravely. If there is moral and political justification for the party, the nation will not allow it to fail. Satyameva Jayate."

Today, when conditions in our country are many times worse and Satyameva Jayate has become a cruel joke on our people, the need for Rajaji's Swatantra is greater than ever.

On the 14th Anniversary of our Party, we rededicate ourselves to the tasks enjoined on us by our illustrious Founder.

Since the last issue was published, (No. 76-Oct/Dec. 1970) much has happened in the Indian political scene. We have had a Lok Sabha election (1971) followed by Assembly Elections (1972). Opposition Parties including Swatantra were badly mauled. It is not necessary now to go into the reasons. But this was a trying period for the Swatantra Party. That it has not only survived but is now well on the road to total recovery is a tribute not only to the faith of the large majority of its members but an indication of the validity of the Party's principles and policies.

We are resuming publication at a time when the chickens of the false promises given to voters by the Ruling Party have come home to roost. We are today facing an economic crisis of unparalleled magnitude. Prices of essential commodities even where they are available have sky-rocketed. More often than not, the basic necessities of the people are just not available. These are the tragic consequences of the fraudulent slogans resorted to by the Ruling Party to seduce the voters.

There is another reason for resuming the Newsletter. Thanks to the stout-hearted efforts of those at the Party's helm at the Centre and in the States, Swatantra is steadily regaining lost ground. Members of the Party at the District and Primary Unit levels ought to be informed of this fact so that they would be spurred to make similar efforts to revive Party activities in their areas.

Through the Newsletter, we wish to keep our units and members informed of these developments. Members of the Party need no longer feel isolated. They no longer need to be on the defensive. It is time once again to educate the people that Swatantra policies alone offer the country a chance to rescue herself from the morass to which it has been led by a bunch of incompetents in seats of power in Delhi and in most of the States. In fact, had Swatantra's policies been given a chance we would not be facing a situation where millions of our countrymen are going hungry.

We would have ~~liked~~ liked to print the Newsletter as was done in the past but money is not easily available and whatever is available is needed for organisational activities. Readers of the Newsletter are therefore requested to put up with duplicated copies till such time as we are in a position to print them again.

We want Units of the Party whether at the Primary, District or State level to let us know of what they are doing, the progress they are making in the enrolment of members, the kind of problems they are facing in the field and how they are tackling them. We would like to share them with our members in other parts of the country. Write in any language you please. We shall get report them in the Newsletter.

R A J A J I

On Christmas Day last year, Swatantra's founder, passed away. "Rajaji is dead. Long live Rajaji" said the resolution adopted by the Sixth National Convention, "for the Swatantra Party which is the embodiment of his battle for Dharma is determined to pursue his policies, which alone will lead the country to prosperity through freedom." The following is the text of the Resolution :

"This National Convention is meeting for the first time bereft of his founding father Rajaji. Words cannot describe the anguish and sorrow of the Swatantra Party in what will turn out to be the greatest loss to the country after Gandhiji's death.

Rajaji was an intellectual giant. His foresight was legendary and he had the courage of his convictions.

Rajaji's public life cannot be classified into any one category of activity. He was a statesman; a politician and a political philosopher, a literateur par excellence. Rajaji was equally at home with national and international affairs as well as with trivia. He was Gandhiji's conscience keeper and after Gandhiji's death, the conscience keeper of India itself.

From Governor-General to Home Minister to Chief Minister to

private citizen, Rajaji carried all this with a grace and modesty which should serve as a lesson to all men of public life. In the last few years of his life, Rajaji's was the voice of dissent -- loud and clear. Dissent without which democracy itself is meaningless.

Rajaji is dead. Long live Rajaji for the Swatantra Party which is the embodiment of his battle for Dharma is determined to pursue his policies which alone will lead the country to prosperity through Freedom.

The National Convention bows its head in homage to its founding father. "

SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

Delegates from the four corners of India streamed to Rajaji Nagar Madras on April 14 and 15, 1973, where they gathered in a tastefully decorated pandal with a huge cut-out of Rajaji forming a backdrop on the Dais, to participate in the Sixth National Convention of the Party, pay their homage to the Party's Founder and restate the Party continuing faith in its principles and policies. As the UP daily Pioneer observed in an editorial (23.9.1971) "The Swatantra Party alone has displayed the courage of convictions and stuck to its distinctive ideology regardless of cheers and jeers."

The President of the Tamil Nadu Unit and Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. G.K. Sunderam -- himself a shining example of Swatantra's concept of an enlightened businessman welcomed the delegates.

The Convention was inaugurated by Minoo Masani, the Party's honoured leader who set an example to public life in this country by voluntarily stepping down from the Presidentship of the Party on the ground that he had not led the Party to success to make way for younger men to take charge of the Party's affairs.

Party President Piloo Mody, delivered the Presidential Address and appropriately entitled his Address "Only Swatantra Can Do It". His inspiring speech infected the entire thousand and odd delegates who had gathered with Piloo's optimism about Swatantra's future.

The General Secretary's Report presented by Madhu Mehta, the Party's General Secretary followed the pattern set by his predecessors of stating facts bluntly, "turning the searchlight inwards" in the true Gandhian tradition, pointing out problems that the Party had to face and exhorting the delegates to accept the challenge.

The Rajmata of Jaipur released the Convention Souvenir. In a studied speech she called upon the Party's members to follow Rajaji's ideals. A speciality of this Souvenir is that it is devoted entirely to a selection of Rajaji's writings and also his inaugural addresses to earlier Swatantra Conventions.

Speaking on the economic situation, Mr. N. Dandekar with his usual shattering logic demolished the thinking behind the government's economic policies that were ruining the country.

A most significant document produced by the Convention was a restatement of Swatantra policies. A draft prepared by Piloo Mody and entitled "Swatantra Party - India's Only Hope -- Swatantra Restated" was discussed at considerable length, paragraph by paragraph and page by page. Had Rajaji been alive and present, it would have gladdened his heart immeasurably to see speaker after speaker, getting upon the platform to assert that Swatantra policies were today more relevant than ever before. The Draft, with a few changes was adopted with acclaim.

As many as 19 Resolutions were adopted by the Convention. They ranged from matters like the economic situation, the takeover of foodgrains, trade, Andhra and Telengana struggle to the Aligarh Muslim and Benaras Hindu Universities and the plight of Handloom and Powerloom Weavers.

It is all very well to talk bravely and rededicate oneself to ideals and policies. But what about rebuilding the Party machine so as to enable it to carry forward such ideals and policies. That is precisely what the Convention set out to do by effecting two major changes in the Constitution of the Party so as to make the Swatantra vehicle sturdier and make it move faster. The first of these amendments dealt with membership. The old categories of Workers, Life Workers and sympathisers were abolished and in their place was substituted a single category viz., Members. Henceforth, everyone who joined the Party would be a Member of the Party on paying one rupee per annum. Anyone who chose to pay for 20 years at a time would be deemed to be a member for life.

The other major amendment was in regard to the structure of Committees at the Primary Unit level (i.e. at the Assembly Constituency or Taluka level). To have an elected Committee the Primary Unit will now have to enrol a minimum of 50 members and these 50 members will have to be spread over one-third of the polling station areas within that Assembly Constituency or Taluka. The purpose behind this amendment is two-fold :

- (a) that Primary Unit Committees should be more representative of the Primary Unit area than hitherto, and
- (b) during election time, it would be of immeasurable help to have active members in the various polling station areas who could be depended upon both to campaign and to get voters to polling stations.

FIFTH PARTY ELECTIONS

The Sub-Committee of the National Executive appointed to take all decisions concerning Party elections has settled the programme for the Fifth Party Elections.

The last date for enrolment for purposes of Party elections will be September 30, 1973. This means that all those who are on the rolls of membership as on 30th September, 1973, will be entitled to participate i.e. to vote and stand for elective office in the Fifth Party Elections.

Until recently, Party membership was based on the calendar year which meant that all membership subscriptions came to an end on the 31st of December each year irrespective of the month in which a member was enrolled. This actually retarded enrolment because towards the latter half of each year, enrolment became slack as even party units felt that it would be difficult to go to the same person for renewal within four to five months. This system has been abolished.

Instead, membership will now be based on the basis of one year from the date of enrolment, i.e. if a person is enrolled on the 30th of July, 1973, his membership will come up for renewal on the 30th of July, 1974.

Thus, enrolment becomes a round-the-year process.

The last date for enrolment for purposes of the forthcoming Party elections therefore does not mean that enrolment should stop after 30th September. It only means that only those who have been enrolled on or before 30th September, can participate in the 5th Party Elections.

The National Headquarters is presently printing enrolment forms and membership cards in almost all the regional languages. As soon as they are received from the Press, forms will be sent directly to all the districts in States where we have no functioning State Offices and where State Offices are functioning, the National Headquarters will settle the question of whether to send forms directly to District Units or not in consultation with the State Offices concerned.

Literature (In English)

- | | | |
|---|----|--------|
| 1. Only Swatantra Can Do It - Piloo Mody | -- | 25 P |
| 2. India's Only Hope - Swatantra Restated | -- | 25 P |
| 3. Rajaji Souvenir | -- | Rs 2/- |
| 4. High Prices Why ? (Cartoon Booklet) | -- | 25 P |

Available from the National Headquarters of the Swatantra Party,
143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay 1.

The following is the time-table for Party elections :

1. Last date for enrolment for purposes of Party Elections .. September 30, 1973
2. Last date for certification of Membership lists in the various State/Regions by the National Headquarters .. October 15, 1973
5. Last date for completion of elections
 - (a) at the Primary level, and
 - (b) of Primary Committee representatives on the District Committee .. October 30, 1973
4. Last date for completion of elections
 - (a) of District Office Bearers, and
 - (b) of representatives of the District Committee on the State/Regional Council .. November 15, 1973
5. Last date for completion of elections
 - (a) of State/Regional Executive Committees and
 - (b) of representatives of State/Regional Councils on the General Council .. November 30, 1973
6. Last date by which the election of Office Bearers and Members of the National Executive should be completed .. December 31, 1973

Further details in regard to Party elections can be had from the National Headquarters. Please write to us if you have any questions to ask or doubts to clear.

Socialism's Common Denominators

"There are five things which are common to all Socialist countries : high prices, high taxes, shortages and queues, black markets and a brain drain".

Mr. Piloo Mody at Lucknow on July 15, 1973

News From The States

Andhra Pradesh

Earlier this year, the State Unit led by the redoubtable leader Sardar Latchanna was pitchforked into the leadership of the agitation for the bifurcation of Andhra. The bifurcation demand is not linguistic because both the regions speak Telegu. The Party which keeps out of linguistic agitations, plunged headlong into the demand for the bifurcation because it was democratic in character, as it truly reflected the will of the large majority of the people living in both Telengana and Andhra.

The administrative machinery particularly in the Andhra region was totally paralysed for almost three months. Buses did not run, planes neither took off nor landed; the revenue collecting machinery broke down, the postal services were practically non-existent and the writ of the Delhi Sarkar no longer ran. Women in large numbers, schools and college students, non-gazetted officers, businessmen and traders, all participated in this huge movement reminiscent of the Quit India days.

But the Government in Delhi was totally insensitive to the agitation and treated the demands of the people as a challenge to its authority. The armed forces and the Central Reserve Police were utilised by New Delhi ruthlessly to suppress the agitation. The State Police was no longer trusted. Many were killed and many more wounded. The leaders of the Swatantra Party including such stalwarts as Ratnasabhpathy, Sunkara Satyanarayana, young leaders like Y. Sivaji, were all clapped into prison along with leaders of other parties who had joined the agitation.

Mr. Piloo Mody, Mr. Madhu Mehta and Mr. Manu Amersey visited the Andhra Region during the height of the agitation and had grim stories to tell of the ruthlessness of the Central Government. They were also witnesses to the reverence with which the Andhra masses held the leadership of our Party.

Presently, there is a lull. While groups of Congressmen are busy shuttling between Delhi and the State to find ways of hoodwinking the people of Andhra, our Party is busy strengthening the organisation and getting ready for the day of reckoning.

Bombay :

The price spiral has hit the common man very hard. Such items as bread, Dalda, wheat, leave alone rice are simply not available. Even vegetables like potatoes and onions have registered a tremendous spurt in prices.

The Bombay Regional Unit led by Madhu Mehta decided to do something about it. At first, they defied Government orders by selling wheat at Rs 1.25 per kilo to the people. This was at best symbolic action

to prove that the shortage is the result of the stupid decision to take over the wheat trade.

As against the prevalent price of Rs 1.50 per kilo of potatoes and of Rs 1/- per kilo of onions, the Bombay Regional Unit has begun (since the end of last month) the sale of potatoes and onions to the public at .75 Paise per kilo for potatoes and .50 Paise per kilo for onions. On the first day of the sale, there was a regular stampede outside Churchgate and Victoria Terminus stations, but the thousand kilos that the Regional Unit was able to make available was sold out within hours. Throughout the next two months, the Bombay Regional Unit proposes to take on more items of daily consumption by the common man for sale to the public at reasonable prices.

Mysore :

To help hungry people in drought stricken areas, the State Unit decided to open one or two gruel centres in certain districts of Mysore. On the initiative of the State President, Mr. N.K. Ganapaiah, one such gruel centre was opened at Devapur, a village in Shorapur taluka of Gulbarga district. Nearly 21,000 people were fed at the Centre from the 6th of April to the 16th of June. The Centre was closed as soon as the district received adequate rains and cultivation commenced.

Punjab :

Dr. Mehar Singh of Amritsar, the Vice-President of the State Unit and the President of the Amritsar District Unit, has been doing excellent work in Amritsar district by both enrolling members and taking the initiative with other Opposition parties in organising demonstrations against shortage of essential commodities, high prices and the low procurement of wheat.

Towards the end of May, Dr. Mehar Singh and members of the Party, participated in a procession which demonstrated outside the Kotwali, the local Congress Office, the Food and Supply Controller's Office, the office of the Deputy Commissioner and the house of a Congress MP.

On June 18, the Swatantra Party along with the Akali Dal, the SSP and the Congress(O) formed a Standing Committee to launch a limited programme of action against the deteriorating law and order situation, rising prices and scarcity of essential commodities. Former Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal is the Chairman of this Committee. The Swatantra Party is represented on the Committee by State President Mr. Bhupinder Singh Mann, Dr. Mehar Singh, Mr. H.S. Bhalla and Mr. Raghubir Singh.

Tamil Nadu :

The National Convention of the Party held in Madras and the tremendous enthusiasm that was evi evident was indicative of the firm roots the Party had taken in Rajaji's state. It was therefore no

surprise that that Dr. Hande's defection to the ADMK made not the slightest difference to the Party except that we are one MLA less in the State Assembly. The State Council and Executive meeting in Tirunelveli on June 3 unanimously elected Dr. Santosham as General Secretary to fill a vacancy caused by Hande's defection. Several resolutions were adopted among which was one urging the Union Government to set up a Committee of economic experts and experienced administrators to suggest measures to reverse the unhealthy economic trends in the country.

Mr. B. Venkataswamy was elected leader of the Party's group in the State Assembly in place of defector Hande. Mr. K.H. Bomman was elected Secretary.

Swatantra MLA, A. Moses and several Swatantra volunteers courted imprisonment in Nagercoil while picketing the local collectorate in connection with the agitation against rice shortage in Kanyakumari district.

Uttar Pradesh

A considerable amount of attention is being devoted by the National leadership to this State. Party President Piloo Mody has been making frequent tours of various parts of UP. His most recent visit was in the middle of July when he welcomed into the Party's fold 2,000 former members of the Republican Party from various parts of UP, 1,500 of whom were present at a Worker's Conference in Lucknow addressed by Piloo Mody. Over six hundred members from 38 districts of the State attended the Conference held on July 14 and 15. Piloo urged Party's workers not to allow Uttar Pradesh to become Indira Pradesh. The conference was also addressed among others by Party General Secretary Mr. Madhu Mehta, Sardar Harbhajan Singh, State President and State General Secretary Mr. H.K. Srivastava.

Nomination of candidates is proceeding apace with the Party having already nominated 57 prospective assembly candidates for the forthcoming Assembly elections scheduled early next year.

(FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION)